Spanish Cinema Studies at GCSE, A level and Undergraduate Level:
An Analysis of Practices, Policies and Priorities

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2019

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Final word count: 86, 431
Abstract

The contents of this PhD thesis shine a light on recent and current practices in the teaching and learning of Spanish cinema, within Spanish studies at GCSE, A level and undergraduate level in England. The methodology draws on the most relevant scholarly activity in the fields of Spanish studies, film studies and education, and the research presented aims to balance equally between all three academic disciplines. In addition to presenting and reviewing core literature from scholars and (film) critics, the research relies on the quantitative and qualitative responses (gathered via a series of questionnaires) of examiners, teachers, lecturers, trainee teachers and, most importantly, students (a total of 293 completed questionnaires). The data analysed furnishes a much needed, student voice – a core contribution to the research field - with regards to Spanish film pedagogy, and the findings presented within each chapter provide a framework for building on and improving practice for future students and educators of Spanish. In the opening chapter, opportunities for learning via film are identified in a curriculum review, involving the national curriculum, DfE frameworks, Ofqual requirements, exam board specifications and undergraduate module outlines. It is underlined that approaches to foreign film education require careful planning, adequate training and access to research-led, supportive and transparent methodological frameworks, such as those provided by this thesis. In Chapter 3, it is argued that this should begin with an informed approach to visual, film and multimodal literacy, and a plethora of theories and hypotheses are tendered in support of this initial step for educators. A wide variety of Spanish film education enthusiasts from the past twenty years, such as Herrero (1998-2010), Champoux (1999), Stephens (2001) and Bazalgette (2009), are called upon to frame recent thinking and evidence-based outcomes in the field. Direct inspiration is then taken from renowned authors - Delgado and Fiddian (2013), Smith (2000) and Allinson (2001) - of staple publications devoted to recurring filmmakers; mostly, Pedro Almodóvar and Guillermo del Toro. Both directors’ cinematic oeuvres are considered at length; particularly regarding the works, Volver (2006) and Matador (1986) (Almodóvar) and El laberinto del fauno (2006) (del Toro), although several other films are incorporated. Similarly, other cineastes provide the context for the establishment of ‘core’ concepts (and key terms) in the third chapter; namely, José Juan Bigas Luna, Víctor Erice, Juan Antonio Bayona and Achero Mañas. Their works are scrutinised in relation to thematic and aesthetic deconstruction, pre-Transition film-making, child-centred genre films used to echo past traumas, and contemporary, sociopolitically-driven narratives, respectively, and, in some cases, collectively. It is confirmed that film is an increasingly popular and important aspect of Spanish-related undergraduate degrees, and it has been a prominent feature of the A level for some time. However, its use at GCSE is found to be highly inconsistent and, as is argued, insufficient, both in terms of making the GCSE more appealing, accessible and meaningful, and preparing students appropriately for the demands of A level and beyond. A series of theory- and practice-led arguments are put forward in favour of Spanish cinema’s ability to deeply enhance GCSE students’ understanding of Spanish language, history, society and culture. Concerns unique to the legacy and reformed Spanish A level are outlined, particularly in relation to the assessment scheme. The A level is exposed to be missing out on a number of opportunities to improve the quality of Spanish film-related studies, and recent changes are
confirmed as having improved in some areas, but still failing to address pre-existing, substantial challenges for students and teachers. Inspiration is taken from a variety of undergraduate modules at local universities, where several Spanish film modules and individual works are found to play a prominent role in creating scholars of Spanish, and providing students with key knowledge and skills to better their future lives and careers. The variety of modules, courses, topics and films involved at all levels of Spanish film pedagogy, specifically in relation to the data analysed in Chapter 4, leads to the establishment and scrutiny of four core themes – auteurism, realism, genre and stars – which are unpacked in Chapter 5 for their specific significance to, and problematic implications for, studies of Spanish at the various levels, and the theoretical understandings, and teaching and learning methodologies, they necessitate for optimum outcomes to be achieved. A final conclusion draws on all of the above to clarify exactly where and how Spanish film pedagogy needs to evolve in any legitimate, committed and apprised pursuit to better the Spanish education offered to students in England, and where this PhD projects makes a specific and unique contribution to the research field.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to my PhD supervisors, Prof. Chris Perriam and Dr. Alex Baratta; both of whom have been right behind me every step of the way. I feel incredibly lucky to have been supported by two such experienced and reputable figures in the fields of language, film and education. Thank you especially for your patience, your understanding, and of course, the countless meetings, conversations and all of the invaluable feedback you have provided over the past six years.

Thank you to all staff and students at the University of Manchester who I have had the pleasure of working with. I enjoyed every one of our seminars, post-seminar soirées, and even the ‘Shut-up and write’ sessions.

Thank you also to the staff at our neighbour university, Manchester Metropolitan, and especially Dr. Carmen Herrero, Dr. Isabelle Vanderschelden and Marta Suarez for all of the additional opportunities you have provided me with along the way.

I am grateful to all those who enabled me to develop my research experience and enhance my professional network by presenting at conferences and training events at Manchester Metropolitan University, Royal Holloway University and Durham University.

Financing my studies would have been significantly more challenging without the support of my employers. Thank to you to Oldham Hulme Grammar Schools, Monk’s Walk School and Stonyhurst College for your generous encouragement.

None of this would have been possible without the intellectual contribution of the students and staff I have had the pleasure of working with over the past six years and previously. Thank you particularly to all those students and colleagues who contributed directly to this research; much of this work belongs to you.

Above all, thank you to my family and friends who have been there through all the highs and lows. You have put up with my rambling, my moaning and my frequent exasperation, and in the end, you have always managed to put a smile on my face. I love you.

For Granny

For Dad

For Mum
The Author

Mark Goodwin is a secondary, full-time modern foreign languages teacher with a particular interest in foreign film pedagogy. Mark is currently employed as Head of Modern and Classical Languages at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire (2018-present). Previously, he has worked as Head of MFL at Monk’s Walk School, Hertfordshire (2016-2018), Head of Spanish at Oldham Hulme Grammar Schools, Lancashire (2009-2016) and he completed his NQT year at Chailey School, East Sussex; a specialist languages college (2008-2009). Mark has also taught at schools in France, Spain and China.

Mark’s original alma mater was the University of Liverpool, where he completed an undergraduate BA (Hons.) degree in European Film Studies and Modern Languages (2003-2007). After training as a MFL teacher on the PGCE programme at the University of Manchester (2007-2008), Mark embarked on a Master’s degree in Education at Edge Hill University (2008-2012). Mark then returned to the University of Manchester to complete a PhD in Spanish Studies (part-time) (2013-2019) while continuing to work as a teacher.

Mark is a committee member of the Independent Schools Modern Language Association (ISMLA), a member of the Film in Language Teaching Association (FILTA) and is actively involved in the work of the Film, Languages and Media Education (FLAME) research group. Mark has also contributed to the research groups: (North-West) Regional Research Network in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Cinema and Childhood and Nation in World Cinema.

Mark has presented academic papers at the FLAME International Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University (2015), the Childhood and Nation International Conference, Royal Holloway University (2016), the UK LINGUA Multilingual Language Learning and Teaching Colloquium, Durham University (2016) and the New Approaches to Transmedia and Languages Pedagogy International Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University (2019).

Mark’s paper, ‘An Analysis of the Success of the Cultural Topic at A level’, has been published in Herrero and Vanderschelden (eds.) (2019), Using Film and Media in the Language Classroom. He has a publication forthcoming - ‘Bridging the gaps left by boredom, bad policies and Brexit: Does foreign film pedagogy hold the answer?’ – in Herrero and Suarez (forthcoming) Teaching Languages with Screen Media.
Introduction

Spanish, as an academic subject in schools and universities in England (and globally), has enjoyed a relatively prosperous growth in recent decades. Whilst the proportion of GCSE modern foreign languages (MFL) students taking French and German has dropped dramatically, the Spanish GCSE cohort has (proportionally) increased by a notable, 75% since 2002 (Jeffreys 2019). Beyond GCSE, Spanish is the only one of the three major languages not in decline at A level, and the language has been highlighted by the British Council as the most valuable for UK students’ futures (British Council 2017). With more than four hundred million first language speakers worldwide, and as the official language of no fewer than twenty-one countries, its rising status and the favourable perception of its value is perhaps not entirely surprising. The language’s growing attractiveness among young people is sometimes attributed to its influence on popular culture, and some claim it is the number of celebrities with at least a smattering of Spanish that make it seem more accessible in the UK, where MFL is often perceived as an overly difficult school subject (Mansfield 2014). Spanish’s popularity is unlikely to be eclipsed; as a Romance language, it shares roots with English and is closely connected to several other languages, such as French (still the most widely taught language in UK schools, but probably not for too much longer). Despite such accolades, just 4% of adults in the UK say they speak Spanish well enough to hold a conversation (Mansfield 2014), and although the proportions are relatively positive for Spanish, there are 45% fewer GCSE MFL students overall in England (and Wales and N. Ireland) than in 2002 (Jeffreys 2019). Enquiry into potential sources to blame uncovers a plethora of large-scale concerns. The level of difficulty continues to be a significant barrier. Simultaneously, achievement in lessons is ranked lower in MFL when compared to other subjects. Harsh grading, particularly at A level, lingers on as a core obstruction. The advantages of the Ebacc remain highly questionable. Finally, the impact of Brexit is deemed to be significantly damaging for modern foreign language learning (British Council 2019: 18). But while there is a limited amount that educators and students can do about such failures in government policy and national management, it is imperative for curricula – that related to each and every institution – to provide the best and most effective methodologies in teaching and learning, and the incorporation of the most worthy resources.

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1 For earlier evidence, see Nunn (1944: 501). For USA, see Draper and Hicks (2002). For China, see Study International (2015): https://www.studyinternational.com
2 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47334374
4 https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/spanish-speak-language-400-million-people
5 See also Long and Daneci (2018: 3).
Moreover, it is essential to listen and respond to student voice,\textsuperscript{11} and for curricula to be designed in direct response to those at the very heart of it.

One of the most notable factors in the enhancement of the subject’s popularity can be attributed to the evolvement of the study of Spanish-speaking cinema. Davies (2010: 1) observes that the previous two decades have seen a rise to greater prominence of Spanish film studies. This is, arguably, in part at least, because of Spanish cinema becoming one of the most fertile cinemas in the world, and also the significant increase in the production of popular, Spanish genre films (see Beck and Rodríguez 2013: 27).\textsuperscript{12} At the same time, young people are engaging more and in greater numbers with technological popular media, and are developing the skills and confidence in navigating spaces, such as those afforded by film (or video, more generally, particularly via the internet). Chan and Herrero (2010: 11) advise that, ‘to prepare students for the challenges presented by our globalised, networked, culturally diverse world, educators should put into practice strategies and activities that underpin the new media literacies involved in accessing, analysing, interpreting, understanding and creating visual messages in a multimedia environment’. Ofsted (2011, cited in Long and Danechi 2018: 8) meanwhile highlights a lack of intercultural understanding in the majority of MFL lessons, because students do not have good opportunities to develop it. As a secondary teacher of MFL, a head of a languages faculty and a post-graduate researcher in Spanish and Education, the author of this thesis (referred to in the thesis as, ‘the author’) is entirely committed to the continuous betterment of MFL teaching and learning in England. Six years of engagement in professional dialogue and the rapidly increasing variety of research dedicated to foreign film pedagogy – including attendance at, and contribution to, various training events, conferences, forums and research groups – led to the compelling decision to embark on a PhD project (2013-2019) dedicated to understanding better and enhancing current practices in Spanish film pedagogy, for both the author and his own students – current and future - but also for all interested educators, and indeed, for their students.

The rationale for this PhD project is twofold. Firstly, it is based on a commitment to gather together the most enlightening, existing theories, methodologies and practices related to Spanish film pedagogy in English schools and universities. Secondly, it is stimulated by a dedication to contextualise, clarify and evaluate related practice, as a means to drive forward a consistent improvement in pedagogical provision. The research presented moves beyond pioneering literature about how and why to teach foreign cinema (Champoux 1999; Stephens 2001; Bazalgette 2009; Chan and Herrero 2010, to note but a few) - although much of this is cited and developed in the specific context of the project - and also the invaluable work of Davies (2010), Davies (2018), Herrero (2019) and others (as specified throughout the thesis), who collectively put forward a plethora of illuminating, nuanced and wholly practical models for ‘teaching’ Spanish through film, at various levels. The thesis differentiates itself by assimilating a wide variety of scholars’ claims directly alongside school, university and research-body investigative and exploratory findings related to

\textsuperscript{11} See Osler (2010: 27).

\textsuperscript{12} See also D’Lugo (2001: 3-11).
(Spanish) foreign film pedagogy. However, most importantly, it incorporates and underscores a much needed student and educator’s voice in direct relation to the curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies and their own direct responses to particular cinematic works. By doing so, the thesis delivers a number of re-organised, re-defined and re-appraised core theoretical and methodological models for educators and students henceforth; GCSE to undergraduate. It ties together the different key stages of education, from primary (briefly) to secondary, and from secondary to tertiary (undergraduate). This is done principally to clarify what each stage can learn from the other and where transition can be improved. Department for Education (DfE) guidance, Ofqual requirements and direct observations from exam boards are drawn upon in order to cover and compare all angles and perspectives. DfE frameworks and strategies, GCSE and A level specifications, and undergraduate module aims and objectives are used as a basis for measuring purpose, impact and success; all appraised against findings taken from questionnaire data – details, including research questions, outlined below – and indeed, the most relevant of literature from scholars of Spanish studies, film theory and educational theory, along with other scholars’ and critics’ views of specific movements within Spanish cinema and views on individual Spanish works. Finally, the research provides fresh and re-contextualised perspectives on individual Spanish films – involving film analysis - as, simultaneously, cultural products, as an industry, and, most importantly, as pedagogical tools.

The acronym, MFL, is used throughout to refer to modern foreign languages and/or where reference is made to the generic academic subject of, ‘languages’, in schools and universities. The thesis is dedicated to Spanish only, as is made clear, but several points bear relevance to MFL as a whole/more generally. The project focuses exclusively on Spain and not on any other Spanish speaking country. The teaching and learning of Latin American cinema in the Spanish class/seminar room (in England) has already been identified as a possible follow-up research project, as has a study into the teaching and learning of French cinema. ‘Spanish’ is used to refer to the language, the nationality, and sometimes, the academic subject. Attempts are made to ensure clarity, including where perceptions of what ‘Spanish’ is differ. Several citations have been translated by the author into English to ensure that the thesis flows as a whole and can be read comfortably by any speaker of English and without the additional wording required to include both languages. All translations are the author’s, unless otherwise stated. Film titles are kept in the original language (Spanish) out of respect for, and in direct significance to, the works’ country of origin, and also because the language included in the titles themselves sometimes assures its own place in the learning processes, as is made clear. The first mention of a film title includes the name of the director and the year of release. Thereafter, commonly only the film title is used and is usually abbreviated for ease of reading and to reduce the word count. All descriptions of non-public exam courses and modules are accurate at the time of original writing, but may have changed over the course of the six years taken to complete this PhD project; they are therefore not dated and as the majority of module details are no longer the same, it is not possible to provide exact references. All online references were last accessed on 31st July 2019, unless otherwise stated. Numbers are noted in words, apart from when referring to chapters or
sections, proportions and percentages, largely in Chapter 4, or when deemed neater and/or less wordy.

The forthcoming chapters are divided as follows. Chapter 1 – Research methodology - sets out the selected research design and the specific nature and purpose of each research method. Chapter 2 – Research context – firstly outlines where film sits currently in the MFL curriculum. At key stage 2 (KS2) and key stage 3 (KS3), this is (briefly) mapped through a look at the national curriculum for England. At GCSE (key stage 4) (KS4), this is charted through the DfE subject content and the specifications of the UK’s two most popular exam boards: AQA and Edexcel. Similarly, at A level, specifications and statutory requirements build up the picture of film-related expectations and opportunities, along with examiner commentaries (no longer available online), although these feature mostly in Chapter 4. Finally, related undergraduate courses are outlined via module descriptions and expected outcomes, as noted by online descriptors and/or lecturers’ qualitative comments (as is made clear). The second section of Chapter 2 provides a (literature) analysis of the most significant, existing research initiatives and outcomes relevant to the field, followed by literary review and film-analysis-based case-studies of works by core authors and in relation to core cinematic works. Chapter 3 – Key terms and core concepts – begins with an (literature-based) analytical overview of visual, film and multimodal literacies. This is followed by literature review- and film analysis-based case-studies of two works (and filmmakers) capable of facilitating a broad examination of dominant themes and aesthetics in Spanish cinema, and importantly, how best to approach their deconstruction. The chapter ends by focusing on the traditions of the child in Spanish cinema (literature and film analysis), and how this feature has particular resonance in the Spanish class/seminar room. Chapter 4 is dedicated to data analysis (phase 1) and is entitled as such. It incorporates the questionnaire responses of some two hundred and ninety-three participants: a mixture of GCSE students, A level students, undergraduate students, school teachers, university lecturers and trainee teachers, as is made clear in the Methodology, and aims to directly respond to each of the research questions presented below. Finally, Chapter 5 – Data analysis Phase 2: A research-led approach to (core) theme-based Spanish cinema studies - categorises, collates and contextualises the four most tenacious, fertile and constructive zones of Spanish film pedagogy (as identified by the data analysed in Chapter 4): auteurism, realism, genre and stars. Conclusions are drawn throughout and in direct response to the discussion of each section, although a final, comprehensive conclusion is offered, encompassing the overall and collective findings of the project, which offer a future pathway for educators of Spanish film.
Chapter 1: Methodology

Based on the information gained from several months of preliminary research and the details set out within the Introduction, the findings, analyses and discussions that make up this thesis are driven by the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What are the key issues, concepts, and themes that arise from an analysis of recent and current Spanish film studies provision, and how should they be approached, henceforth?

RQ 2: What does current, Spanish film pedagogy at GCSE look like, and how is its effectiveness perceived at present?

RQ 3: a) What sort of impact is Spanish film currently having at GCSE within the teaching and learning of Spanish language, history, society and culture, and b) how can it help tackle under-achievement?

RQ 4: To what extent do the outgoing and reformed assessment structures of A level Spanish (film elements) benefit students?

RQ 5: a) To what extent do studies in Spanish cinema at undergraduate level prepare students to become scholars of Spanish, and b) how do they prepare undergraduates for modern day life and employment?

The selected methodology for this PhD research project in order to answer the questions above as thoroughly and succinctly as possible is made up of a variety of carefully considered methods for different purposes. The PhD therefore employs a multimethod approach, as is made clear and explored below. It is the intention of this chapter to outline and consider each method’s place within the research design, along with the ethical considerations and procedures in place. The methodology chapter is ordered as follows: general outline; documentary analysis; case-study; action research; questionnaires and data handling; mixed methods; explanatory design; ethical considerations; reflection and reflexivity. The separate method of film analysis is so inherent to each and every step of the PhD project that it is instead explored theoretically and practically as a research method continuously throughout the thesis.

General outline

As a first step to ensuring clarity surrounding the justification of each method, it is firstly required to set out the general outline of each method and associated theoretical background, as employed through the course of the thesis, before dealing with each specific case in more detail. The three sections of Chapter 2 largely derive from a literature review, including documentary analysis, of the most relevant official documents and publications related to Spanish film curriculum provision (Section
2.1), existing research in the field of foreign film pedagogy (Section 2.2) and a case-study of the two most prominent of Spanish filmmakers (as identified in the previous two sections) in the specific field of Spanish film pedagogy (Section 2.3). Chapter 2 consolidates the significance of the project and contextualises it empirically and theoretically, addressing the principle research questions. The literature review and analysis is identified as ‘a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners’ (Fink 2005: 3). The analysis of the core theoretical literature involves reviewing the ‘thinking’ surrounding the essential topics, rather than just the ‘evidence’ (Punch 2009: 96), and, as alluded to above, this guides the analysis of findings and claims of previous cognate projects. Chapter 3 also employs a literature review approach, firstly, to set out the core, pedagogical values and procedures involved in the most valuable, most purposeful and essentially, most successful teaching and learning of Spanish film. The first section begins with visual literacy and moves on to film literacy, and finally, multimodal literacy; a sequence that has been carefully selected in order to mirror the recommended order of foreign film-based teaching and learning strategies, as is made clear. This particular structure for the section was consciously decided upon in favour of a chronological analysis of associated theory and practice, which although may be considered a more traditional approach for an analysis of this kind, would not be able to reflect the nature and significance of scaffolding foreign cinema studies (from the basic, to the complex) in the same way. The literature analysis of Section 3.2 and Section 3.3 takes the form of additional case-studies in order to capture the specific case of film deconstruction and analysis in the Spanish learning context, and then the pedagogical significance of children’s representative traditions and qualities in Spanish cinema (a commonality identified in many of the works studied, as is outlined) respectively. Chapter 4 tests the theories and hypotheses put forward in Section 2.2, Section 2.3 and in Chapter 3 by analysing and interpreting the (quantitative and qualitative) data gathered from a total of 293 completed questionnaires. This analysis is simultaneously categorised according to each of the five main research questions (above), and as such, each of the four sections of Chapter 4 provides direct answers to each respective research question via a combination of extended literature analysis and the scrutiny of each relevant batch of questionnaire responses, as is made clear at the start of each section, and displayed in Table 1 below. Chapter 5 captures the four core, cinematic strands identified as simultaneously those most relevant to film studies in the context of Spanish teaching and learning, and those uncovered as weak or problematic within current practices, as is made clear, and as is also displayed in the table below. The thesis closes with conclusive answers to the main research questions, and in doing so, aims to underline the project’s specific contribution to both the research field and to future school and university practice. In summary of the above, and for ease of reference, Table 1 below outlines the research method and details of sources involved within each of the sections following the Methodology chapter. The details of the labelled questionnaires can be found in Table 2 below.
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<td>• Literary publications related to foreign film pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3 Assessment structure at A level</td>
<td>• Quantitative and qualitative (questionnaire) data analysis</td>
<td>• Questionnaires E, F</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Documentary analysis</td>
<td>• DfE curriculum information</td>
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<td>• Questionnaires G, H</td>
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<td>5.1 Auteurism</td>
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<td>· University websites (schemes of work and module descriptors)</td>
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<td>· Literature review</td>
<td>· Academic publications in relation to foreign film pedagogy at undergraduate level</td>
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<td>· Literature review</td>
<td>· Literary publications related to auteur theory and individual filmmakers</td>
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<td>• Questionnaire J</td>
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<td>• University websites (schemes of work and module descriptors)</td>
<td>• University websites (schemes of work and module descriptors)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Literary publications related to realism theory and individual films</td>
<td>• Literary publications related to genre theory and individual films and directors</td>
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<td>• Author’s own analysis of the works</td>
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<td>5.4 Stars</td>
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<td>• Questionnaire K</td>
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<td>• Literary publications related to star theory and individual</td>
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<td>films, directors and actors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Author’s own analysis of the works</td>
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</table>

**Documentary analysis**

It is recognised that documentary analysis is a social research method and is both a valuable research tool in its own right, and a key component in the process of triangulation (the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Bowen 2009)). It is hoped that by corroborating findings across data sets – DfE curriculum guidance, exam board and exam regulator requirements and university schemes of work (found on university websites), alongside wider sources of literature and the (mixed-methods) quantitative and qualitative analyses of questionnaire data, it is possible to reduce the impact of potential bias by capturing, framing and examining information collected through different methods. Although it is not possible to discuss in detail all of the potential obstacles and particular elements relating to validity, credibility and bias pertinent to documentary analysis, due to word constraints (although some of this is returned to below), it is important to highlight some of the crucial considerations that the author has firmly taken on board. The first of these concerns the subjectivity of the author (returned to later), who as well as being a researcher, is also a Spanish teacher. In such case, the documents analysed are somewhat unavoidably seen through the eyes of the teacher (as the existing target audience of the documents), however, serious attempts are made to evaluate the original purposes of the various documents, and to (re)-assess them objectively, where possible. Secondly, attempts are made to look for possible, multiple interpretations of the
information presented by the various documents. Frequently, this includes a reflection on the specific style, tone and agenda emitted by the relevant documents (as advised by O’Leary 2014).

Case-study
The current research uses contextualised, small-scale, case-study-based empirical research in order to gain knowledge by means of both direct and indirect observation and experience. In the first instance, or in the pre-empirical stage, this involves the scrutiny of related educational policies and exam administration, and the methodology therefore relies on documentary analysis (see above), and the specific branch of public records (Section 2.1, and referred to throughout the thesis). The analysis then centres on literary, theoretical and substantive theory research in the fields of film and multimodal literacy, film theory, educational theory, and existing studies and research projects surrounding the use of film in MFL teaching (from Section 2.2 onwards). This includes the incorporation of a series of case-studies, as identified in each section, but the method of action research has also been identified as relevant to the project, as is made clear below.

A case-study approach has been selected firstly due to its appropriateness for a relatively ‘small-scale, short-term, classroom-based research’ investigation (Wilson and Strutchburg 2009: 62). Looking closely at the various types of case-study and what exactly the chosen case-studies should involve for this particular project, it is learned from Yin (1993, cited in Demetriou 2009: 206) that case-studies can be ‘exploratory, explanatory or descriptive’. It is understood that exploratory case-studies concern fieldwork and data collection which may be taken before defining the research question, and that a descriptive case-study involves a descriptive theory as a starting point, where the descriptive theory must cover the depth and scope of the case under study (Demetriou: 2009: 206). An explanatory case-study has been identified as the most suitable for this project, largely due to its appropriateness to casual studies where the analysis involves pattern-matching techniques (Demetriou: 2009: 206). Specifically, a series of snapshot case-studies (as recommended by Yin 1994, cited in Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal 2008: 28) have been identified as the most suitable model, as it is a priority to research the current situation for the research participants currently involved and, in such case, much of the data is attained directly from one time point (related to the time each questionnaire was completed over the two and a half-year period of the questionnaire data collection (see below)). A pre-post case-study would require two time points whereas a longitudinal case-study would require several. As referred to above, the case-studies involve an element of action research as a means to analyse the success of individual films (and filmmakers) in achieving specific learning objectives. The application of an action research method is not however entirely straightforward in this case, as is explained below.

Action research
It is understood that action research requires initiating change (Wilson and Strutchburg 2009: 62), which is a key objective of this research project. But it is also accepted that action research involves researching the effects of such changes (Ibid), which does not directly occur in this research design.
Although action research does not constitute the principal research method involved in this project, it is important to recognise its strengths for similar investigations and their outcomes, not least because it aims to ‘bridge the gap between research and practice’ (Somekh 1995: 340). There are however restrictions associated with action research in this particular case, as the methodology does not aim to monitor change from one academic year to the next. Instead, it attempts to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning-related policies and practices according to prior decisions involving curriculum design, access to research-led pedagogical models and the implementation of specific Spanish films and filmmakers, as is made clear. Put another way, the project does make specific proposals for change (throughout the thesis, and explicitly in section conclusions and in the final Conclusion), and its findings offer potential for future site- and practice-specific action research in schools and universities. To recapitulate, the structure of the thesis builds from an evaluation of the curriculum (Section 2.1), through to an analysis of prior research and (film) content-related literature in the field (Section 2.2 onwards) – some of which has indeed involved action research – and finally, a mixed-methods (see below) model of investigation and analysis to incorporate a direct response from students and teachers via a series of questionnaires (Section 3.3 onwards). It is hoped that the outcomes of this research, and specifically, the answers to the main research questions (above) will lead directly to an action research-led approach to ongoing investigation and practice (researchers, teachers, lecturers, curriculum designers and even the DIE in the field of (Spanish) foreign film studies.

**Questionnaires**

The questionnaire data collection took place between 30 June 2014 (upon ethical approval) and 15 December 2016. A total of seven institutions - six schools and one university – make up the 293 completed questionnaires. Some students (school or university) have completed more than one of the different questionnaires. It was initially intended to gather between 300 and 500 questionnaire responses, and so with 293, just under the bottom end of the target number, it was felt to have been an adequate number on which to make certain observations, critiques and suggestions. It is not intended for the relatively small number of responses (especially when considered in relation to each separate questionnaire) to make broad assumptions about national, or even regional, trends. It is however the intention to contextualise the questionnaire data alongside the relevant literature, and for the various sources to collectively (via a multimethod approach) inform and develop the arguments put forward. The schools include four maintained secondary schools - two mixed (ALM and HF) and two single-sex (BIS-B (boys) and BIS-G (girls) - one maintained sixth form college (OSFC) and one independent secondary school (HM). Approximately fifty schools (including a variety of maintained, independent, faith, mixed and single-sex schools) and four universities were contacted by email, but only six schools and one university returned completed questionnaires. Comments were however received by email from Spanish film lecturers in a total of five universities. One of the participating schools (HM) was the author’s employer at the time of the data collection, and several of the student participants were the author’s own students (ethics implications considered below). The undergraduate responses come from groups of students on two separate Spanish film modules (as is
made clear) at a north-west university. The trainee teachers’ responses were gathered from two, consecutive PGCE cohorts at the same university. Two of the maintained secondary schools, the sixth form college and the university are located in the north-west of England. Two of the maintained secondary schools (BIS-B and BIS-G) are located in Hertfordshire. It is not a principal intention of the thesis to contrast responses between one type of institution and another, and on this basis, the type of institution (maintained, sixth form, independent, and so on), or its location, are not highlighted in the data analysis. There are however a number of points where the particular circumstances of an institution’s curriculum (related to Spanish cinema) constitutes part of an argument, such as in Section 4.1, where it is argued that where students are not exposed to Spanish films in the classroom, they are less likely to value cinema’s place in the MFL curriculum.

A total of twelve questionnaires were designed, completed and analysed – see Appendices V-XVI, and for clarity, the number of responses relative to each questionnaire and each target group are noted in Table 2 below. The variety of questionnaires aimed to gather a sufficient amount of data from the different target groups: GCSE students, GCSE teachers, A level students, A level teachers, undergraduate students, undergraduate lecturers and trainee teachers. The (A-L) lettered ordering of the questionnaires (see below) represent their evolving nature during the first half of the PhD (2013-2016), where the core research progressed from literature analyses (Chapter 2, Section 3.1, Section 3.2), to mixed-methods (see below) questionnaire data handling, to a combination of both (Section 3.3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Questionnaire A is regarded as an experimental, first-phase of data collection in direct response to the findings of the literature concerning children in Spanish cinema (Section 3.3). Questionnaires B-H are considered the ‘general’ questionnaires, which aimed to collect a snapshot picture of Spanish film provision at school and university level. Finally, Questionnaires I-L represent the case-study approach to either specific areas within film studies deemed to be the most significant and/or weak and/or problematic in the context of the teaching and learning of Spanish (realism, genre, stars), or the particularities of individual works (such as El laberinto del fauno).

Questionnaires have been selected in preference to interviews or other methods for the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data in large part due to the logistics of gathering information from a variety of institutions, and particular, those involving children. In order to maintain professionalism and fairness towards participants, the questionnaires are as neat and user-friendly as possible.

Completion instructions are included, and the questionnaires are designed with suitable spacing, especially for open questions. An information sheet (Appendix III) is provided so that participants understand the aims of the research and associated ethical issues, and a consent form (Appendix IV) is attached (for ethical purposes). It is judged that none of the questions are likely to make participants feel awkward, and it is stressed that all responses remain anonymous. To ensure that the analysis maintains the anonymity of participants, codes are used to refer to each participant, such as ‘QA-HM-GCSE-1’. As noted above, a total of seven institutions completed and returned questionnaires. The details of which questionnaires each institution and group of participants (using participant codes) completed is noted in the table below. As noted above, a total of 293 completed
questionnaires were received. 236 of these are from students, 8 are from teachers and lecturers and 49 are from trainee teachers.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONNAIRE</th>
<th>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>HM (GCSE) 20</td>
<td>QA-HM-GCSE-1 – QA-GCSE-20</td>
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<td>HM (A LEVEL) 8</td>
<td>QA-HM-AL-1 – QA-HM-AL-8</td>
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<td>QUESTIONNAIRE B: GCSE STUDENTS GENERAL</td>
<td>ALM 16</td>
<td>QB-ALM-1 – QB-ALM-16</td>
<td>93 STUDENTS</td>
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<td>BIS-B 32</td>
<td>QB-BIS-B-1 – QB-BIS-B-32</td>
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<td>BIS-G 10</td>
<td>QB-BIS-G-1 – QB-BIS-G-10</td>
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<td>HF 19</td>
<td>QB-HF-1 – QB-HF-19</td>
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<td>HM 16</td>
<td>QB-HM-1 – QB-HM-16</td>
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<td>QD-1 – QD-49</td>
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<td>OSFC 10</td>
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<td>18 STUDENTS</td>
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The use of questionnaires within educational (school) practice and policy research is recommended for its efficient use of time, anonymity, possibility of a high return rate and standardised questions
(Munn and Drever 1990: 10). Answers to both open and closed questions have been inserted into a spreadsheet (stored securely and encrypted) for analysis. A small selection of charts (see Chart 1 and
Chart 2 in Chapter 4) have not incorporated as they make it easy to see spatial and numerical relationships (Opie 2004a: 143), although it is understood that the relatively small quantities of responses (especially in relation to each individual questionnaire) is generally not qualified to suggest very broad trends. Although some use is made of quantitative data analysis to contextualise the data and literature analysis (as noted above), there is a greater reliance on the qualitative responses to steer and develop the arguments put forward.

**Mixed methods**

As already outlined, the PhD adopts a mixed methods approach - the use of quantitative and qualitative data – although the quantitative data is used largely as a means to contextualise the associated qualitative comments rather than to make any bold assumptions about regional and/or national student/teacher proportional trends. The mixed methods approach still aims to learn more about the research topic where the strengths of qualitative research are combined with the strengths of quantitative research, while compensating at the same time for the weaknesses of each method (Punch 2009: 290). This is ‘the fundamental principle of mixed methods research’; that is, ‘combin[ing] the methods in a way that achieves complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses’ (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004: 18). Pragmatism is a principle associated with mixed methods research, whereby there is a rejection of ‘either-or choices’ and the ‘metaphysical concepts associated with the paradigm wars’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003: 20-21). A mixed methods approach focuses instead on ‘what works’ in allowing for research questions to be answered, and is fitting within this project, as it aims to provide answers to the research questions as substantially, although as simply, as possible.

It is understood that mixed methods have not always been a popular approach in educational research. In fact, it is only since the 1990s that researchers have begun to see past the ‘either-or thinking of the “paradigm wars”’ (Punch 2009: 289) and started to develop the groundwork for comprehensive mixed-methods designs. The popularity of mixed-methods in the twenty-first century is however supported within the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* and the promotion of a number of prominent international meetings devoted to research methods (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007: 16-18). In the current research, a range of closed questions and numerical data are used to suggest possible (small-scale) similarities or trends in specific relation to the participating institutions and individuals (not as regionally or nationally representative), from which responses to research questions can initially derive. The open questions aim to gather the honest and subjective commentaries of the students and educators, providing qualitative data that allows for the analysis of specific observations and comments in the context of participants’ experiences and perspectives.
Research design: explanatory and triangulation

The current research has turned to the relatively simple, four-option classification of Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 58-88): explanatory, exploratory, embedded and triangulation. Both an explanatory design and triangulation have been chosen as the most appropriate, due to the sequencing and multimethod approach to data collection and analysis. To recapitulate again, this has firstly involved an extensive literature review, which includes documentary analysis. Secondly, it has involved the gathering of quantitative data to establish sample (small-scale) numbers related to current (at the time) provision, including, for example, numbers of schools currently making use of Spanish film at GCSE level, the quantities of selected directors at A level, and the amount of undergraduate Spanish students who feel that studying Spanish cinema has improved their understanding of Spanish language, history, society or culture. A second, and more comprehensive, phase of qualitative investigation is based on the details, examples and explanations given in response to the qualitative-based questions, as is made clear.

Despite this fairly complex methodology and research design, it is felt that interpretive accessibility is achieved, as well as the opportunity for extensive pattern matching that comes with the analysis of quantitative data. This facilitates a more ‘specific focus’; that is, a focus on factors which can be studied in relation to specific other factors (Denscombe 2007: 249). A consistent consciousness to ensure ‘researcher detachment’ (despite the author’s prior interest and experience) has been applied where at all possible, as has an ‘objective’ approach through the quantitative analysis of numerical data (Denscombe 2007: 250). As Punch (2009 294) concludes, ‘qualitative methods are the best way we have of getting the insider’s perspective, the “actor’s definition of the situation”, the meanings people attach to things and events’. The use of triangulation is therefore very much incorporated in parallel to the explanatory design as a means to crosscheck observations and perspectives between the government, exam boards and regulators, students and teachers. It is thought that the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a suitable variety or combination of research methods (Given 2008: 892), which in this particular case incorporates such a varied selection of both literary-based sources (including documentary analysis and the discussion of previous research projects) and questionnaire-based data; all of which, requires particular ethical consideration, as it set out below.

Ethical considerations

It is well established that there are ethical issues surrounding not just educational research, but all forms of social research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). It can be confirmed that the current research follows what is outlined in the ethical procedures stipulated by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – particularly regarding informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and a mindfulness of the interest of the research participants13 - and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) – particularly regarding the responsibilities to the community of educational

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13 See https://esrc.ukri.org/public-engagement/social-science-for-schools/resources/doing-research-ethically/
researchers, and in this specific case, to those theorists, educationalists and authors whose work constitutes such a large part of the analysis.

Research participants have been made explicitly aware of the reasons why the research is taking place and what will happen to the information they provide. The research does not explore topics that are likely to cause distress. However, it may be the case that some topics relevant to the films studied provoke strong feelings in respondents in relation to religious beliefs and practices, the representation of specific communities, questions of cultural difference, and so on. The research does not carry risk of criminal or other disclosures requiring action, for example, involving the safeguarding of children or vulnerable/dependent adults.

All questionnaire respondents were at least sixteen years old at the time of participation. All participating students were accompanied by a teacher during the completion of questionnaires. It was expected that each questionnaire took no longer than fifteen minutes to complete. It can be confirmed that all personal data generated as part of the research has been securely stored for the duration of the study. All computers used for storing data have been encrypted, following the University of Manchester IT security and data protection guidelines. As referred to above, anonymity has been preserved with respect to stored data by the use of code names for research participants, which has only been known and available to the custodians of the data (author and supervisors).

The research involves the administration of questionnaires with adults and children in an accredited institutional setting and in the presence of professionals with a duty of care. Each participant has given informed consent to take part in the research by completing questionnaires in the respective institution and returning them by (university-stamped) pre-paid post. Questionnaires have only been completed after a consent form has been read and signed by each participant, as administered by teachers/lecturers. The questionnaires have a simple design and include a number of likert scales to encourage completion and for ease of analysis, in addition to more open ended responses for qualitative analysis.

A participant information sheet, following the University of Manchester proforma for participant information sheets, has been developed for the research project and is found in Appendix III. This has been written succinctly and in layperson’s terms, and given to all research participants. It includes: the name and contact details of the author (university email, address and phone numbers only); an explanation of the research aims and what the research will achieve; the reasons why the research participant has been approached; the activities that the research participant will engage in, where these will take place and how long it will take, including brief details of the kinds of questions that might be asked (especially those questions that may provoke strong responses); a description of what happens to the data collected; the likely outputs of the research; a statement clarifying the limits of anonymity and confidentiality offered; a statement emphasising that the participant is free to withdraw
at any time without giving a reason; the name and contact details of the supervisors and the University of Manchester Research Governance office.

Reflection and reflexivity

Rather than being a technique, a method, or a curriculum element, it is understood that reflection is a state of mind, and an ongoing constituent of practice. Its more specific use within the current research can be defined by its ability to ‘facilitate identification, examination, and modification of the theories-in-use that shape behaviour’ (Bolton 2010: 3); behaviour which, in this particular case, concerns learning skills and the subsequent uses and impact of newly acquired skills and knowledge. The author’s primary motivation is to assess the success of current practices in using Spanish film to enhance the learning of Spanish in schools and universities, and to establish further potential, research and theory-led evidence and frameworks on which teachers, lecturers and students can rely. Much has been written in recent years about how and why films should be used to enhance Spanish teaching (see Section 2.2), although, to the author’s knowledge, relatively little has been written about the detailed, specific and tangible success of the practice. In light of this, the author has been greatly influenced by the work of Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007: 302), who advocate praxis, that is, action informed through reflection. The author also attempts to employ specific, reflective questioning within the processes of data gathering and analysis; relevant to both the author himself and the research participants: ‘What do you know and do not know you know?’; ‘What do you think about your role and boundaries?’; ‘How do you value and take into account personal feelings?’ (see Bolton 2010: 4).

As referred to above, the motivation for the project comes initially from the author’s own practice as a Spanish teacher, Spanish cinema enthusiast and former European film (undergraduate) student. It is, however, in such case, imperative to set out that the researcher’s prior knowledge and interest might be considered a precarious basis for this project,\(^\text{14}\) despite the understanding that in the initial planning process, ‘experiential knowledge’ is of obvious usefulness (Maxwell 1996: 27-9). In order to find strategies to question one’s own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions, and, understand how individuals relate, and between each other, shape organisational realities, shared practices and ways of talking, it is necessary to ensure a high degree of reflexivity, where possible. It is understood that reflexivity is, essentially, a stance of being able to locate oneself in the picture, and to appreciate how one’s own self influences [actions] (Bolton 2010: 13-14). In the case where the view of social reality focuses on the subjective experience of people, as is at the heart of this investigation (student voice), it is crucial to observe that reactions to the call to reflexivity, or, put another way, the ways in which researchers have engaged in reflexivity, are variable. For some they are unduly philosophical. At best they are perceived as having marginal significance, and at worst, they may be considered destructive. For others, such an approach aims to contextualise the ‘truth’ as subjected to continued deconstruction in order to expose the myth of a ‘modernist dream’ (May and Perry 2012: 15). It is true that the current research design relies on a background of pre-reflexive assumptions – students and teachers are happy to participate in research.

\(^{14}\) See further details in Ethics document (Appendix I).
projects such as this; film is a useful tool in MFL teaching (as evidenced by a vast range of literature and previous research projects); it is possible to find links and determine common perceptions based on an analysis of literature and questionnaire data - which may seem like a paradox, but it prevents a discursive paralysis; a set of assumptions is necessary in order to practise in the first instance. However, the benefit of hindsight through an open-endedness subjects ideas and practices to revision, rejection and qualification is pointed out. Although it is argued that degrees of the ‘fixity’ of assumptions are required, robust reflexivity aims to support the validity involved in the dynamics of change (Sandywell 1996: 16).

Reflexivity may be considered particularly important within an interpretive paradigm where qualitative methodologies are incorporated, such as in this case. It is understood that being an educational researcher demands a very different set of relationships, at the core of which is a set of value-laden concerns about individual, community and societal well-being (Edwards 2002: 158). The author has attempted to follow the model of educational researchers working within the positivist paradigm, which regards the social world as a hard reality, external to human beings. And in such case, objectivity – a pursuit to achieve the de-personalisation of human participants and gain distance between the researcher from the researched (Basit 2013: 506-507) – has remained an imperative. Moreover, while there has not been the requirement to develop radically different ethical criteria when engaging with younger subjects – particularly when aged 16 and over, as in this case - it has been essential to consider issues of power and ethics (see Osler 2010). The author has remained mindful of the fact that some perspectives and explanations may get overlooked because participants prefer not to explore certain perspectives (see Shah 2004); a particularly important consideration within this research project as a significant amount of the participants are the author’s own students. In summary, the reflexivity involved in this PhD project has entailed reflection, introspection and critical self-analysis during the research, whereby the educational researcher attempts to take on the significant, ethical responsibility of their own biases and potential impact of their own background and beliefs (Basit 2010: 220; Hopkins 2008: 203) on the validity of research findings. A recognition of the role of subjectivity and using the researcher’s positionality as a tool not only sets out to enhance the integrity of the study, but also improve the research process and the analysis and interpretation of the data (Mosselson 2010), as is demonstrated, where possible, from Section 3.3 onwards.
Chapter 2: Research context

The opening section of the chapter presents the scope for learning Spanish through film based on a documentary analysis of the English school curriculum (KS2 to key stage 5 (KS5)). The second section captures the nature of foreign film pedagogy in England (and the UK) today, according to the research findings and subsequent claims of leading theorists, scholars and practitioners in the field, principally from the last two decades.\textsuperscript{15} A significant proportion of the analysis incorporates six academic articles focused on Spanish film pedagogy published by the Instituto Cervantes between 1998 and 2010.\textsuperscript{16} Simultaneously, the findings of Champoux (1999), Stephens (2001) and Bazalgette (2009) are scrutinised for their particular significance to the research. Each scholar makes a variety of claims about how and why to teach and learn through foreign cinema, but several also identify potential obstacles, which require careful consideration by teachers and lecturers regarding the setting and assessing of learning objectives and outcomes. As a means to identify the most pertinent themes, concepts and approaches, the section also incorporates an analysis of study guides published by the Manchester arts cinema, HOME.\textsuperscript{17} The guides analysed are labelled according to each film’s curriculum links and related topics, and include several of the films identified in the previous curriculum section. The second section of the chapter also integrates sources gathered at a training course in Madrid, entitled, ‘Uso didáctico del cine en el aula’; referenced according to the relevant course leader (Herrero, Fuentes, Doblas (2015)).\textsuperscript{18} The chapter concludes with a literature review of three core texts related to the most prominent of the films and directors identified in the curriculum section below:\textsuperscript{19} Smith (2000); Allinson (2001); and Delgado and Fiddian (2013).

\textsuperscript{15} The time-frame selected due to: the increasing prominence of foreign cinema on Spanish A level and undergraduate schemes of work; the development of a wide variety of practice-led research and local/national strategies in the same period; and a broad range of locally-organised theory- and practice-led training sessions for Spanish teachers and subsequent publications, as is made clear.

\textsuperscript{16} Castiñeiras and Herrero (1998); Orti, Ángeles and Bendriss (2011); Herrero and Valbuena (2009); Álvarez (2009); Herrero and Valbuena (2010); Corpas (2000).

\textsuperscript{17} All available at: https://homemcr.org.

\textsuperscript{18} Where it is not possible to clarify the individual speaker, all three names and the date make up the reference.

\textsuperscript{19} These texts and works also link the research findings to the critical, mainstream ideas.
2.1: Film in the MFL curriculum: a documentary analysis

Schools
This section firstly sets out the initial scope for learning Spanish through film, both in recent years and today, according to the MFL curriculum in England, as referenced via DfE documentation and the GCSE and A level specifications of England’s two most popular exam boards, AQA and Edexcel. For the first time (as set out in 2005), ‘every child between the ages of seven and eleven [would] have the entitlement to learn a new language’; ‘a fundamental shift in [the] approach to language learning in this country, [meant to] transform the shape of language learning in [English] schools’ (Adonis 2005: 3). Teachers are given a free choice of ‘any modern or ancient foreign language’ (DfE 2013: 2).

Since September 2007, all primary schools in England have been following a revised framework for teaching literacy, which includes the requirement to develop students’ ability to read ‘in print and on screen’ (BFI 2013: 18). Additionally, the current primary national curriculum (DfE 2013b: 193) states that students should ‘understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources’. Now in 2019, it is, unfortunately, well documented that the anticipated, positive results of skilled and successful linguists (beyond KS2) have not entirely materialised, and instead, England (and the UK as a whole) is suffering from a dramatic decline of GCSE languages students; a 45% decrease between 2002 and 2018 (JCQ 2019, cited in Jeffrey 2019).

The 2008 KS3 framework (DfE 2007: 165) specifies the necessity of ‘appreciating the richness and diversity of other cultures [and] recognising that there are different ways of seeing the world’. The 2014 KS3 national curriculum (DfE 2014b: 98) adds that students should ‘understand and respond to […] a variety of authentic sources’. Despite these references, it fails to include any direct mention of film. There is, however, some direct referencing within core KS3 resources. Describing different film genres and giving opinions on them is a common topic at Year 8/Year 9 level, and appears in many popular KS3 Spanish textbooks, such as Mira 2 (Heinemann publications). Such topic areas and activities provide a worthy opportunity to make use of clips to initially expose (KS3) students to directors, actors, regions of Spain, Spanish history and so on, as detailed shortly.

In the legacy AQA GCSE (last examined in 2018), the most fitting place for Spanish film is within the ‘leisure’ context, and experience suggests that many teachers use film as the basis for the ‘controlled assessments’. The reformed AQA specification (2016b: 10) makes an explicit mention of ‘cinema’

25 https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/spanish/specifications/AQA-8698-SP-2016.PDF
within ‘Freetime Activities’. Edexcel (2012: 9) makes an explicit mention of ‘film’ within ‘Media and culture’. Similarly the reformed Edexcel (2016: 8) explicitly mentions ‘Film’ (and television); this time within ‘Identity and Culture’. The same specification (6) notes that students should ‘respond to a rich range of authentic […] material’ and ‘develop awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where the language is spoken’.

The legacy AQA A level (2009) aims to: ‘provide an insight into another culture and society’ and ‘develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage’. ‘Cinema’ is one of the sub-topics of ‘Popular Culture’. In addition to cinema-related vocabulary and expression appearing in the listening and reading assessments (collectively worth 75/160 marks), ‘cinema’ is potentially a major topic in the conversation section of the speaking exam (worth 40 marks in total) and may be the theme of a speaking card (10 marks). It can also provide the basis of the written essay (35 marks). AQA A2 (legacy) students have to study the cultural topic, where teachers guide students in two of the topic areas. One of the most popular topic areas (according to exam reports) involves ‘the study of a director’. This ought to include: ‘a detailed study of at least one work of the artist’; ‘the influences on the artist’; ‘the ideas/techniques of the artist; and ‘the importance of the artist both in his/her own lifetime and later’. Similarly, at A2 with (legacy) Edexcel, students can study a Spanish film within ‘Unit 4: Research, Understanding and Written Response in Spanish’, worth 45 marks; namely, ‘a research-based essay in Spanish’, where ‘literature and the arts ([e.g. …] film)’ are specifically mentioned.

The reformed AQA A level specification (2017a: 10) states that there is a ‘focus on how the Spanish-speaking society has been shaped socially and culturally’, and that studies should include ‘aspects of the artistic life’. This should be achieved by ‘using authentic spoken […] resources’. It is suggested to link certain topic areas with films from the prescribed list, although direct links are not included. There is the option to study two literary works or one literary work and one film. Examiners’ reports from the first exam series (2018) suggest that one of each is by far the most popular model, which confirms the demand for film pedagogy at this level, at the very least as a means to complement and vary from the study of literature. If the study of a film is chosen, students complete an essay within Paper 2, worth 20% of the A level (10% per essay). Students additionally have the possibility of exploring Spanish film within ‘artistic culture’. The most specific reference to film in the topic-based work is ‘film stars’, however, there are additional listed topics where film provides an ideal basis for contextual study related to ‘traditions and customs’, ‘cultural heritage’, and so on. The reformed Edexcel specification is largely similar. Paper 2 requires students to write an essay on a film and a book (or two books). Students should ‘engage critically with intellectually stimulating […]

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27 https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/spanish/specifications/AQA-7692-SP-2016.PDF
films’. Students are also encouraged to ‘develop knowledge about matters central to the society and culture, past and present’ (Edexcel 2016a: 7).

In summary, the promises of updates to the KS2 model to produce enthusiastic and skilled linguists at higher levels have not yet been fulfilled, and this is at least partly due to a failure to truly expose students to the broadest range of materials, including those ‘on screen’, and indeed, adequately lay the foundations for critically engaging with such materials. KS3 teachers and students, then, have to rely on their own ideas and those within published resources for engaging with film within Spanish lessons. This is unlikely to encourage educators who are sceptical about film study to explore its pedagogical possibilities, as professional experience suggests that priorities in schools are naturally given to subjects, skills and topics that are explicitly highlighted within official schemes of work. At GCSE, there is a tradition of topics offering good scope for the inclusion of film, and previously, teachers took the opportunity afforded by the controlled assessments. There is yet to be, however, a component of the GCSE that is explicitly dedicated to the study of film, or to any cultural text. This prevents students from having the opportunity to build the necessary skills related to film analysis, which often forms a significant part of the A level, and indeed, MFL degrees. At A level, the two exam boards discussed appear to be largely on the same page, seemingly directed by the DfE and Ofqual. Film study remains optional, but has proven to be popular, and is able to deeply enhance several aspects of learning about ‘Spanish’. That said, a number of inadequacies and obstacles related to film provision and assessment at A level are revealed in Chapter 4. This overview confirms that the opportunity for film-based work is very much there at all levels of MFL education, although it is much more directly referenced at KS5. This in itself raises a number of questions about an imbalanced curriculum, perspectives on the importance and place of film as a learning tool, and indeed, how well students and teachers are prepared for the demands of foreign film analysis at higher levels.
Universities (undergraduate): a documentary analysis

This section provides an initial analysis of methods for organising and executing the teaching and learning of Spanish cinema at undergraduate level. Unsurprisingly, module contents and learning outcomes vary significantly from university to university. However, by using the University of Manchester as a primary case-study, and by establishing prominent connections to modules at other institutions - the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool and the University of Newcastle - recurrent themes, socio-historical and cultural contexts, and choices of individual filmmakers are outlined in relation to particular works. By doing so, trends in Spanish film pedagogy at degree level and aspects of the module-designing process are outlined and evaluated.

‘Spanish National Cinema: Identities in Transition’ (Manchester) is a final year module covering the pre-1990 period in Spain. It incorporates the works: Bienvenido Mr Marshall (Berlanga 1952); Viridiana (Buñuel 1962); El espíritu de la colmena (Erice 1972); Cría cuervos (Saura 1976); Los santos inocentes (Camus 1984); and Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (Almodóvar 1984). The learning outcomes state that students will demonstrate ‘expertise in cinematic analysis and awareness of the specific context in which these films were made’; ‘awareness of major developments in cinema in Spain’; and they will gain ‘a good grounding for further study in Spanish cinema’. The course additionally: ‘introduce[s] students […] to an aspect of the cinematic dimension of Spanish culture under Franco’s dictatorship and in the early democracy’; ‘give[s] students an insight into films produced by different generations of filmmakers’; [places the] films in their historical and economic contexts, [including] under Francoism - the “Spanishness” of its industry, professionals and products’; and ‘create[s] an awareness of […] the changing role of cinema as an instrument and indication of national identities’. Recognising Spain in a historical context is at the heart of this module, but more specifically, it centres around evolving perceptions of Spain as a nation ‘currently’ (Bienvenido to El espíritu) and formally (Cría to Mujeres) under Francoist dictatorship. As explored in depth in the chapters that follow, the dictatorship and Spanish Civil War are central themes to a significant proportion of Spanish cinema pedagogy in English universities and schools today. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering the immeasurable impact of both the War and subsequent, thirty-six year tight grip of fascism for Spain. However, as is discussed in the forthcoming chapters, conflicting perspectives, tendencies and debates surrounding such impact has itself become a core feature of Spanish film analysis and criticism, both during and after the dictatorship period.

Additionally, a number of arguments are presented regarding the need for teachers and exam regulators to broaden the themes explored within Spanish film study at school level.

As a means to pick out further layers of purpose behind some of the works cited so far, it is enlightening to compare the details of their reappearance at other institutions. Firstly, Bienvenido is used to teach ‘cultural production’ (Leeds). The work appears again on the module, ‘Spanish and Latin American Cinema: Space, Movement and Identity’, and specifically, the sub-module, ‘Mythical geographies in Francoist Spain’ (Liverpool). Although the exact intentions for learning surrounding
'cultural production' are not able to be confirmed, it may be suggested that Bienvenido affords lecturers useful tools to explore both the challenges unique to film-making processes at the time in Spain (1952) - and indeed, the concept of creating any artistic product - and more specifically, such works' role in the creation of national (Spanish) cultural identity. Secondly, El espíritu reappears within the sub-module, 'Spaces of resistance' (Liverpool). The use of the word, 'space' implies that the surrounding environment and the framing of location are considered as central to this work's significance to Spanish cinema, and it is logical to consider the reference to 'resistance' as indicative of the period in the final years of the dictatorship.

In 'Barcelona: City Image' (Manchester), students are expected to gain: 'the ability to understand, analyse and comment upon different images, their production and reception, within a specific set of social contexts'; 'the ability to analyse aspects of Catalan culture since 1975'; and acquire 'cultural competency'. As the basis to achieve such goals, the following films are used: Ocaña, retrat intermitent (Pons 1976); Todo sobre mi madre (Almodóvar 1999); Barcelona, un mapa (Pons 2007); Vicky Cristina Barcelona (Allen 2009); and Biutiful (Iñárritu 2010). In further exploring perspectives of post-Franco Spanish identity, this module highlights the significance of Spain's division into seventeen autonomous regions and associated variety of languages, diverse social make-up and different cultural identities. Films officially labelled as 'Spanish', but which have a dialogue predominantly in Catalan, Basque or Galician, are largely absent from provision in schools due to the obvious, dominant objective of the course to enable students to communicate in (Castilian) Spanish. However, the broader variety of official languages of Spain (Catalan, Basque and Galician), and associated sociocultural modules offered at undergraduate level, provide a good reminder of both, the immense complexity inherent to the teaching and learning of foreign nations, and indeed, the numerous restrictions suffered in secondary schools, where, as suggested in the previous section, there is a significant risk of avoiding any meaningful exploration of what it may actually mean to be 'Spanish'.

Similarly, the module, 'Madrid on Screen' (Manchester) aims to provide students with: 'the ability to understand, analyse and comment upon different images [...] within a specific set of social contexts'; 'the ability to gain a knowledge of and to analyse aspects of cultural history relating to modern Madrid'; and again, equip students with 'cultural competency'. Students are exposed to the role of the Cineclub from the late 1920s onwards, the role of the Escuela Oficial de Cine during Francoism, and the rise of major production companies since the 1980s. Later, the course incorporates a selection of films - El pisito (Ferreri 1959), Mujeres (Almodóvar 1988), Carne trémula (Almodóvar 1997) and 20 centímetros (Salazar 2005) - set in the city, with particular attention to the social issues raised, and to developments in entertainment genres (in particular, urban comedy on film and urban melodrama). By including productions ranging in date from 1959 to 2005, the course presents students with vast contrasts in how Madrid and its inhabitants are framed and represented on screen over a diverse timeframe. But by setting the sociocultural, socio-political and industrial context of such varying works in the earlier part of the course, this module additionally offers the students the possibility to enhance
their understanding of where, why and how several, celebrated Spanish works came to be made and released. In this sense, the module is a good example of where cinematic analysis within MFL studies can offer a wide and flexible platform for developing students’ understanding of core aspects of (inter)national development.

An explicit study of society is implied in the module, ‘Social Issues in Portuguese and Spanish Film’ (Manchester), where the following works provide the contextual basis: *En construcción* (Guerín 2000); *Los lunes al sol* (León de Aranoa 2002); and *Te doy mis ojos* (Bollain 2003). Students should be able to: ‘draw on an appropriately wide knowledge of social issues’; ‘relate [such issues] to their treatment in films of several sorts’; ‘develop informed analyses of film form in context’; ‘develop an appreciation and critique of different forms of filmic representation’; and ‘form judgments and opinions based on detailed cross-cultural knowledge’. Additionally, using a range of documentary, docufictional, and feature films, the unit aims to instill in students a critical awareness of the relationships between social issues and cinematic representation. Issues under analysis include ‘marginalisation through economic hardship’ and ‘domestic violence’, as discussed further in the forthcoming chapters.

Similitude can be identified with at least three of the films cited above in ‘Spanish and Latin American Cinemas: An Introduction’, and ‘Space, Movement and Identity’ (Liverpool), where the module titles and details provide additional clues surrounding the purpose behind each selected work. In the former, both *Cria cuervos* and *Te doy mis ojos* reappear, which, firstly raises interesting questions about perceptions of works best equipped to provide students with an ‘introduction’ to the very broad topic of ‘Spanish cinema’. *Cria* is described as a ‘touching and thought-provoking […] work which remains one of the most important films in Spanish cinema’ (BFI).29 and ‘a masterpiece of form and technique’ (Bradshaw 2011).30 Released when Spain was just coming out of forty years of Fascist rule, it achieved critical success as a Golden Globe nominee and winner of the Grand Prize at Cannes in 1977. Dictatorship, in one form or another, can again be found within the core identity of the chosen work, although, this film’s unique qualities lie in direct relation to its timely creation and release in the period directly after Franco’s death. Similarly, *Te doy* made a significant name for itself among critics, particularly in European festivals and film journalism. Winner of seven Goyas, the film had a prolific impact on the national and international film stage following its release in 2003. Incidentally, it is perhaps unsurprising that, according to the information sourced and presented thus far, the majority of the films used in Spanish teaching at both school and university level are well known in festival and critical circuits, and in many cases have also enjoyed significant commercial success. It is logical that educators wish to expose their students to the highest profile and most respected works, and it is wholly appropriate that students are given direct access to the best and most revealing

29 [https://www.bfi.org.uk/blu-rays-dvds/cria-cuervos](https://www.bfi.org.uk/blu-rays-dvds/cria-cuervos)
examples of Spanish cinematic works. Moreover, in such case, it is likely that a wider variety of
teaching resources and content for research is readily available to further enhance the teaching and
learning process. Due to the storyline of Te doy centring on domestic violence, it can certainly make
for uncomfortable viewing. However, as is explored at length in Section 4.4 and Section 5.2, such
content relates directly to hugely important changes in Spanish legislation at the time, during a pivotal
period in the social psyche regarding gender equality and social intervention. Similarly, Los lunes can
again be found within the sub-module, ‘Global Spain’. Such a title places the value of the film within a
representation of Spain’s place in the wider world and its evolving relationship with other nations;
one again, within a post-Franco timeframe (see Section 4.4).

As stated at the beginning of this section, it is important to establish within this chapter where and why
it is the case that individual filmmakers are favoured over others. Although Saura and Erice are two
reoccurring names, this is largely in relation to just one of their works: Cria (Saura) and El espíritu
(Erice). As is demonstrated in the course of the thesis, there is, however, one filmmaker who is
reoccurring throughout at both school and university level; Almodóvar. Volver has already been
identified as dominant within the A level course, although his broader oeuvre frames him as an even
greater, dominant force at university level. This may not be surprising when the key factors behind
educators’ apparent motivations surrounding filmmaker choices are reiterated: critical and/or
commercial success; use of well-known actors; making a statement about aspects of Spanish social
and cultural identity; Almodóvar’s oeuvre fits very well into all of these categories. It is intended to put
forward at this stage the initial traits and key themes of his works to be uncovered later. In ‘Space,
Movement and Identity’ (Liverpool), Volver returns within, ‘Returning to the rural’. The sub-module title
suggests that the film is used to depict geographical and sociocultural aspects of rural Spain in
contrast to prominent Spanish cities - as featured in other modules - where traits, traditions and
tribulations within different social settings are at the heart of the module’s contents.

Almodóvar’s Matador (Almodóvar 1986) is the third film making up ‘Spanish and Latin American
Cinemas: An Introduction’ (Liverpool).31 As suggested above in relation to Cria and Te doy, the
module title very much suggests that such (a) work(s) possess(es) a generic value and quality that
can be seen as representative of, or at least introductory to, a national Spanish cinema. It is important
to emphasise at this stage Matador’s apparent classification as a powerful and pedagogically fruitful
context on which to base much of broader, thematic and aesthetic trends that define a significant
proportion of Spanish film studies, and indeed, set the tone for future studies in the cinema of Spain.
In a similar way, it is enlightening to note that Almodóvar’s Todo and Mujeres have historically been
taught in two ‘introductory first-year modules’: ‘An Introduction to Film Language’ and ‘An Introduction
to Iberian and Latin American Studies’, respectively (Liverpool) (Taylor 2014). Once again,
Almodóvar’s oeuvre is called upon as a basis for an ‘introduction’ to two, somewhat vast academic

31 Also now taught in ‘Hispanic Cinemas’ (Manchester), as part of a ‘thematic strand on national identities and their
contestation’ (Perriam 2017).
areas, which can only be a complement to Almodóvar's cinematic career, and is, once again, a reminder of his global, critical and commercial success. However, it is also highly suggestive of the ability behind much of the defined content of his works to educate with some transparency on a variety of the most pertinent aspects of Spanish sociocultural identity.

In summary, the modules and works considered paint a comprehensive picture of recurring themes and approaches related to Spanish film pedagogy at undergraduate level. In some cases, there is an extended continuity of the motivations and methodologies previously referred to in the context of schools - civil war, dictatorship, social struggles, child-centred trauma - although the universities cited suggest a wider and more direct preoccupation with politics, the economy, the law, and indeed, interpretations of (and the complexities within Spanish) nationhood. Such discussion underlines the extensive temptation to oversimplify, generalise or even, overly rely on film when teaching and learning of aspects of historical, social or cultural identity. In which case, students must be frequently reminded that most films are fictional, but also that all films (whether fictional or not) are a product of the filmmaker's own creation. By remaining conscious of this, undergraduate students of the films cited above may learn a great deal about varying perspectives on the Franco period, but also in the Transition years and beyond; all of which boast a variety of cinematic works that capture enlightening visions of sociocultural movement and space. Whether focused on Spain's best known cities, or on the traditions of rural society, the contextualisation afforded by location and setting offers immense scope for developing students' ability to reflect on, and empathise with, the foreign 'other' at various time points, and in varying, troublesome circumstances. There is an underlining message of competency, which is regularly related to the concept of cultural competency; it is undoubtedly desirable for educators of MFL to transmit the competency that they themselves have previously acquired onto their students, and there is a strong case to suggest that cinema has all the tools to effectively facilitate such a process. Finally, it has been demonstrated that cinematic style and aesthetic quality are key features within foreign film pedagogy at university level (just as they are at A level). It is therefore the objective of the next chapter to explore, analyse and evaluate how, where and to what extent such features and valuable processes take place.
2.2: Foreign film pedagogy: A literature analysis of previous research findings and initiatives

Before embarking on an analysis of ‘pedagogy’ related to Spanish cinema studies, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term and to set out the reason for using it instead of other related terms. Deriving from the Greek word, agogos, meaning ‘leader’, and then, paidagogos, which was a slave who led boys to school and back, in time, the term, pedagogue, has come to mean simply ‘teacher’, and ‘pedagogy’ is now commonly used to refer to teaching, or rather, the study of the methods and activities of teaching. As it frequently demonstrated below, a number of key literature sources choose to employ the term, ‘pedagogy’ in relation to films studies in discussions of the theories, processes and practices involved in teaching and learning, and, incidentally, it is also the chosen term of Romance-language social science, perhaps especially in Spanish and Italian. Earlier in the current decade, Fischer and Petro (2012) made a solid attempt to analyse the study of film in depth. Cinema Journal has featured articles on pedagogy since the earliest days of its existence. Recent, additional important contributions include Spence (2004), McEwan (2007), Sandler (2009), Ritterbusch (2009) and Hovet and Lathrop (2011). While Hovet’s earlier research (2006) succeeds in connecting film pedagogy to historical film exhibition, his approach may be considered somewhat uneven, but inherently practical. Fischer and Grant (1983) had earlier focused directly on curriculum design, making their work highly relevant to the current research. However, it is in fact since the 1970s that educationalists experienced in using film as a teaching tool have urged its adoption by others. Films are a ‘comfortable, familiar medium to contemporary students; one that can keep student interest in the theories and concepts under discussion [whereby] students can see the theories and concepts in action; in more than a figurative sense, theories and concepts “leap from the screen”’ (Champoux 1999: 11). The power of media has shifted from communication to education to the point where ‘it has become an essential tool in the teaching of foreign languages’ (Álvarez 2009: 1). In fact, there are few other art forms of which teachers can be so confident that pupils will already have substantial experience: ‘all children first encounter narratives in audio-visual form; they hear spoken stories while looking at the pictures […] long before they have any notion that the words written on the page may also be meaningful’ (Bazalgette 2007: 18). The result is that by the time they get to school, children have gained a repertoire of skills for interpreting narrative texts, such as inference, prediction, recognition of genres and character types, and the ways in which narratives can manipulate time (Bazalgette 2009: 8).

In addition to gaining the aforementioned skills via traditional forms of storytelling, children now gain the vast majority of their awareness and understanding of narrative and culture via modern technology. The New London Group (NLG) (1996: 10) highlights the increasing invasion of private spaces by mass media culture, global commodity culture, communications and information networks, and the collective impact on (child) audiences. In the modern day world, ‘childhood cultures are made up of interwoven narratives and commodities [including] the internet’; teachers find that cultural and linguistic messages are losing power and relevance as they compete with these global narratives.

Collectively, the above claims point towards the necessity to establish how these various texts are best negotiated, understood and exploited within education, and in this particular case, the teaching and learning of Spanish. Increased exposure globally to the moving image underlines a growing ‘need to create a more “cineliterate” audience’ (Bazalgette 2009: 1). The BFI (1999: 2) predicted previously that the importance of recognising ‘critical and creative moving image skills [would] be a key element of literacy in the twenty-first century’, given the then existing ‘lack of recognition of the potential of moving image education [MIE] across the curricula’. With such critical identifications of skills gaps in mind, what do more recent studies propose, and what are the advantages of their proposals?

Films are ‘perfect vehicles for introducing students to different types of popular culture and engaging them with critical questions about the relationship between information and power through the critical analysis of socio-political issues and intercultural relationships’ (Chan and Herrero 2010: 11). Benefits include: a ‘playful component’; a ‘vehicle for active learning’; ‘it facilitates comprehension activities that are perceived as “real”’; ‘it creates a curiosity gap that facilitates the exchange of opinions and ideas about the film’; ‘it helps to explore non-verbal elements’; ‘it improves oral and aural skills’; ‘it provides meaningful contexts and vocabulary, exposing viewers to natural expressions and natural flow of speech’ (11). Additionally, foreign film study: ‘exposes students to visual culture’; ‘increases motivation’; ‘provides a stimulus for other work/further tasks’; ‘supports the exploitation of non-verbal communication’; ‘contextualises teaching content’; ‘brings curriculum closer to pupils’ experience’; ‘gives learning more meaning’; ‘allows for interactive activities’; ‘promotes the ability to critique’; and ‘allows for “intercultural communicative competence”‘ (Hererro, Fuentes and Doblas 2015). The benefits are substantial and, if achieved, cement film pedagogy as an indispensable tool in enhancing the learning experience for students of MFL. Many of the claims of teachers, researchers and scholars regarding the optimum learning potential of film involve not just an enhancement of knowledge and understanding related to MFL, but also the broader value to the development of literacy. In addition to the research groups and authors cited below, educators are encouraged to refer to Potter’s (2013) work on media literacy, particularly regarding his theoretical scheme based on seven specific skills: analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis, and abstraction, and five sets of knowledge structures: media effects, media content, media industries, real world, and the self. Similarly, it is pertinent for educators embarking on a methodical comprehension of the cognitive and specific technicalities involved in the learning processes associated with media, but specifically, film, to access the much cited work of Metz (1991). As is uncovered and unpacked in the course of this chapter and in the chapters that follow, a solid understanding of the processes of film construction and audience reception, and indeed, the interrelationship of all such elements, is vital to any determined attempt to enrich students’ ability to analyse and interpret the cinematic works they are exposed to.

As pointed out in the previous section, there is no specific provision for Spanish film study in any of the current GCSE specifications. There is however a requirement for students to ‘recognise and

33 See Byram (1997).
respond to key information [...] including within authentic sources”; moreover, educators are reminded that at GCSE, ‘it is important to develop awareness and understanding of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken’ (AQA 2016b: 11-12). There are numerous arguments from scholars that learning MFL through film is well placed to achieve such outcomes. At A level, the study of (a) Spanish film(s) remains optional, although figures so far suggest that the majority of students are following the, ‘one film, one book’ route, as opposed to two books. Prior to the detailed analysis carried out in Section 4.3, it is important to emphasise that the assessment structure for the film essay in the reformed A level (Paper 2) is split equally between ‘language’ and ‘critical analysis’ (20 marks each). This change places a more equally balanced stress on the quality of the vocabulary, grammar and expressions that students are able to use and their ability to scrutinise, interpret and critique the cultural ‘text’ (film) that they are studying. The revised terminology and changes in the mark scheme also encourage closer attention to be paid to the broader concepts of critical perspectives, critical analysis and the pedagogy involved in ‘critical thinking’ as an academic discipline (since 2008, a separate A level subject). The variety of films and methodologies for teaching and learning are significantly more varied at undergraduate level, and over the last two decades, the number of Spanish undergraduate cinema-based modules has increased. Spanish teachers and lecturers have a natural responsibility to strive for a continuously enhanced awareness and understanding surrounding the evolving theoretical and critical perspectives of the subject matter (the films themselves) and methodological approaches to teaching and learning, such as those examined below.

‘If children get the chance to experience a literacy curriculum that respects and extends their knowledge of moving image media, they are likely to do better at school’ (BFI 2013: 22). This claim follows significant evidence gained from the Reframing Literacy Programme (run by the BFI), such as from one teacher, who comments: ‘all children, regardless of their ability, have been able to discuss narrative in a sophisticated manner’; ‘pupils are […] more fully engaged’; the process ‘has allowed children to learn using a medium within which they feel comfortable’; ‘this allows for higher order thinking [and it gives] them the tools they need to understand the media rich world around them’ (BFI 2013: 23). The Available Light Advisory (ALA) (2010: 4) meanwhile claims that 100% of 359 teachers they surveyed claim to have experienced improvement in individual students’ performances as a result of film education, with one teacher summing up; ‘film worked well within the curriculum requirements and got good results’.

Marsh and Bearne (2008: 20) note further positive evidence, citing that two weeks after completing a unit of film-related work, the numbers of children writing in one class at level 4 (the expected level for their age group at the time) had risen from 29% to 75%. During this time, the children had extended their vocabulary and were able to write for a variety of purposes with greater confidence. Another

34 Previously, there were 20 marks (AS) or 25 marks (A level) for content, 5 for vocabulary, 5 for range and 5 for accuracy.
student identified an improvement in verbal communication skills; ‘using films made me more confident to speak out because I knew there were no right or wrong answers’. Such an impact has particular resonance for GCSE and A level assessments, where many pupils struggle under the pressure of assessed speaking especially. Some of this is due to a general lack of confidence to speak in a foreign language, although with the removal or reduction of the amount of direct, fixed-answer questioning offered by discussing a film, students are given greater flexibility to use the language they are most comfortable with. Section 4.4 establishes the extent to which the popularity of the film element at A level is due to the perception of ‘no right or wrong answer’. If it were to be the case, then there is a good argument for such a message being made even clearer, as a means to help reduce the declining numbers of MFL students referred to in the Introduction. An avoidance of incorrectness and/or failure is likely to be appealing at GCSE, where historically there has been, and continues to be, so much focus on the precise accuracy of written and spoken work. Previously, GCSE students suffered due to an encouragement to memorise large chunks of text for the ‘controlled assessments’ (see Ofqual 2013: 31). Results and examiners’ reports from the reformed GCSE suggest that students are losing marks primarily because of not understanding the bullet points. However, an additional problem is that, within legacy and reformed specifications, pieces of writing have often been based around overused and unstimulating topics, such as ‘daily routine’ or ‘describing my bedroom’. From professional experience, film reviews, character descriptions and alternative plot endings make for some of the most interesting, and often, best quality, examples of written and spoken work.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, much discussion surrounded the worrying fact that nine out of ten students in the UK stop learning a language at sixteen.\(^{36}\) The Nuffield Report warned that the UK was heading towards being a minority clinging to monolingualism. Earlier publications, such as CILT’s *Thirty Years of Language Teaching*, had placed the blame on the MFL curriculum, which had a ‘badly leaking roof’ and ‘insecure foundations’ (cited in Hawkins 2002: 23-24). Similarly, Pachler and Field (2001: 303) criticise ‘the emphasis on formal grammatical accuracy characterising GCE and CSE examination syllabi’, which ‘has been said to have contributed to a lack of pupils’ success in MFL and a lack of popularity of the subject’. Such comments suggest that, for some time, there has been a dominant focus on linguistic accuracy, and significantly less on more appealing topics, such as cinema. Such aspects of studying Spanish are (according to many of the participants’ personal experiences noted in Chapter 4) often regarded as the most enjoyable. Students become significantly more motivated to engage in language work related or subsequent to the study of the film(s), particularly if interlinked with history, society or culture. Before looking at examples of how and where this is experienced, it is pertinent to briefly consider the impact of the cultural topic at A level (2009-2018). The renewed emphasis on culture arrived without any directed provision for preparation at GCSE; a problem that continues, whereby neither the legacy nor reformed specifications include any candid encouragement to include Spanish film study. Thorogood and King (1991: 2) had earlier pointed out that with the ‘A/AS level being much less teacher centred and instead reliant on more

\(^{36}\) See Hawkins (2002: 23). See also more recent findings: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47334374
independent learning, it seems that somehow, somewhere along the line, the GCSE is fail[ing] to prepare the learner for the next stage up'. With no units specifically focused on Spanish culture, history or aspects of society in the GCSE course, it is both illogical and unfair that students (and teachers) have then been expected to succeed with such demands at the next key stage.

Much evidence points to film’s motivational factor due to it being something of a novelty and/or something different to the norm. Conversely, it may be considered a medium (along with several others) that students are comfortable and highly familiar with, as pointed out earlier. The combination of novelty, comfort and familiarity constitutes a great asset for teachers and lecturers. ‘Learners welcome and enjoy most novelties that offer “time out” from the daily grind of the curriculum, which can stimulate them to learn better’ (Bazalgette 2009: 14). Students do not learn anything well unless they are both, ‘motivated to learn, and believe that they will be able to use and function with what they are learning in some way that is in their interest’ (NLG 1996: 23). Learning through media, such as film, ‘involves, engages and motivates students, and gives them control over their own learning’ (Wilkinson, in Wilkinson and Head et al. 2009: 28). Finally, the ALA (2007: 4) declares that 100% of 359 teachers they surveyed agreed (or strongly agreed) that ‘film is a means of getting children enthusiastic about their subject’.

Film is ‘a highly motivating element within Spanish lessons, which facilitates the process of communication and the participation of students’ (Ortí, Àgeles and Bendriss 2011:1). It is in fact the ‘multimodal’ approach and use of ‘multiliteracies’ involved in foreign film pedagogy that make it such a motivational activity (Ortí et al. 2011: 2). Film communicates through several means: verbal, written and physical, and in such case, it is well equipped to cater for different preferences in communication and/or of learning methods. ‘Film stretches the most gifted and engages the hardest to reach’ (ALA 2007: 1). There is however a limited amount of detailed literature on the potential of cinema as a differentiation tool.

Researchers have long posited a lack of confidence as one of the main disincentives of studying MFL post-GCSE (McCroskey 1977; Horwitz 1991; Arnold 1999). Fawkes (cited in Chambers 2001: 72) in his role as Education Officer at the BBC, notes that the combination of visuals and audio ‘reassures the learners that they are able to understand the foreign language’. The incorporation of film (or indeed any visually supported listening exercise), then, has the potential to help alleviate the perception of listening being one of the most difficult skills; a concept put to the test in Chapter 4. There are also grounds to claim that listening to understand dialogue in a film has an obvious and defined purpose; that is, to understand the story and the characters within it. This broad exercise sits apart from many other traditional listening exercises, often more transactional in style, where the principle objective may be to simply get as many marks as possible.

Setting the scene for how foreign cinema can be an ideal platform for linguistic development, Ortí et al. (2011: 1) highlight the dominance of the visual image in today’s world, and suggest that the use of
visual imagery is likely to appeal to a younger audience. The authors claim that film can increase communication among students by promoting the exchange of opinions, interests and personal experiences. They take inspiration from Ontoria (2007) and Urpi (2000) in classifying cinema as a fitting teaching resource because it 'influences the development of imagination, sensitivity and the psyche of the spectator by combining linguistic, sound and visual elements' (see further details in Section 3.1). An obvious method for developing language skills lies within the use of subtitles. English subtitled versions can be used in the class/seminar room to ensure that the dialogue and overall contents of the film(s) is/are grasped as well as possible, although subtitles also have the potential to enhance a range of basic language-learning skills. Hearing new words while reading the English translation offers itself well to a general expansion of vocabulary and expression. The combination of foreign audio and English subtitles is direct training and practice in translation; a significant requirement of the reformed GCSE. The removal and/or manipulation of subtitles can be used to assess listening progress, whereby students have to either demonstrate understanding from the audio alone, or add the correct subtitles (by interpreting the audio). It is important to recognise however that subtitles can be inaccurate, possibly leading to misunderstanding, or much worse. Similarly, a failure to address such difficulties with subtitles, specifically regarding barriers and/or obstacles in language learning, mean the problems are likely to worsen. Subtitles are becoming 'less controlled and more communal in response to new digital technologies and the decentralising impulses of globalisation' (Tymoczko 2005: 1088–9). 'Non-professional, errant modes of screen translation are becoming increasingly paradigmatic of the current translation environment' (Dwyer 2017:3).

Research from the past two decades has pinpointed cultural learning (via film) as a successful method for developing skills in communication. 'The ability to understand the cultural context of foreign language use can be key in leading to effective communication in the target language' (Pachler and Field 2001: 147). It is the images of cinema that allow for the comprehension of linguistic messages and the development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence (Orti et al. 2011: 1). The development of such skills begins in the 'unique property of film to make one see and grasp things which only the cinema is privileged to communicate' (Kracauer 1973, cited in Champoux 1999: 1). Collectively, these observations not only support arguments in favour of foreign film being a substantial resource to help linguistic development, but they also provide an important reminder of additional elements involved in communication. The critical terminology crucially connects 'language' (in apparent isolation) to other components of national/regional and/or 'foreign' identity; those related to 'social' and 'cultural'.

Many experts signal a failure in the teaching of foreign culture within MFL studies. Byram (cited in Swarbrick 2002: 84) signals that 'the effect of language teaching on young people’s perceptions of and attitudes towards other cultures [has been] negligible'. Herrero and Castiñeiras (1998: 1) speak of the 'complexity of cultural experience'; supporting the notion that culture is a hugely broad and diverse
subject, particularly when attributed to a whole nation (such as Spain) or group of nations (such as Spanish-speaking countries). Culture is also particularly complex to teach to a foreign audience due to the difficulty in defining it and/or the fluidity of its actual meaning. Many have argued however that foreign film pedagogy provides a significant potential to directly expose students to varying aspects of foreign culture. Ortí et al. (2011: 2) specify ‘the knowledge of customs of “material culture” (clothes, housing, objects etc.) which are presented within the storyline’. Stephens (2001: 2) however advises that [educators] have an obligation to move students beyond a mere tourist knowledge of foreign cultures’, and similarly, Pachler and Field (2001: 147) summarise that the ‘development of cultural awareness is essential to understand that there are other ways of life in order to tackle stereotypes’.

Spanish film in lessons allows for the understanding of cinema as an artistic product within the culture itself; by simply watching and learning about a Spanish film, students are already learning about Spanish culture, regardless of the actual content of the film. ‘Cinema allows for the development of communicative competence and intercultural consciousness, as it permits the understanding of similarities and differences between one’s own culture and the culture represented in the film’ (Ortí et al. 2011: 2). This concept is in fact referenced in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2018: 66-67). Much recent investigation has centred on the concept of ‘interculturality’, rather than simply, ‘culture’. Fuentes (2015) suggests that the main purpose of showing Spanish films to foreign (non-mother tongue) Spanish students is to expose them to the ‘other’; that is, Spain itself. Fuentes draws attention to how the intercultural value of cinema lies in its unique ability to capture multiple aspects of culture at once, and indeed, the complexities of cross-culture identities. For those seeking to grasp a deeper and contextualised understanding of what is meant by ‘cultural competency’, as referred to earlier, the Spanish films, Bwana (Uribe 1996) and Biutiful (Iñárritu 2010) are recommended as useful examples in relation to the topic of immigration. Discussion of such films’ contents highlight the value of learning from films that contain such a high degree of explicitness about the darker sides of Spain’s cultural image. It is possible to consider other intercultural conflicts, such as masculine/feminine in El orfanato (Bayona 2007), generational in El bola (Mañas 2000) and political/religious in Los girasoles ciegos (Cuerda 2008). In terms of how such intercultural conflicts may be taught or incorporated into class/seminar room activities, Fuentes (2015) puts forward strategies of ‘contextualisation’, ‘description’, ‘analysis’ and ‘students’ own recording’. Fuentes (2015) concludes that interculturality allows for the ‘break-through of linguistic, economic and anthropological barriers’, and that ‘film provides one of the most useful models for this breakthrough’. Finally, Fuentes (2015) warns about ‘passivity’ as being the biggest obstacle in effective foreign film pedagogy, pointing to the importance of setting out clear objectives and appropriately setting up the use of essential skills, such as critical analysis, if a true understanding of interculturality is to take place. The above equally applies to any attempt to present, explore or ‘teach’ aspects of Spanish history or society, whereby, as is explored below, cinema is able to fill a significant gap in students’ knowledge. However, as is also considered in subsequent sections, the most popular works used tend to include

very similar historical contexts or oversimplified social contexts, and often display restricted and/or biased perspectives of socio-historical periods and events.

Studies in Spanish cinema not only lend themselves to tracing a century of significant historical events detailed in standard civilisation books, such as the Civil War and Franco’s dictatorship, but most importantly, they offer insight into the attitudes and values that led to and became the result of such events. Film ‘furnishes an accessible window into Spain that would otherwise be blocked or unavailable to undergraduate students unable to read novels or plays, or to read enough of them to gain a broad understanding’ (Stephens 2001: 3). Periods of Spanish history have commonly featured as a key area of study linked to A level specifications. For example, in the legacy AQA AS/A level, students were expected to ‘develop awareness and understanding of the […] heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken’, and at A2, students (and teachers) had the option of studying ‘a period of twentieth century history from a target language-speaking country/community’.

As a means to provide a broad overview of where prominent Spanish works fit neatly within the core topics of the A level course, it is useful to refer to the guidance provided in the HOME study guides. Such information is especially helpful when creating schemes of work. As stated previously, for cinema studies to be a successful element of MFL learning, it is essential for works and materials to be carefully planned, whereby students are entirely clear about purpose, relevance and, overall, what is expected of them and from the process as a whole. As is argued throughout, well-planned and effectively structured use of cinematic references to enhance topic-based work is well placed to enable A level students to become more informed, more conversant and, overall, more ‘competent’, as specified in the undergraduate module aims discussed in Section 2.1.

‘Family and Relationships’ constitutes one of four main topics within the legacy AS. Although this has been replaced by ‘Traditional and modern values’, the suggested sub-topic areas in the specification and those provided by popular textbooks, such as the AQA endorsed, Oxford version (2016) remain similar. The latest specifications do however place increased importance on understanding such themes in a historical context. The majority of the study guides mention ‘interpersonal’ or ‘family relations’ as a key component of the films’ contents. Both *Retorno a Hansala* (Gutiérrez 2008) and *Un Franco, 14 pesetas* (Iglesias 2006) look directly at friendship. The guides provide a useful collection of films capturing Spain in a late twentieth century historical context, spanning from a Civil War/post-War setting in works such as *El espinoz del diablo* (del Toro 2001) and *El laberinto del fauno*, through to post-Franco Spain in works such as *La máquina de pintar nubes* (Maxo and Tellería, 2009); all captured, incidentally, through the fantastical eyes of a child (see Section 3.3). *La máquina* exposes students to colloquial expressions, images and identities directly related to the Basque country, and it is therefore a possible source of exposure to regional identity (AQA ‘Spanish Regional Identity’).41 As

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40 Link to specification no longer available.
are *Un Franco*, 14 pesetas, which looks at immigration in the midst of Franco’s rule in the 1960s, and *La mitad del cielo* (Gutiérrez 1986), which deals with domestic migration and rural exodus in the 1960s and 1970s. Such works are additionally well placed to provide cinematic references within the topic of ‘Multiculturalism in Hispanic Society’. Also lending itself well to a cultural case-study within the topic of ‘Equal Rights’, *La mitad del cielo* concerns gender relations and focuses specifically on the role of women in Spanish society in 1959; similar to *El laberinto del fauno*, although it is set in 1944. As is considered at length in subsequent sections, *Volver* is concerned with contrasts in rural and urban landscapes (Madrid) at a physical, social and cultural level. The guide also describes it as a film about ‘women’s culture, traditions and death culture’. It should be pointed out that *Volver* also deals with the controversial topics of rape, paedophilia and incest, although these significant issues are not explicitly mentioned in the study guide. *La vergüenza* (Planell 2009) and *Retorno a Hansala* both look at relations and contrasts between Spain (mainly Madrid in *La vergüenza*) and other countries; Peru and Morocco, respectively. *La vergüenza* also deals with issues associated with childhood and adoption, whereas *Retorno* poses a number of social questions regarding emigration, isolation, poverty and religious and cultural respect.

Baddock (1996: 20-22) notes that ‘cinema […] provide[s] an ideal means of introducing situations and language from real life’. The author’s claim however fails to sufficiently define what is meant by ‘real life’ and such discussion raises vital questions about students’ ability to process any concept of a Spanish-related ‘reality’. It raises the equally crucial question(s) of, to what extent are students equipped to comprehend perceptions of reality, and indeed, any forms of theorised and/or intended cinematic realism (see Section 5.2). A pursuit to uncover aspects of ‘real’ Spain, or what Spaniards might ‘really’ be like, is often synonymously associated with the incorporation of so called, authentic materials, such as films. Authentic materials may be considered as ‘real texts not created for languages students but instead for those speakers of the language in question’ (Harmer 1983: 146), or, ‘any material that has not been specifically designed with the intention of being used in languages teaching’ (Nunan 1989: 54). Authentic materials consist of ‘the demonstration of language, whether oral or written, which was originally produced for communication among native speakers in a non-pedagogic context’ (García Arreza et al. 1994: 23). In summary, authentic materials are ‘discourse produced with non-educational intentions, or discourse created with educational goals but that have some characteristics that probably occur in real communication’ (Geddes and White 1978:137-145).

Any perception of film in the class/seminar room as ‘non-educational’ may prove to be either very positive or very negative, depending on the particular perspective, viewpoint or objective. For students to perceive learning from cinema as a non-conventional and/or non-traditional form of learning - different to using textbooks, worksheets and so on – may help to increase engagement and motivation due to the novelty factor, as alluded to earlier. However, for students to associate film as having a non-educational benefit also risks being counter-productive, whereby students may not place sufficient value on a cinematic work as a fertile and evocative vehicle for learning.  

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42 See AQA Paper 2 (2018): ‘Analyse the differences between life in the country and life in the city in this film’.

43 See related articles to Schema Theory: Carrel and Eisterhold (1983); An (2013).
individual perspective, intention and interpretation must be celebrated and considered at the very heart of any teaching and learning through cinematic works, not least if students are to adequately grasp the various complexities surrounding the ‘reality’ afforded by films. As pointed out earlier, advantage can be taken of the notion of there being no right or wrong answer at a certain level of film analysis and evaluation. Moreover, filmic pedagogy should remain an additional and supportive resource alongside ‘traditional’ pedagogical methods, and should not become the dominant focus in order to avoid loss of impact or becoming gimmicky.

Authentic materials, such as film, ‘offer teachers the opportunity to expose pupils to ‘material produced for “real”, out-of-classroom contexts and for specific purposes’ (Pachler and Field 2001: 147). Film may be as close to ‘real’ Spain/Spanish as some students can get. ‘Whilst most films are fiction, they can offer powerful experiences that students are unlikely to have in a classroom’ (Champoux 1999: 12). ‘A further reason for developing pupils’ cultural awareness is to learn to empathise with speakers of other languages’ (Pachler and Field 2001: 148). Arneheim (1957: 212-321) however describes how film records physical reality but sees it differently from ordinary human experiences. Although Carroll (1985: 79-103) concludes that film is unequalled in its ability to hold and direct the attention of the viewer, as after all, ‘lens techniques, camera movements, camera angles, framing of shots and film editing can create gripping views not found in reality’.

The experiences afforded by foreign cinema study encompass a wide variety of linguistic, cultural, social and historical references via a multimodal relationship between the spectator and the work. ‘With its ability to pack a two-hour period with plot, emotion, drama, events, images and ideas, [a film] draws attention […] to ethical boundaries, conceptual frameworks, national memory and identity, and the use of language and idioms’ (Stephens 2001: 2). Cinema is ‘a globalised discipline’ that can usefully be split into three categories: ‘linguistic, paraverbal and cultural’ (Castiñeiras and Herrero 1998: 1). These three categories set out clear areas of study and provide a useful framework for the planning of learning objectives in relation to foreign film analysis. ‘Studying Spanish films is not just about one specific element, such as “language”, [but rather] it involves a combination of a number of elements that include various forms of communication (such as looks or gestures), [learning about Spanish cinema as a] national art form [and the] integration of cross-curricular work’ (Castiñeiras and Herrero 1998: 1-2). Bazalgette (2009: 3) points to ‘a high level of relevance to other aspects of the curriculum, particularly literacy’. Cinema is ‘especially recommendable in the teaching of a foreign language [because it] ties together the elements of language and culture [in a] “natural way”’ (Santos 2007, cited in Orf et al. 2011: 1). Educators are urged to proceed with caution and not to make assumptions when it comes to their students’ ability to perceive any aspect of a foreign film in a ‘natural way’, or indeed, to see fiction film itself as ‘natural’, as it is of course a scripted creation. Oliveras (2000: 38) labels this capability, ‘intercultural competence’, which he defines as, ‘the ability of a person to act in an appropriate and flexible way when faced with actions and expectations of people from other cultures’. The extent to which students are interculturally competent, or indeed, equipped to process a combination of linguistic and intercultural elements, cannot be assumed.
Herrero and Valbuena (2009: 58) consider the combined components of ‘social’, ‘cultural’, ‘political’ and, ‘pedagogical’. They cite Tapscott (2008) in reference to his discussions of a ‘Net Generation’, which they use to emphasise many teenagers’ daily use of technology and how such customary behaviour determines a clear need for similarly technologically-driven, and multidisciplinary teaching resources and strategies. The authors (ibid) also cite Piscitelli (2009: 41), who describes the older generations as ‘forever digital immigrants’. A failure to include an appropriate range of technologies and literacies, such as those associated with film, into languages lessons may, based on this evidence, create an unhelpful distance between the educator and the student. In a subject such as MFL, where engagement and motivation are commonly regarded as two of the most regular challenges for teachers, it would be foolish to ignore such observations.

Three potentially recurring obstacles posed by foreign film pedagogy are highlighted by Herrero, Fuentes and Doblas (2015). Firstly, a lack of appreciation from students and other teachers about the pedagogical value of cinema. Secondly, perceptions that teaching and learning through film is lazy and best suited to end of term activities. Thirdly, the lesson time taken to play a full-length feature film. In addition, such material can often be too complex for beginners, which can make its usefulness uncertain (Álvarez 2009: 1). Authentic audio material can be frustrating and produce anxiety for beginners (Ur 1984, cited in Álvarez 2009: 1). Additional fears for educators arise as moving images are technology dependent. Moreover, there is a widespread set of cultural assumptions that assign film and television a lower cultural status than the high arts, such as literature, theatre and fine art (Bazalgette 2009: 7). Within any attempted study of cultural identity, including and, arguably, especially, via fictional cinema, it can be very difficult to define what is meant by ‘Spanish culture’ for a variety of reasons. Like texts, cultures are seen as ‘indeterminate sites of conflict that cannot be pinned to a single totalised meaning, [moreover,] art in Spain has frequently revealed a variety of conflicts within the culture […] which expose a multifaceted world that has struggled to come to terms with issues that span centuries of its history’ (Graff and Robbins 1992, cited in Stephens 2001: 1).

Finally, Herrero (2015) underlines the significance of questions surrounding students’ capability to distinguish between being entertained and being educated through the medium of film.

It is useful to turn to the BFI as a primary source of possible solutions to several of the obstacles set out above. Feature films of ninety minutes or more are often impractical within a school timetable, although in universities they can often be shown during pre-/post-lecture/seminar screenings (BFI 2013: 10). ‘Short films can provide a useful alternative, [frequently] intense, densely textured, often open to many levels of interpretation’ (ibid). Exclusive use of short clips can however restrict understandings of how complete narrative structures work, or how characters develop over the course of a whole story. With any related context or objective in mind, the selection of works should prioritise those most likely to ‘inspire’ [and offer] stimulating viewing experiences’ (ibid). Chan and Herrero (2010: 12) identify the four essential considerations when selecting works: the particular nature and versatility of the film from a linguistic, cultural and thematic point of view; the level of language; appropriateness for the classroom; and subject matters that are regarded as prohibited by specific
cultures. An enhancement of teacher training related to all aspects of film pedagogy is crucial, particularly according to the sources referred to below and in Chapter 4, where the majority of participating trainee teachers express disappointment at the relevant level of training offered. The ALA (2007: 14) reveals that 91% of 359 teachers it surveyed said that they were not given any training on how to use film in the classroom, yet 96% of the same cohort feel that film ought to be a core part of initial teacher training. Film is about active learning; the best film education includes discussion, presentation, critical thinking, team working and filmmaking, as well as watching (ALA 2007: 1). Educators must ensure that students avoid passive watching, but rather, become and remain actively involved in viewing, reviewing and, most importantly, developing their own personal interpretations of each work’s content, style and, crucially, intention; that is, the intent of all those involved in the film making and production processes.

Although educators must remain mindful of directing students towards a particular reading, clear instruction and defined learning objectives are required if students are to wholly benefit from film in the class/seminar room. The NLG (1996: 23) refers to the much cited, Vygotsky (in Cole 1978) for his claims surrounding collaboration in practice being a foundation of learning, and arguments about how certain forms of overt instruction are needed to supplement immersion (acquisition) if learners are to gain the conscious awareness and control of what they acquired. That is, just because many young people are immersed in multimodal/multiliteracy texts, it does not mean they know how to interpret them. An important first step towards providing students with the means to effectively acquire and decipher knowledge from film is through ensuring the familiarity of the relevant filmic terms, such as ‘cinematography’, ‘mise-en-scène’; ‘low-angle shot’, ‘dissolve’ and so on; usually needed in both English and the target-language. There is an additional requirement to establish a language to describe the forms of meaning that are represented; in other words, educators and students need a metalanguage; ‘a language for talking about language, images, texts and meaning-making interactions’ (NLG 1996: 16). The metalanguage must be capable of supporting sophisticated critical analysis of language and other semiotic systems, yet at the same time, not make unrealistic demands on the educator and the learner (Ibid). Ideal activities are those which incite intercultural competence (as referred to earlier), whereby students are equipped to ‘develop linguistic competence, sociolinguistic [...] competence and intercultural consciousness’ (Ortí et al. 2011: 1). The development of linguistic proficiency must be an indispensable partner to the content component of the class (Stephens 2001: 3). Students should be encouraged to practise and develop their linguistic skills in activities that focus on narration, reaction and summary before they are expected to analyse or evaluate the film orally or in writing.

When considering the most appropriate lesson structure, educators need to firstly ‘exploit prior knowledge’ (Mitchell and Swarbrick 1994: 2). Showing film scenes before discussion gives students a recallable visual image to which they can compare the topics under discussion, whereas showing scenes after describing or discussing theory and concepts allows for the use of scenes as a ‘video case’ (Champoux 1999: 9-10). Both approaches offer scope for students to develop their analytical
skills in applying what they are actually learning. Repeating scenes is especially helpful when trying to develop students’ understanding of complex topics (Wolensky 1982: 17) and ‘repeated engagements with film education further increase attainment’ (ALA 2007: 3).

There are a number of particular issues and themes to be aware of in the specific context of the study of Spanish cinema. For example: ‘the prevalence, meaning, and effect of violence’; ‘the shifting filters through which [Spanish] films present gender and sexuality’; and ‘competing images of Spain as a nation: those promoted by Francoist ideals and those promoted by films who directly or indirectly challenged Francoist viewpoints’ (Stephens 2001: 3-5). An examination of violence in Spanish cinema reveals that it is ‘at times notably absent and at other times horrifyingly graphic, [and that] anyone attempting to describe the distinctive characteristics of Spanish cinema usually begins with its excessive violence’ (Ibid).44 The political struggle of the Civil War is often framed as a clash between the two Spains: two competing visions of Spain, which are fleshed out repeatedly in Spanish cinema. It is also necessary to carefully consider how gender and sexuality are ‘frequently linked to violence in Spanish film’, revealing a ‘dynamic interplay of stereotypes or roles, and their distortions or inversions’ (Ibid) (see Section 3.2). Films such as Belle Epoque (Trueba 1992), Camada negra (Gutiérrez Aragón 1977), La ley del deseo (Almodóvar 1987), Matador (Almodóvar 1986), Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (Almodóvar 1988) and Amantes (Aranda 1991) - works which problematise issues of national identity, violence and gender - help students infer the framework against, and in which, artists work. When choosing the most appropriate level and resources related to the teaching and learning of Spanish films, an appropriate place to start is with the Curriculum Plans provided by the Instituto Cervantes45 and also the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. A final model to use when identifying and planning the use of particular works, and at the teaching and learning stage, incorporates seven core concepts for educators: coherence, authenticity, clarity, variety, flexibility (for different levels), motivation and professional appearance (Herrero 2015). Any teaching and learning model must however also be further inspired and extended via the educator’s responsibility to access a variety of literature on the works, their creators and the related topic areas appropriate to the level and particular learning context. As for the requirement to expose students to a suitable range of works and filmmakers, teachers/lecturers’ and students’ own understandings and evaluations of each artistic work should be developed and influenced by other spectators’, scholars’ and critics’ perceptions in any comprehensive, balanced and responsible pedagogy related to an art form.

44 See also Kinder (1993a: 138).
2.3: Prominent filmmakers in Spanish studies: literature review-based case-studies
(Almodóvar and del Toro)

The school curriculum analysis in Section 2.1 revealed that Pedro Almodóvar and Guillermo del Toro have historically been two of the most popular directors within Spanish cinema studies. Whilst del Toro remains a prominent feature of school-based film study, most notably with regards to El laberinto del fauno, Almodóvar manages to cross between school study - more so at A level than at GCSE - and undergraduate programmes with notable frequency. Del Toro and Almodóvar’s respective filmographies are considered in detail in Delgado and Fiddian’s (2013) work, whilst the additional two publications outlined previously - Smith (2000) and Allinson (2001) - provide an extended analysis of Almodóvar’s oeuvre covering the period up to Almodóvar’s thirteenth feature film, Todo sobre mi madre. Due to their prominence in both the literature cited so far and the curriculum review presented in Section 2.1, Matador (1986), Mujeres (1988) and Todo (1999) are presented in this section as central to the discussion of Almodóvar’s particular significance to current Spanish teaching and learning. Similarly, El laberinto - primarily, although not exclusively as considered by Delgado and Fiddian - is the central focus of this section’s analysis of del Toro’s work due to its dominance across, at least, school, curricula and as the director’s undisputable biggest Spanish-speaking commercial success. As is argued in the chapters that follow, a study of the prominence of these two directors (and their critical contexts) firstly facilitates the establishment of patterns, trends and traditions related to teaching and learning methodologies in Spanish sociocultural studies. Secondly, it captures a series of notable gaps in the current, film-related Spanish curriculum, and a broader group of limitations hindering the widest, best informed and, essentially, most effective, teaching and learning of Spanish.

The previous section made the case that studies in national cinemas are of great benefit when attempting to demonstrate, explain or better understand a given nation, at least, that is, from the subjective perspective of the filmmaker(s). It is however important to consider where and to what extent particular filmmakers and particular works, both individually and collectively, create the image of the nation itself, viewed from both within and outside of its borders. Established auteurs and younger generations of filmmakers have harnessed cinematic language towards a commentary on the nation-state and the politics of historical and cultural memory. Almodóvar has become ‘an international trademark’ and ‘the visibility of his work through the exhibition sector in Europe, Asia and the Americas has further served to generate interest in Spanish film products’ (Delgado 2013: 1-2). In such case, Almodóvar may be to thank for some of the extended academic interest in Spanish cultural studies at both school and university level in recent years. With the popularity of other modern languages, most notably, German, in a fairly consistent decline - possibly, in part at least, as a direct result of a steady rise in the popularity of Spanish - it is more significant than ever to look carefully at all factors behind such shifts in subject choices, and the associated concerns for the future of British

46 Volver is probed specifically in subsequent sections, as is clarified.
47 According to www.imdb.com, the film grossed $87,041,569 worldwide.
linguists. Could one of these factors lie within the surging popularity of Spanish filmmakers abroad? Arguably, an achievement not reached to the same extent during the same period by other European nations. “The [Spanish] auteur is no longer a figure with mere minority appeal [… and] the crossover attraction of popular genres [has] muddied the boundaries between “popular” and “auteurist”” (Delgado 2013: 3). Notable global box-office successes such as Abre los ojos (Amenábar 1997), [REC] (Balaquero and Plaza 2007), El orfanato and Los ojos de Julia (Morales 2010) have helped to re-establish the identity and popularity of Spanish cinema on a domestic and international scale in recent decades. There has however been much debate spanning the same time period highlighting the specific implications of these works for interpretations of national identity. Discourse has focused on the works’ contents, artistic designs, genres, the professional and personal identities of the filmmakers, and their transnational identity appeal. Often such discourse is tied directly to perceptions of a nation that had for so long struggled to freely portray itself in all artistic forms due to the heavy censorship imposed by the Francoist dictatorship. On the reverse side, as is emphasised in the data-led, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there is a significant and increasing demand for Spanish culture - including from foreign audiences – to contain broader and more diverse thematic preoccupations than those offered currently.

In 2017 and 2018, Spanish films produced an impressive turnover of more than one hundred million euros at the Spanish box-office (Rivera 2019). But, looking back at the details of Spanish film production in the last two decades reveals a less straightforward, although even more enlightening picture with regards to the evolving nature of national and international audiences. In 1998, sixty-five full-length films were produced in Spain. This figure rose to one hundred and seventy-three in 2008 and two hundred in 2010. However, while the level of investment increased, the level of state investment was not matched by box-office income (Delgado 2013: 4). In fact, during 2010, none of the top ten box-office hits were home-grown; a concern summarised by Ignasi Guardans (then Director General of the ICAA; Spanish cinema then had ‘the lowest market share in Europe’). The international market and the branding of Spain remain the key determinants for film in the second decade of the twenty-first century (Delgado 2013: 5). Spanish cinema had to hold and expand its international popularity for obvious commercial reasons, but, in doing so, there would be a much more profound and, as noted above, enlightening, implication for both how this impacted the creative processes of the filmmakers, and indeed, the resulting impact on both domestic and foreign audiences. In such a process, Spanish cinema essentially attempts to ‘sell’ various versions of the Spanish image. Such a process is of course far from new or uniquely associated with Spain; ‘film produces space and in doing so shapes how we see the world’ (Lefebvre 1991, cited in Delgado 2013: 5). However, a closer analysis of the associated processes involved in the Spanish context during this time is fundamental to any meaningful interpretations of Spanish subjectivity and provides a vehicle to simultaneously broaden and unite all available methods of sociocultural study. Stars such

48 https://cineuropa.org/newsdetail/365008
49 See details at https://cineuropa.org/en/interview/135013/
as Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz (see Section 5.4) have a key part to play; ‘global stars whose selling power promotes an image of Spain as an ‘alluring, desirable “other”’ (Delgado 2013: 5). For teachers and students aiming to fully engage in the specific make-up of Spanish star status as simultaneously linked to the (industry-led) promotion of national and/or regional identity, and the persistent preoccupations to define and redefine what or who ‘Spanish’ actually is, it is necessary to delve further than generic ideas about recognisability, identification and an appreciation of acting talent. That said, the internationally successful careers (and closely followed personal lives) of actors such as Cruz and Bardem (particularly when recognised as a married couple) can only help to strengthen students’ interest in foreign works, whereby the teacher may be more readily able to make reference to English-speaking roles (and involvement in other industries and media, such as modelling and television roles) as a means to associate the studied film with familiar points of cultural reference, and perhaps reduce the alien feel sometimes associated with foreign cinema.

New ICAA director general in 2011, Carlos Cuadros, readdressed the importance of selling Spain through its cinema: ‘cinema is the best tool for promoting the brand of a country and its products’. Similarly, Enrique Salazar, vice-president of the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade, declared the same year, ‘Spain needs an international profile and foremost in its creation is cinema; a key element for a country’s economy and image’ (both cited in Delgado 2013: 5). Such comments are very much harmonious with the politically orchestrated and, largely, economically driven, Marca España project; ‘a process of economic and political instrumentalisation conducted by large companies who promote a simplified and homogeneous image of national culture’ (Rius and Martín 2014: 20-21). Diez Nicolás (2003: 103) declares that ‘culture and Spanish language are first order assets that the country has underutilised’. A study into the origins of the Marca España - from the original policies of the Aznar-led Partido Popular government of 1996-2004, through to the much debated actions of the Zapatero-led PSOE government of 2004-2011 - not only provides a vital context in which to base an academic analysis of recent Spanish film history, but also, a pedagogical platform for broader teaching and learning related to Spain’s socioeconomic political history. As a nation which has notoriously had to prove and improve its own economic reputation - both during the Transition years and again, following the financial crisis of 2008 - strategies associated with Spain’s self-promotion abroad, such as the Marca España, offer an ideal vehicle for contextualising an extensive wave of Spanish cinema, not least, within the very notion of what a ‘Spanish’ film is; its evolution as a genre itself, and within, a redefinition of existing genres, as is explored below.

Winner of seven Goyas, nine Ariels and three Oscars, El laberinto del fauno was the third and ninth most popular feature film in Spain in 2006 and 2007, respectively. Various sources dispute the official genre of the film, such as www.imdb.com (2019), which labels it as a ‘drama’, a ‘fantasy’ and a ‘war film’. However, the film was generally received as a horror (Smith 2013: 146). Before picking up on the specific pedagogical relevance of such stylistic associations, it is necessary to consider del Toro’s

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50 Also see Dyer and McDonald (1998).
51 See also Martinez (2003).
'personal style and vision uniquely capable of crossing national frontiers and generic borderlines' (Smith, *Ibid*), and specifically, the nationality (as a form of genre) of the film itself. As a film production, *El laberinto* may be considered as much a Mexican film as it is Spanish.52 The cultural allegiance of *El laberinto* is however more difficult to apportion. Although set in Spain during the aftermath of the Civil War, del Toro has publicly connected the violence in the film to a ‘Mexican sensibility’.53 Therefore, prior to looking at how the film is representative of horror, fantasy and so on - reminiscent of a number of specimens and past (AQA) A level Paper 2 essay questions related to genre styles and technical identities54 - it would be useful to reflect on what might be considered a film’s initial genre or type; that is, to which national cinema(s) it belongs. In doing so, students are additionally able to gain an insight into the different production companies involved in making the film and, most importantly, (re)consider the nature of national perspective relevant to audiences and filmmakers. Moreover, students of ‘Spanish’ are, after all, meant to ‘learn the language in the context of Hispanic countries [and discover] highlights of Hispanic artistic culture’ in direct conjunction with how all aspects relate back to Spain (AQA 2017a: 10).

By locating a genre film for the second time at a precise and traumatic moment in Spanish history,55 del Toro encourages spectators to read the fantasy format that generally transcends time and space within a very particular context. Genre conventions function as triggers of recognition for competent audiences and intersect in complex and unstable ways with a number of different factors: nationality, history, industry and sexuality (Smith 2013: 146). Here, educators and students are reminded about the complexities required by any labelling of a cultural product, particularly due to variables surrounding audience reception. Genre studies is also likely to offer scope in the class/seminar room for a more informed discussion about how to define and interpret the terms of ‘nationality’, ‘history’, ‘industry’ and ‘sexuality’ in a Spanish context. This includes the various implications of studying a Spanish, Mexican or Argentinian film, for example, on students’ learning of the Spanish language, or, the varying impacts of watching films with male or a female central characters, for example. Such cases also provide a reminder of the relevance of considering the varying nationalities, genders and all forms of differing identities of spectators when approaching analysis of any ‘foreign’ cultural and/or artistic products in the MFL class/seminar room.

More than just another typical horror film, *El laberinto* incorporates ‘revamped versions of traditional monsters and more abstract “personifications”’, none clearer than Captain Vidal (Sergi López), as the ‘embodiment of sadistic machismo and the incarnation of death’ (Smith 2013: 150). Weightier readings of *El laberinto* as a horror film may also address ‘the most recognisable characteristic of Spanish horror’; that is, ‘the interaction between eroticism and violence or sex and death’ (Smith

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52 Coproduction between Tequila Gang (del Toro) and Picasso Studios (Tele 5).
54 ‘Analyse the techniques that del Toro uses to explore the fantasy world of Ofelia’ (AQA 2018b); ‘Analyse the techniques used by the director to represent the regime of horror that predominated during this postwar period’ (AQA 2018a).
55 After *El espíritu del diablo* (2001), labelled the ‘brother film’ of *El laberinto*.
2013: 148). Other character personifications which, if studied in sufficient detail and in the context of both artistic representation of historical figures and the cinematic concept of intertextuality, ⁵⁶ help students gain a more profound appreciation of the cinematic technique of characterisation and/or character representation more generally. This is also a regular feature of (reformed) A level essays. ⁵⁷ A good example can be found in del Toro’s character, The Faun (Doug Jones); ‘the object of the child’s [Ofelia’s (Ivana Baquero)] fascination, but also of her fear’, which can be directly compared to Ana’s (Ana Torrent) view of Frankenstein (after she has watched James Whales’ 1931 version) in Erice’s El espíritu de la colmena (1973) (Smith, Ibid). Similarly, El espíritu offers clear precedents for various scenes in El laberinto, such as that of Ofelia replacing the eyes of the statue, reminiscent of Ana – another female child protagonist, placing the glasses on the skeleton, Don José. Smith (2013: 151) notes how, firstly, female heroes are relatively rare in Spanish cinema, and secondly, the several and less haunting films with a similar theme that followed El espíritu and preceded El laberinto tended to employ boys as uncomprehending witnesses to historical horror. Smith (Ibid) cites a reviewer in the national daily, 20 Minutos (2006), who claims that El laberinto had more in common with the ‘childhood regressions’ of Erice than with recent ‘magical-mythological’ spectacles like the Harry Potter and Chronicles of Narnia franchises. In this respect, El laberinto may be presented in the class/seminar room as a work more true to its national and cultural heritage than it is to international genre conventions.

That said, El laberinto fully capitalises on the most dramatic elements afforded by the horror genre and it is within the playing out of such elements that students are most readily able to recognise the particular tendencies of del Toro as a director, whereby genre conventions are exaggerated and manipulated to emphasise identities of figures and groups within the historical backdrop, such as children, women and so on. ‘In this slippery film world, we are both Red Riding Hood and the Wolf: the force of the experience in horror comes from knowing both sides of the story’ (Clover 2000: 12). Spectators know what Ofelia’s fate will be from the start of the film, as the opening scene begins with a rewinding shot of blood rushing back into Ofelia’s nose as she lies dying next to the labyrinth. El laberinto can be classed as a Spanish horror film which ‘engages with a special matrix of nationality, history, industry and sexuality’, and one which has ‘established a unique and invaluable model for the future of Spanish genre film’ (Smith 2013: 156). The strands of such analysis aptly frame and re-clarify the three essential components of this research: the pedagogical methodologies, theories and practices involved in visual pedagogy; the development of film literacy, analysis and criticism; and the learning of Spanish language and socio-historical/cultural identities. Sufficiently addressing all three areas equates to the most robust and authoritative approach to fully exploiting the educational value of foreign cinema as a cultural product, as is now demonstrated via an analysis of Almodóvar’s œuvre.

⁵⁷ ‘Analyse the human or unhuman behaviour of the characters in the film’ (Las 13 rosas, AQA 2018b); ‘Examine how men are presented in the film’ (Volver, AQA 2018a).
'No other Spanish cultural product has been as instrumental in the 1980s and 1990s in shaping the world’s impressions of Spanish national identity' (Allinson 2001: 25). Such a bold statement not only sets Almodóvar apart from other Spanish directors of the same period, but also attaches considerable responsibility to the cineaste. Popular in university Spanish departments, Matador can be viewed as a ‘highly stylised version of a singular national mythology [and a] sophisticated commentary on national identity. It may well be [Almodóvar’s] most studied as well as his most misunderstood creation’ (Allinson 2001: 153). When studying Matador, it is hard to ignore the plethora of visual nods to a stereotyped national identity via the colourful, bullfighting-infused mise-en-scène. Such references are visible from the film’s opening shots of María (Asumpta Serna) luring her first victim to a corrida-inspired death, until the film’s closing scene of Diego’s (Nacho Martínez) murder and María’s suicide in a ‘combination of abstraction and hispanicity […], dense with iconography of the españolada’ (Smith 2000: 76). Specifically, spectators are exposed to a torero-style cape, which the lovers lie on, dominant reds and yellows and the flower Diego holds in his teeth; suggestive of a victory flower thrown to a torero. The final love scene is accompanied by the Spanish, tragic love song, Espérame en el cielo (performed by Mina); ‘its first bars of pure Spanish guitar perfect for the corrida-inspired tableau of yellow and red’ (Smith, *ibid*). Almodóvar has in fact commented that the song could have been written especially for the film. Matador is a work ripe for study of the relationship between cinematic aesthetics and the playful manipulation of national identity. Aside from just the film’s audiovisual qualities however, it has been suggested that the film’s title is more than just the Spanish for ‘bullfighter’, but a compilation of the words mata and d’or; namely, long, golden tresses (symbolic of danger). Almodóvar has also claimed that the ‘M’ in Matador also stands for mirar and muerte, which echoes the frequent episodes of voyeurism and recurring theme of death (Smith 2013: 67). When teaching Matador, it is critical to remain mindful of varying definitions of Spanish identity and culture (as discussed earlier), and indeed, the multiple, motivational components involved in any exaggerated display of national culture, including economic. It is worth noting that Matador was generously financially supported by the Ministry of Culture; such was the perception of its worth to Spain’s culture.

Almodóvar is well known as a director who not only toys with perceptions of Spanish culture, but also as a filmmaker dedicated to portraying his own vision of Spanish society. In this sense, Almodóvar’s oeuvre constitutes an ideal contextual focus point for ‘develop[ing students’] linguistic skills alongside their understanding of the culture and society of the countries where Spanish is spoken’, and exposing them to ‘social issues and trends’ (AQA 2017a: 5-12). Almodóvar’s films can be regarded as ‘social histories of their time’; he uses the film medium to ‘make critical points about Spanish society and about the contemporary world’, and his films reflect a ‘contemporary society which encompasses economic relationships, education, television and the media, crime, law enforcement and friendship’ (Allinson 2001: 46). With such a socially thematic range, it is understandable why Almodóvar’s films are so predominant on A level specifications (*Volver* and undergraduate programmes (various). However, the previously discussed problems with the term ‘reality’ in relation to the study of ‘Spanish society’ through film mean - to recapitulate - that students must be reminded of the subjective
perspective and creativity of the filmmaker, and the constant requirement for their own informed, critical interpretation. After all, ‘dysfunctional relationships and other forms of conflict are required for drama’ (Allinson, *Ibid*). Interesting debate also arises from questioning the extent to which Almodóvar seeks to paint an accurate picture of Spanish society. It is well-documented that the director has largely (with some exceptions) sought to avoid any reference to the dictatorship years in his works. However, a focused study of Almodóvar’s works reveals commentary on a ‘national inferiority complex’ and the ‘Spanish temperament’, represented via ‘interfering caretakers [*Mujeres*], over-talkative taxi drivers [*Mujeres*] and domineering grandmothers, always speaking in proverbs and pining for their villages [*¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?* (1984); *Volver*] (Allinson 2001: 41). Such descriptions undoubtedly constitute stereotypes, in which case, they may be wholly unsuitable for any genuine understanding of a contemporary Spanish society. It may also be argued however that stereotypical figures present in any cultural product are, at the very least, easily identifiable and understood, and in that context, provide clear and distinguishable figures for post-screen discussion and subsequent studies in characterisation and representation. And despite such crude associations of stereotyping, in the particular case of Almodóvar, such referencing incorporates subversion and irony as a means to make the dramatic and/or comedic element the key feature of its documenting of an evolving society, as exemplified below.

Almodóvar frequently stereotypes and makes a mockery of the Spanish police, such as the duo in *Mujeres* who come to Pepa’s (Carmen Maura) apartment; the sarcastic boss and the earnest but inexperienced sidekick (Allinson 2001: 60). The police officers are ‘dispensed with gazpacho’; a sequence that captures ‘a spectacle of authority completely undermined and made to look ridiculous’ (Edwards 1995: 194). Almodóvar may again be read as playing to genre traditions for comedic purposes; clueless policemen often frequent the screens of comedy films. Figures of authority and professionals are generally not represented in a positive light, with the police being the most frequently depicted in a critical or derisory tone (Allinson 2001: 47). However, analysis of such representation provides a constructive stage for teaching students about the changing role of the police in Spanish society, from the time of Franco, through to the Transition years and to the present day. Through such characterization and representation, Almodóvar can be read as an auteur attempting to critique the lack of evolution of a police force - the *Policia Armada* and *Guardia Civil* - known as two of the most feared and hated groups in Franco’s Spain (Allinson 2001: 58-59).

Smith (2000: 194) observes Almodóvar’s ‘increasing engagement with social issues’, while Allinson (2001: 48) notes a change in the Spanish society portrayed in the director’s films after the ‘hedonistic 1980s’. In *Todo* (1999), for example, pregnant nun Rosa (Penélope Cruz) works with prostitutes and the poor, and Manuela (Cecilia Roth) is an intensive care nurse and trains doctors in handling organ donations. Through such character identities and the particular roles they play in society, spectators are exposed to ‘effective support relations between middle-class social workers, prostitutes, nurses and actresses’, which suggest a ‘functioning society, unlike the dysfunctional and corrupt world of earlier films’ (*Ibid*). A study of Almodóvar’s later films is likely to give a stronger impression of a
modern, complex but cohesive society, where people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences work together and largely successfully.

Educators interested in exploring (representations of) class in Spanish society should note that, on the one hand, shifts in class status in Almodóvar’s world are not a predominant feature, nor are they presented as a significant preoccupation for his characters. Pepa’s apartment in *Mujeres*, for example, is a ‘well-designed, luxury penthouse, which alludes to her comfortable financial status in a “fashionable Madrid society” [and] the lack of social problems leaves the characters free to sort out their own emotional problems’ (Allinson, *ibid*). Similarly, in *Matador*, all of the characters enjoy a lavish lifestyle, supported by successful careers. When María asks Diego if his mansion was expensive, he replies, ‘Money doesn’t worry me. I’ve earned enough in the past’ (Allinson 2001: 51). Such examples do however lie in sharp contrast to Almodóvar’s 1984 film, *¿Qué he hecho?,* where the lower social class of Gloria (Carmen Maura) defines much of the central character’s identity and her plight. Despite this, it is recommended to open up class/seminar room discussion about whether or not Almodóvar’s body of works preoccupy themselves with the Spanish-specific social ills of the day, per se, or instead, if social ills of the past or present simply present a light-hearted or somewhat incidental backdrop for the central characters to play out their own conflicts, largely independent of social class or status.

That said, towards the end of *Mujeres*, Pepa recognises the value of her spacious and stylish apartment by announcing, ‘I think I won’t rent it after all. I love the views’. The view certainly is impressive, perhaps too impressive, as it is the case that the actual view from Pepa’s apartment would be impossible (Smith 2000: 94). A class/seminar room analysis of this setting (and view) firstly facilitates the positive impression that Madrid is a modern and aesthetically pleasing city. However, a closer scrutiny reveals that similar views would only be available to those of ‘a certain social milieu’, or ‘higher standing economically’ (Allinson 2001: 116). By the late 1980s, such *terrazas* culture would become known as fashionable status symbols in the city. Such settings can be interpreted as reflective of ‘a world of smart penthouses, stylish clothes and the confident, bold colours of late 1980s and early 1990s Spain (Allinson 2001: 177). In such case, Almodóvar can be read as giving the impression that the Spanish capital is a prosperous and desirable place to be, which can be studied in sharp contrast to earlier films such as *¿Qué he hecho?,* or his first feature film, *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980).

Almodóvar’s Madrid can readily be studied as a city of random, casual acquaintance; Pepa (*Mujeres*) coincidentally ends up in the same taxi with the same driver three times, and meets her lover’s son and his wife coincidentally when they view Pepa’s apartment, for example. Ending in an airport, this work captures the capital and those who live within it as subjects of an attractive, dynamic and fast-moving way of life, similar to *La flor de mi secreto* (1995), *Carne trémula* and *Todo* (known as his ‘blue-trilogy’). ‘By taking his films out on to the streets of the Spanish capital, Almodóvar reflected, starred in and arguably directed the most exciting period in Spain’s cultural history after Franco’
(Allinson 2001: 13). A guided, comparative study of such works’ locational framing relevant to significant periods in Spain’s sociohistorical culture is therefore well-appointed to achieve learning outcomes related to the reformed A level’s focus on ‘how Spanish-speaking society has been shaped socially and culturally and how it continues to change’ (AQA 2017a: 10).

Todo should be approached as a special case due to being mostly set in Barcelona; the mirror of transformed Spain as much as its capital. A regional setting again raises important questions for educators about how to define Spanish national identity and of the intra-national disputes between the central state and so called ‘historical nations’ of Catalonia and the Basque country (Allinson 2001: 22-25). Such content provides an ideal stimulus for class/seminar room dialogue and deliberation surrounding the distinctive identities, evolving constitutional rights and turbulent struggles towards independence of these two regions. In the legacy A level, such topics provide a substantial focus for ‘the study of a Spanish-speaking country, city or region’ and in the reformed A level, they fit well within the areas of ‘[Spain’s] political landscape’ and the sub-topic, ‘Spanish regional identity’ (AQA 2017a: 11-12). But this film is also rich material for the breakdown of technical aspects used to capture the desired look and feel of a chosen location.58 In Todo, Barcelona is introduced with a swooping helicopter shot over the Tibidado hill down to the night lights of the bay below, capturing for Almodóvar, ‘the greatest of film sets’ (cited in Smith 2000: 191). Many students will undoubtedly recognise the lit up Sagrada Familia basilica, first captured from above and then reflected against the window of Manuela’s taxi. Further landmarks include Montjuïc and the Hospital del Mar; twin ancient and modern faces of the Spanish city by the sea (Ibid). Focused studies on setting may also encourage students to appreciate the typical Catalan architecture in the barrio of Eixample, for instance, where Rosa takes Manuela to meet her mother (Rosa Maria Sardà) who inhabits a ‘glamorous apartment decorated in the ornate modernism of Catalan art nouveau’ (Ibid). For a student of Catalan, it may be disappointing that, despite the film’s location for much of the film, only a few greetings are exchanged in Catalan; the ‘bilingual status of Barcelona is barely acknowledged’ (Smith 2000: 192). However, ‘just as performance and authenticity are gleefully confused, so location and dislocation go hand in hand’ (Ibid). Other related examples of cross-regional conflicts worth class/seminar room analysis include the prostitute scene before Manuela is reunited with Agrado (Antonia San Juan), which was actually filmed in Madrid, but with Catalan transsexuals, and the introduction to the city of Barcelona accompanied by a Senegalese song about a Muslim celebration of the love of children (Tajabone, by Senegalese artist-songwriter, Ismaël Lô). An interpretation of the song’s message fits well within a similarly, family-centred artistic work (at least as the title suggests - All about my mother), however, it also provides educators with a useful device in mapping artistic distortions of Spanish nationalist identity. In this specific case, students are able to reflect on the representation of ‘the most exotic, cosmopolitan and least “Spanish” of Spain’s cities’ (Allinson 2001: 198).

58 Required by, for example, AQA Specimen Paper 2, 2018: ‘Analyse the way in which Almodóvar explores the notion of the “Spanish town/village” (Volver).
Democracy has brought with it recognition that Spain is a state where linguistic difference is acknowledged (if not always celebrated) (Delgado 2013: 6). During the years since the end of the dictatorship, Spanish cinema has been able to offer a much broader educational platform for gaining immediate access to (artistically) represented identities of the autonomous regions and diverse range of languages and cultural heritages within Spain. Much of the discussion so far supports the idea that Spanish film is a powerful resource for helping to educate students about the Transition to democracy and shift from ‘blanket nationalism under Franco’ (Delgado 2013: 6). The inclusion of both El laberinto and Las 13 rosas on both of the prescribed lists of the reformed A level (and La lengua de las mariposas, Cuerda 1999, for Edexcel) confirms that the impact of Francoism remains a dominant feature of many current A level studies in Spanish social identity. However, there are a wide number of additional Spanish films made since the end of the dictatorship which, although they do not make specific reference to Franco or Fascism, reveal a great deal about changes in Spanish society. More specifically, they provide a platform for the comparison of traditional and modern Spanish values (as required by the reformed AQA specification 2017a: 10-11) due to their particular contents and the creative and industrial freedom in which they were made. Countless, prominent Spanish works from recent decades could never have been made under Franco; Castón’s Ander (2009), largely, due to its dealings with gay politics, and also Medem’s several works set in the Basque Country; filmed in Basque and often containing plots centred around Basque separatist terrorism, to note but a few. However, much can be learned via class/seminar discussion about how not all Spanish films made during the dictatorship are totally void of socio-politically critical content. El espíritu, for example, holds ‘the model of a restrained and understated storyline that can be read as an allegory of post-Civil War Spain’ (Delgado 2013: 7). Gaining access to a wider variety of works, therefore, provides both a fresh perspective on well-documented and, somewhat overly dominant, topics and themes within the context of Spanish sociocultural studies, but also encourages students to see beyond such constricted connotations when developing their own informed perspective on what Spain and ‘Spanish’ means to them. It is the intention of the next chapter to build further on the varying perspectives of Spain and Spanish - and their specific implications for the class/seminar room - by looking closely at the key terms and core concepts identified as most pertinent and most revealing in a directed and informed approach to Spanish cinematic works, as is made clear.
Chapter 3: Key terms and core concepts

3.1: Visual, Film and Multimodal Literacy: a documentary analysis and literature review

Although the written word has for some time no longer been considered by many as the only element in literacy education (Hererro and Valbuena 2009; Knobel and Lankshear 2008; Álvarez 2009; Sherman 2003), statutory requirements and government-led initiatives continue to disregard the huge potential of the moving image, including film, in literacy education and indeed, in improving literacy standards.\(^59\) It has therefore been a disappointment that the National Strategies (1997-2011) (DfE 2011),\(^60\) introduced by the then, Labour Government, omitted film or any form of media or the arts non-specific to the written word from its direction. It is equally disappointing that the current national curriculum (DfE 2014a),\(^61\) implemented by the Conservatives, does not offer any substantial encouragement to incorporate audio-visual resources within the development of literacy in MFL. It does however stipulate that ‘the writing [students] do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations’; all of which lend themselves very well to foreign film analysis and critique, as suggested in the previous section. Meanwhile, the A level has for many years expected students to learn to ‘communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes’ (AQA (legacy) 2014: 19). The reformed A level (2016) requires students to ‘engage critically [with] films […] in the original language, developing an appreciation of sophisticated and creative uses of the language and understanding them within their cultural and social context’.\(^62\) In this section, a number of arguments in favour of an improved literacy education for GCSE students through foreign (Spanish) cinema and via the incorporation of visual, film and multimodal literacies are put forward. This includes an analysis of definitions, theories and methods in practice, with particular reference to the work of the BFI (2004-2010), the NLG (1996) and the Visual Literacy Standards Task Force (VLTF) (2011). The section offers primary answers to Research Questions 1-3 - although it also refers to implications for A level and undergraduate studies - and indeed, sets up the subsequent analysis performed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

In 1999, the BFI stated that being literate in the present day means students attaining ‘a wider range of critical and creative competencies than has been adequate in the past’ (BFI 2004: 4). At the launch of the Charter for Media Literacy in 2005, Anthony Minghella (cited by ALA 2007: 6) remarked that, ‘Given the way in which moving images can manipulate us, allow us to inhabit many differing points of view, take us on journeys to other times, places and cultures […], surely it’s time for our education system to hold the teaching of the sentence we watch\(^63\) as no less important and crucial than the teaching of the sentence we read’. It is somewhat confusing, then, that recent changes to GCSEs and

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59 See Ofsted (2013).
A levels do not fully reflect the calls of the BFI, Anthony Minghella, or indeed, many of the scholars cited in Chapter 2, who emphasise the importance of properly embedding film study into MFL education, including the ability to ‘read’ films (and the moving image more generally), just as students are taught to read books. At A level, although it is still possible (and so far, highly popular) to study a Spanish film, the reformed course places an increased emphasis on literature, whereby some teachers may opt for students to explore two books instead. Meanwhile at GCSE, there has never been a specific recommendation to include cinema on the course. With growing evidence that the GCSE MFL course is failing to attract the vast majority of the GCSE cohort, at least partly due to a curriculum that fails to convince young people of its relevance and diversity, it is timely to consider the direct impact of the sources and methodologies used. After all, much evidence suggests that the majority of those GCSE MFL students who do study film tend to enjoy it, but many miss the opportunity. In such case, the DfE (2015: 5) requirements that ‘content, contexts and purposes […] will provide an appropriate foundation for A level’ are likely to cause GCSE teachers and students significant confusion.

But what exactly is visual literacy? One useful definition is, ‘the use of visual images to communicate meaning [whereby] it is not just about superior design and aesthetics [but] also [how] culture and meaning are reflected, communicated and altered by images’ (Anon. 2013: 1). Another is, ‘the ability to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use and create images and visual media […] understand and analyse the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials’ (VLTF 2011: 1). Visual literacy in the class/seminar room involves both a gaining of the processes of interpreting and responding to visual imagery, and the study of what goes into constructing or manipulating such images. Precisely how this best applies to and works in the GCSE Spanish classroom is set out below.

As a starting point, educators are advised to look at the work of Dondis (1973: 15), who categorises the following visual elements to study: ‘shape, colour, light, scale and motion’. The Media Literacy Task Force (cited by the BFI 2013: 6) provides a model that centres on ‘the three C’s’; critical, cultural and creative, praising the popularity of ‘TV, DVDs and videos [for ensuring that] four and five-year-olds arrive in school with a wider grasp of [such] key concepts [and with an] understanding of narrative, genre, character, setting and time’. Such competencies are of significant benefit to the early development of essential skills in literacy (across all story-based art forms) needed at primary level, thus, providing a strong basis for learning at secondary. ‘Long before [students] learn to read, they can readily answer questions about films such as, “Can you tell what is going to happen next?” and “How can you tell?”’; questions which ‘develop [students’] ability to infer and predict[;] essential skills in the reading of any kind of text’ (BFI 2013: 6). Such a design is reminiscent of the DfE’s GCSE in MFL subject content (2015: 6), where students are expected to ‘deduce meaning from […]

65 See also ALA (2010: 8).
authentic material’ and to ‘draw inferences in context and recognise implicit meaning where appropriate’. Using film in the Spanish classroom carries benefits to fulfil such statutory expectations, although, as pointed out previously, the subject content fails to make any mention of film or the moving image. Either the DfE does not agree with the findings presented in Chapter 2 and those outlined above, or, it thinks that foreign cinema only belongs at A level and beyond. When students are exposed to films and filmmakers that they would perhaps not otherwise know about, they are empowered to ‘engage with the widest possible range of people, stories and cultures’ (BFI 2013: 6). Specific sections of the subject content touch upon such areas as key to learning at GCSE, for example, where ‘students should develop their ability and ambition to communicate with native speakers’, and where the GCSE course should ‘encourage [students] to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop new ways of seeing the world’ (3). The DfE guidance may in such case be considered, at best, confusing for teachers and students, and at worst, outdated, or simply, insufficient.

In further emphasis of why literacy education today does not meet modern demands, it is firstly useful to note the BFI’s (2013: 5) definition of literacy in the modern day as, ‘the repertoire of knowledge, understanding and skills that enables us all to participate in social, cultural and political life’. There can be little doubt that a bombardment of moving imagery is accepted as commonplace in today’s English society, largely due to advances in technology and, in particular, the internet, which feeds into a continuously increasing demand among users and/or consumers (Hattwig et al. 2011: 1). The dominance of images and visual media in contemporary culture(s) is unquestionably changing what it means to be literate in the twenty-first century. A key question for educators is whether or not such an increasing demand and/or expectation is matched with an increase in skills (among students, but also, in some cases, teachers) to critically view and interpret such images. Despite several findings that a high proportion of students engage with visual materials throughout their childhood, much of the literature scrutinised claims that many secondary students lack the sufficient means of interpretation, analysis and evaluation pertinent to exposure to such media in the classroom. It is crucial that appropriate skills are fully integrated into the MFL curriculum by the end of GCSE at the latest, particularly for students continuing with the subject in higher education, where they face the likelihood of being assessed in foreign film analysis. In essence, a clarification of objectives and guidelines is required when tackling the skills involved in film analysis; both for film as a form of visual media, and as an art form. A considerable amount has been written on the concepts of transliteracy, metaliteracy and multimodal literacy, although, as Hattwig et al. (2011: 1) conclude, ‘standards outlining student learning outcomes around interdisciplinary visual literacy have not been sufficiently articulated’.

Many of the ‘texts’ that students in the twenty-first century have to acquire and manage are built on images. But despite having a distinct visual character and set of principles, they can often be used in ways similar to the processes by which words are used. ‘There is the medium; there is form; there are a variety of artistic purposes and methods; there are genres and conventions [and] traditions’. Educators ‘must bring in the newer media […] to broaden the focus of […] activities and to bring
[them]selves to an understanding of the world inhabited by [their] students as well as by [them]selves’ (Stephens 2001: 1). Educators ought to capitalise on film in MFL education as a means to enhance the depths of students’ authentic subject knowledge, which also helps to bridge gaps in the relatability process between students and teachers/lecturers. This is particularly complex as educators not only attempt to bridge the student-teacher relationship gap, but they also attempt to break through the cultural barriers presented to students via a foreign-language film. In order for such gaps to be reduced, both parties need to share the knowledge of how best to deconstruct the images they are using and, essentially, share an understanding of how to be visually literate, which then enables students to become visually critical.

The ability to be both visually literate and visually critical is a vehicle for raised attainment (see BFI 2013: 22). Being visually literate allows for a greater understanding of other forms of media and other forms of literacy in the fields of cultural studies, art [and] literature. In a world surrounded by so many complex forms of imagery and sound, the development of visual literacy skills is essential to interpret the vast range of visual metaphors presented to audiences via multiple forms of media’ (Anon. 2013: 1-2). Metaphors serve many functions in prose and poetry and can therefore serve similar functions when using film as a teaching tool. They ‘clarify complex thoughts, bring vividness to abstractions, magnify a thought for dramatic effect, and gain insight’ (Champoux 1999: 6-7). A vital function of metaphor is the ‘expression of imagination and stimulating imaginative images in a reader or listener’; ‘a metaphor does not distort the facts described; it offers a new way of experiencing those facts’ (Hawkes 1972: 34). The encouragement of imagination, the incorporation of novel teaching and learning methods, and the cementing of information in students’ memories are, arguably, three of the most highly sought after objectives for Spanish teachers. Combined with the evidence presented so far, it can be concluded that teaching students to interpret artistic strategies, such as metaphors, as part of developing their skills in visual and film literacy, is likely to be both a stimulating and highly effective strategy within the development of students’ understanding of varying perceptions of what constitutes ‘Spanish’; as a language, a nationality and an academic subject.66

The use of film in Spanish teaching as a means of developing (visual) literacy does not come without its potential obstacles and restrictions. There is a danger of film in the Spanish classroom being used as a tool to convey some kind of perceived ‘reality’ associated to the language and the country of Spain more generally (see Section 2.2 and Section 5.2). GCSE teachers are urged to consider carefully the claims of scholars such as Champoux (1999: 12), who brands all films as fiction and notes how fiction writers and directors have much flexibility in how much ‘reality’ they want their films to show. Chapter 2 also emphasised the conflict between a director’s intentions, educators’ objectives and students’ own perceptions of the work they are exposed to. However, ‘the control is not in the writer’s words, but with the reader’s choices’ (Talty 2002).67 Bordwell (1987) also refers to ‘the reader’s choices’, but links such a process to the value of ‘active viewing’. Both active viewing and an

66 See also BFI (2013: 4).
encouragement to develop individual elucidation of all aspects of the films’ being are crucial components of film pedagogy. It is equally important for teachers to question their own perspectives and motivations, and the context in which they prepare, explain and, perhaps in some cases, feel tempted to control, the impact of the (audio-visual) subject matter. It is imperative to question how objective the teacher remains and how much individual interpretation is facilitated. ‘In order to be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities […] students bring to learning’ (NLG 1996: 11-12). Moreover, ‘pedagogy must seek to develop an ‘epistemology of pluralism that provides access without people having to erase or leave behind [those] different subjectivities’ (ibid).

A final important challenge for GCSE teachers to consider concerns the likelihood of students having limited familiarity with the various terms associated with visual literacy, media literacy, or more specifically, film literacy. An additional layer to the challenge concerns MFL teachers’ potential lack of experience, skills or knowledge specifically related to foreign film pedagogy. After all, there has not been any formalised expectation for GCSE or A level MFL teachers to possess the technical terminology and understanding required to carry out any form of specialised film analysis - methodologies of analysing, interpreting and critiquing film are seen by many as highly specialised, which is understandably off-putting for many teachers (see Chapter 4) - in the target-language (or possibly, in English). Students may therefore be unable to accurately articulate what is presented to them and therefore demonstrate their understanding of the work, sequence or shot. In any such case, students are more likely to revert to English (a very common problem at GCSE) and so, target-language usage is decreased.

Beyond the visual, a number of additional senses and indeed, skills, are involved in the development of literacy through foreign film study. Film is a ‘multisensory medium [that] offers students more than listening comprehension’ (Swaffar and Vlatten 1997: 175). It is an incorrect assumption that the principal purpose of incorporating foreign cinema in the MFL is to enhance listening skills, despite the clear benefits to listening, as pointed out previously and discussed at length in Chapter 4. The many different cognitive and critical functions involved in the film process extend the visual and the audio into the development of multiliteracies. This form of learning is inherent to foreign film pedagogy as it is ‘multimodal in nature’ (Pegrum, Hartley and Wechtler 2005: 55). ‘Due to the increasing importance of visual and media images, films have a great potential in the language classroom’ (Herrero and Chan 2010: 8). Film brings ‘together a large variety of modes’, increasingly important in the ‘new media age’ (Kress 2010: 30). The growing necessity for students to develop skills in recognising, understanding and interpreting the various elements involved in multisensory, multimodal and multiliteracy-based processes in the technology-age society is evident, although Chapters 4 and 5 test such ideas against the data gathered from questionnaires, examiner commentary analysis and core literature. Prior to this, it is important to establish the extent to which the reformed Spanish GCSE acknowledges the importance of developing multiliteracies through film and/or offers scope for its inclusion within the course.
As pointed out earlier, the DfE subject content makes no explicit mention of film, or indeed the terms, visual literacy, film literacy or multiliteracies. It does however state that students should ‘acquire new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking through the ability to understand and respond to a rich range of authentic spoken […] material’ (2015: 3). The plurality in this statement and of course the reference to a range of authentic spoken material do however set out expectations surrounding variety, diversity and creativity within the teaching and learning of the GCSE course; all of which the most effective foreign film study is able to achieve. Additionally, the development of audio-based literacy sits comfortably with the expectation for students to ‘understand […] a rich range of authentic spoken material’ (DfE 2015: 3). The development of different ‘ways of thinking’ lends itself well to the multimodal processes referred to above and explained further below. Similarly, where students are expected to understand different types of spoken language, including […] recorded material from authentic sources’ (4), teachers are invited to incorporate film as a robust example of ‘recorded material from authentic sources’. Based on different characters’ dialogue, perhaps spanning different time periods, and the use of narration, for example, students are directly exposed to various ‘different types of spoken language’. Such audio-based processes normally take place at the same time as the viewing of moving imagery, but in the classroom the learning processes, dependent on learning objectives, topics and outlined activities, are also added to the multimodality required by the student spectator.

Further to various academic sources emphasising film spectatorship as a ‘visual’ activity (Hererro and Valbuena 2009; Knobel and Lankshear 2008; Álvarez 2009; Sherman 2003), it is widely accepted that the processes involved are ‘considerably more multimodal’ (Bazalgette 2009: 22). In today’s classroom, this may not only involve cinema, but various forms of video and/or moving image media; although schools and other education and training providers have been using moving image media in classrooms for over ninety years, the increased use of moving image software in schools is now transforming the scope and potential of MIE’ (Bazalgette 2009: 12). The NLG (1996: 1) argues that the multiplicity of communication channels and an increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world [true even more today than of 1996] call for a much broader view of literacy than portrayed by traditional language-based approaches. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) challenge the traditional view on language’s central or dominant role in teaching and learning; arguing that other modes of communication, such as image, gesture, music, spatial and bodily codes also contribute to the multimodal ways of meaning-making and knowledge construction. Vygotsky (cited in Cole 1978) previously warned that ‘just because young people are immersed in multimodal/multiliteracy texts does not mean they know how to interpret them’. Should MFL teachers wish to accept they are part of a shared responsibility to show students how to do so, whether explicitly outlined in GCSE subject content or specifications or not, then it is essential that they are fully supported in establishing the most appropriate methods to do so.

Teachers are encouraged to begin by studying the work of the NLG. They set out that film offers ‘a multiplicity of discourses [where the] scope of literacy pedagogy [must] account for the context of our
culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies [and that literacy pedagogy] now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies’ (1996: 4). The group has produced a useful methodological framework in the form of a multimodal chart, divided into five ‘design elements’: ‘Visual’, ‘Linguistic’, ‘Audio’, ‘Gestural’ and ‘Spatial’. Within each category, a list of the most pertinent elements is provided, such as ‘vocabulary and metaphor’ (linguistic), or ‘bodily physicality’ (spatial). The chart’s emphasis on the multimodal processes that simultaneously occur is demonstrated with a section entitled, ‘Multimodal meaning’, which circles all of the above. The chart provides a clear and practical point of reference for Spanish teachers focusing on developing students’ skills in multimodal literacies and, more broadly, their ability to deconstruct, describe and critique the multimodal authentic source (film) that they are studying. However, the chart alone is unlikely to be sufficient, particularly out of context and/or for teachers less experienced with foreign film pedagogy. A wider reading and gathering of more theory-based methodologies is required.

Kress’ theory of Social Semiotics ‘deals with meaning in all its appearances, in all social occasions and in all cultural sites’ (Kress 2010: 1-2). Kress and others (Jewitt 2005; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) have also produced informative works on the semiotics of multimodality; one of the dimensions of New Literacies Studies, which focuses on how the internet and other Information and Communication Technologies are redefining learning and literacy in the twenty-first century. Those involved in curriculum design are encouraged to dissect such valuable work if they wish to bring MFL qualifications firmly in line with the demand and trends of modern society. Similarly, Jenkins (2006) makes a convincing argument surrounding the evolution of literacy development based on online communication and the need for those involved in all forms of literacy education to exploit this social and cultural shift within the classroom. Jenkins (2006: 8) specifically notes how participatory culture has shifted the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement, and the author articulates a new skill set, contextualised within the digital media environment, which involves social skills developed through collaboration and networking. Based on the strength of the arguments put forward by those above and, additionally, the omissions and gaps identified within the statutory requirements of the reformed GCSE, subject teachers are strongly encouraged to put into practice pedagogical strategies and activities that underpin new media literacies involved in accessing, understanding, analysing and interpreting visual messages in a multimedia environment. As concluded by Herrero and Chan (2010:11), such strategies and activities ‘need to be recognised […] as valuable and powerful learning tools that should be incorporated into school-based practices’.

When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles and approaches (such as those provided through foreign film studies), ‘they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions’ (NLG 2000: 15). Such gains are expected to be sought after achievements for any teacher, at least where importance is given to not just what students learn, but also how they learn and how they articulate

68 http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/rush/.
acquired knowledge, ideas and opinions. The DfE (2015:3) echoes this importance, where students should learn to ‘communicate confidently and coherently’, ‘express and develop thoughts and ideas’, and recognise that ‘the language may become a medium for constructing and applying knowledge’. It is also worth remembering that the value of ‘critical appreciation’ is emphasised at A level (AQA 2017a: 9). In conclusion, specific guidance from curriculum designers for where and how such aims and outcomes are best fulfilled at GCSE (both in order to ensure that GCSE outcomes are met and that students are adequately prepared for A level) remains, to date, virtually entirely absent. It is therefore up to those educators with the interest, motivation and determination to prioritise the development of students’ skills in multiliteracies to access and identify methodologies and guidance from elsewhere. This is essential for GCSE students to gain the necessary skills and tools to effectively deconstruct and interpret all of the foreign cultural and/or artistic products that they are exposed to, as further unpacked in the next section within the case of specific cinematic works.
3.2: Deconstructing codes, conventions and aesthetics in Spanish cinema: literature review and film analysis-based case-studies

A number of core themes and issues related to students’ (and educators’) interpretations of the Spanish films being studied (and specifically, ‘watched’) have been highlighted in the previous section. However, based on the films identified in Section 2.1 as prominent within the Spanish curriculum - either according to undergraduate module contents, prescribed lists at A level, or popular among school teachers and those devising film-study resources, and according to the literature probed so far - there is some commonality within the thematic and aesthetic identities and qualities of many of these films. Once students (and educators) are sufficiently equipped to approach the various components of visual, film and multimodal literacy, the next logical step is to arm students with the means to recognise and deconstruct the thematic and aesthetic trends and qualities specific to Spanish cinema and, particularly, the individual films being studied. This is necessary if students are to sufficiently absorb the filmmakers’ possible intentions behind any identification of narrative trends or aesthetic qualities, and indeed, if students are to be given a substantial basis for the development of their own critical opinions and for the interpretation and critique of opinions offered by others. This section therefore determines how teachers/lecturers and students may best achieve such goals - using two works as a basis for analysis, as set out below - and in doing so, provides comprehensive answers to Research Question 1 and Research Question 5a.

Both Matador (Almodóvar 1986) and Jamón Jamón (Bigas Luna 1992) historically have a notable, although inconsistent presence on university undergraduate programmes (see Section 2.1). However, there is some consistency in terms of where and how these two works appear to be employed within undergraduate (Spanish-related) studies, according to both module outlines and the literature considered in Chapter 2. Both works are considered as iconic, Spanish, post-Franco works with dominant aesthetic traits that make them ‘major representatives of post-Franco Spanishness’ (Fouz Hernandez 2004: 147). Although the films are only really suitable for showing at university level (due to the 18 certificate they carry), a close and considered analysis of both works’ narrative themes and aesthetic qualities - along with the integration of selected, critical literature (see below) - provides a useful and enlightening platform for the optimum study of Spanish film more broadly. In addition to making use of these works to identify teaching and learning strategies specific to thematic and aesthetical deconstruction, it is also intended to defend and encourage the inclusion of these particular films on Spanish-related undergraduate programmes - based on an analysis of the films themselves and the scrutiny of critics’ responses - as an additional means to explore some of the complexities in cultural and social phenomena in post-Transition Spain. The analysis principally concerns heightened characterisation, genre hybridity and intertextuality; all of which, it is argued, define both films’ iconic and often highly symbolic narrative and aesthetic identities.69 These

69 Intertextuality, or at least, a director’s referencing of artistic inspiration present in their films, is the subject of various legacy Paper 3 essay questions: ‘The best artists have many sources of inspiration. How are these sources of inspiration reflected in their work(s)?’ (AQA (legacy) 2017); ‘What were the influences on the artist you studied?’ (AQA (legacy) 2016). It is yet to be the direct subject of any of the reformed A level Paper 2 essay questions (AQA or Edexcel).
arguments provide a scaffold for educators’ and students’ own development of deconstructive analysis, debate and critique. The selected critical literature is predominantly concerned with Strick (1993) and Kinder’s (1993b) reviews of *Jamón Jamón* and Evans’ (1993) analysis of *Matador*, although the views of other relevant critics and scholars are also considered. Rather than simply use these authors’ claims to support the arguments made however, the intention is to re-examine these much-cited critical accounts within the context of framing where perspectives may have moved on to today and in the specific context of the Spanish class/seminar room.

In order to immediately flag up possible dangers of superficial and/or non-multi-sourced analyses in studies of cinematic narratives and aesthetics, scrutiny begins by picking up on Strick’s (1993: 57) description of *Jamón Jamón* as ‘teasing humour’. What Strick’s review appears to ignore is how it is precisely through the series of humorous visual motifs that the film is able to effectively frame significant shifts in gender roles and identities (politically as well as socially), as supported by Evans (cited in del Plno 2002: 212), who describes *Jamón Jamón* as, ‘a work about maternity, femininity and national identity’. The aesthetic qualities of the film can be read as highly representative of post-dictatorship identities, including those related to the increased power of autonomous regions, whereby the fictional, southern Spain setting (it was actually shot on the Monegros desert near Zaragoza) is framed as a dominant and blatantly symbolic background throughout. Despite such claims, Strick (1993: 58) highlights a further problem with *Jamón Jamón*, in that ‘it can’t be taken seriously at any level [as a work which has] reverted to domestic fantasy’. Such an analysis fails to recognise the strong play of irony and national and/or regional, utterly self-conscious reflection and overt self-critique present in the film. Whilst for Strick (*Ibid*), the film is ‘no more Spanish than universal’, there are further sources of evidence and justified opinion to suggest that *Jamón Jamón* (and, as discussed shortly, *Matador*) can be viewed as aptly capturing a juxtaposition of certain national and international perspectives on what ‘Spain’, ‘Spanish’, and indeed, ‘Spanishness’, mean at the time of the film’s (films’) release, and also how these works (and others identified to have similar qualities) represent a movement beyond the Spanish cinema (and arguably, the Spanish society) of the previous generation.

In recognition of this generational shift, Berrocal (2006: 1) notes of the films of the 1990s:70 ‘a pathway with personality seems to have been found, one which differentiates itself from other cinemas by its stylistic variety and techniques within its own consonance, and which has validated itself by making the definitive jump to international recognition. In the end, it was in cinema made in the nineties when the past started being accepted as the past and not as a psychological and social burden’. Educators aiming to deliver a historical overview of post-Franco cinema ought to pay particular attention to how films such as *Jamón Jamón* (and *Matador*) provide visual snapshots (via characterisation, plot and mise-en-scène) of not just what made (and, it could be argued, continues to make) certain Spanish films stand out (against other/previous Spanish films and also other national cinemas), but also of

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70 However, it could be argued that the same can be said for certain films of the 1980s, such as *Matador*, in sharp contrast to the works of directors such as Saura and Trueba.
original methods for capturing how certain characters are representative of Spaniards no longer haunted by their past. That said, there is a variety of material (again, led by characterisation and characters’ actions) for teachers and lecturers to highlight, which seriously questions whether the effects of Spain’s historic shift to democracy and postmodern consumerism are really as liberating as advertised (Kinder 1993b: 34). After all, although students are able to witness in both Matador and Jamón Jamón strong female characters who are able to use their sexuality to gain control over men (possibly representative of increased female empowerment gained in recent decades) - in Matador, María lures her male victims to their death and orchestrates the climatic murder/suicide sex scene - in Jamón Jamón, Silvia (Penélope Cruz) fends off several advances from Raúl (Javier Bardem) until she can no longer resist him, and has José Luis (Jordi Mollà) longingly desiring her throughout - they are all still utterly dependent on pleasing the men around them, albeit, via the fulfilment of their own erotic desires. It may be enlightening for teachers to note here Marsh’s (in Marsh and Nair 2004: 54) comments about how gender roles in Spain around this time were ‘radically’ and ‘swiftly’ transformed, although ‘more so in legislative terms than in the reality of wider society’. If Marsh’s assessment is correct, then it supports the view of a sophisticated capability of both works to represent for Spanish students advances in gender roles and identities in Spain according to changes in socio-political structures, and in doing so, highlight the inconsistencies and ongoing obstacles in simultaneously subverting and advancing subjective understandings and acceptances of who the (stereotypical, at least) Spanish Male and Female may be. What both films unquestionably offer to Spanish students is an imprint of perspectives on how and why Spain and its citizens (at least, as represented by the films’ characters) may have come to be as they are in 1992, or indeed, 1986. Berrocal (2006: 2) summarises: ‘this footprint […] does not exactly evoke a desire, this footprint is presented as an imprint transmitted from generation to generation and one which takes an active function just in the moment when we understand the why behind many of the things that surround Spanish citizens’.

There is a strong case, therefore, that, firstly, Jamón Jamón and Matador (at least via the filmmakers’ own perspectives), and perhaps other films of a similar style and/or with similar content from the period, provide students with a window into the evolving existence and psyche of Spaniards of the late 1980s/early 1990s. So far, it has been claimed that this is largely exercised via overt sexual and national stereotyping, which ironically, if not paradoxically, aims to stress the misunderstood social complexities of Spain in the final decades of the twentieth century. And secondly, that to misinterpret these stereotypes (either through superficial and/or unguided readings or insufficient reference to multi-sourced literature), is to ignorantly misinterpret and indeed miss out on the perspectives, intentions and abilities of filmmakers such as Almodóvar and Bigas Luna. These may be summarised as perspectives, intentions and abilities centred around letting go of the post-trauma (dictatorship) psychological grip on Spain in favour of a more progressive and exploratory narrative, free to do as it pleases, but one which maintains a significant level of social and historical consciousness.

At first glance for the student (and possibly, teacher/lecturer), it is tempting to consider the ‘typically Spanish’ iconography of Matador and Jamón Jamón - the reds (Maria’s dress in Matador; the bright sunsets in Jamón) and yellows (the sun, the bullring in Matador; the barren landscape in Jamón), and
the referencing to Spanish foods such as *jamón* and *tortilla de patatas* (*Jamón*) - as simply emphasising the ‘Spanishness’ of both films’ narratives and ultimate celebration of the two films’ places in an easily-identifiable national cinema of growing success. However, any widespread class/seminar room reflection of Spain’s troubled past in regard of its means to try and define itself on screen or otherwise ought to bring into discussion and debate the huge complexities of nationalism in the Spanish context. As referred to in Chapter 2, a key aspect of the changes brought about by the end of the dictatorship - and subsequently ripe for cinematic analysis - was the regained ability to develop and portray regional diversity. Studies of the use of colour and motifs of traditional ‘Spanish’ identity - the national flag, the national sport (bullfighting) and even the sunny weather - should, at least in the case of *Matador* and *Jamón Jamón*, aim to inform students about Spain’s obstacles in exercising regional identity and the uncertainties of its present and future in this regard; historically (during the dictatorship and before), at the time of filming (in the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s) and indeed, in the present day. One particularly prominent message for students to deconstruct concerns the mapping of character/social destiny, whereby teachers may draw specially on characterisation and associated aesthetic motifs and props. For example, those characters who remain confined to the Spanish traditions of the past - Diego as a bullfighter, María as a *lídja*-inspired lawyer, Raúl as a *jamón* and garlic-eating macho, Juan as a *tortilla de patatas*-obsessed and marriage traditionalist - are all condemned to die, just like, it may be deliberated, Spain ceased to live as it had to during the Francoist era and/or Nationalist Fascism in Spain would eventually cease with the death of the dictator.

An additional layer for careful scrutiny within the symbolism of foods (and other visual references) related to ‘typical’ Spanishness reveals a poignant and fruitful connection when studying aesthetic and thematic references in both films. In both Strick (1993) and Kinder’s (1993b) reviews of Bigas Luna’s work, food is linked directly to sex for representative purposes, although it may be argued that a deconstruction of *Matador* reveals similar linking and for similar purposes. Although Strick (1993: 58) merely observes that, ‘in Luna’s doctrine, Spanish sexual and eating habits are closely linked’, Kinder (1993b: 30) provides a more observant critique in this regard, and one which points to significantly more didactic material about Spanish stereotyping and perceptions of, and issues within, regional diversity: *Jamón Jamón* plays with the sexual implications of the pride Spaniards take in their gastronomic passion for garlic, (which is used like an aphrodisiac) and for *jamón*, which comes in many varieties from the diverse regions of the nation. But it is not just the explicit Spanish culinary references that are able to inform and/or reinforce students’ critical appreciation of overt sexualisation in Spanish films, and indeed, where critics’ views differ. The tone of Strick’s (1993: 57) description of Bigas Luna’s capturing of a ‘lugubrious wasteland’ in ‘laudatory Panavision’ sits far from Kinder’s (1993b: 30) description of the ‘stunning’ opening shot (for example), where the frame eventually rests

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71 See Faulkner (2013: 199).

72 Particularly timely in relation to recent political unrest and controversy regarding the Catalanian (illegal) referendum and ensuing protests, and the former leader’s exile in Belgium. Additionally, works such as *Ocho apellidos vascos* are well placed to stimulate comprehensive teaching and learning surrounding domestic uneasiness with films capitalising on regional cliché and stereotype for entertainment purposes. See AQA (2018) (Paper 2): ‘Some Basques and Adalusians felt offended watching this film. Analyse why they reacted this way.’
on the bull’s *cojones*. Kinder is justified in claiming that this shot serves to tell the audience (and in this case, Spanish students) not only that the film will be blatantly phallocentric (and therefore gender- and sexuality-centric), but also that it will go for big emotions which verge on parodic excess; empowering the Spanish teacher/lecturer to draw on a range of visual iconography as a vehicle for symbolic (national and/or regional) representation. * Jamón Jamón is undoubtedly a film that overtly parodies several stereotypes of Spanishness and, in particular, those associated with sexuality. Although perhaps most of interest for the Spanish student is how this is done with a view to flipping perspectives on a, for some, overly simplified (and often, highly inaccurate) national society and culture, whereby simplified, yet exaggerated, mise en scène and explicit camera work collectively work to inform spectators about such distorted and/or incorrect perspectives on Spain itself.

The historical associations of stereotyping within Spanish cinema do contain elements of particular pedagogical significance related to recognising and understanding the relationship between the film industry and state control. For example, Evans (1993: 330), referring to *Matador*, points out that ‘any deviation from stereotype during Franco’s years verged on blasphemy’. The fact that *Matador* and * Jamón Jamón * exaggerate and subvert stereotypes may, therefore, be interpreted as reminiscent of the legacy of stereotyping in Spain as a consequence of control and conformity, and it is here where teachers and lecturers find further significant learning material surrounding the links between Francoism (and/or dictatorship more generally) and the distortion of archetypal/stereotypical figures in Spanish society represented on screen. In *Matador*, this may be studied through the characterisation of the three male protagonists: Diego; the arch-macho, hindered by his bullfighting injury and dominated by compulsive desire (and eventually, María); Ángel (Antonio Banderas); a young homosexual, desperate to assert his heterosexuality and escape the verging on Oedipal-obsessive control of his Opus Dei mother (Julieta Serrano); the policeman (*El comisario*) (Eusebio Poncela); an upholder of the law, although perversely fascinated by sexuality and murder. Similarly, educators should carefully note the conscious intention visible in both films to merge and distort concepts of masculine and feminine perspective, self-identity and desire. For example, in *Matador*, María follows Diego into the men’s toilets (Evans 1993: 329), and in * Jamón Jamón*, the film’s sexy images, like the billboards, are clearly addressed to the erotic tastes of both genders (Kinder 1993b: 30); a quality of mass appeal and interest that also, it could be argued, is pertinent to a vigilant reading of *Matador*. Moreover, in * Jamón Jamón*, the new commercial stereotypes of transgressive sexuality have merely replaced those earlier Spanish clichés of ‘gypsies, flamenco dancers, and matadors’ (Kinder 1993b: 34), although it could be said that such substitution has been most successfully promoted in the world market by Almodóvar’s oeuvre. In a broad sense, through their overt explorations of stereotypes and extreme portrayals of sexual and gender identity, Almodóvar and Bigas Luna may be studied as filmmakers who want to encourage spectators to see beyond a sunny, *sangría*-drinking holiday destination, and instead, reflect on the evolving nature of national and regional identities, and within them, the complexities of family and romantic relationships. One of these complexities can be studied via the oedipal references in both films; in * Jamón Jamón*, Juan’s overprotective mother, Carmen (Stefania Sandrelli), who undresses him, and in *Matador*, Ángel’s controlling mother who stares at him
through the bathroom glass door as he sits naked. For Evans (as noted by del Pino 2002: 212), the
oedipal narrative (and the category of the abject) serve to subvert the cultural model of the self-
sacrificing mother as an example within (Spanish) patriarchal society. Meanwhile, Bigas Lunas’ work
specifically may be read as somewhat more ambiguous, in that the director questions traditional
stereotypes without managing to completely condemn them and therefore confidently put forward a
rhetoric of sexual (and gender binary) liberation.

The section so far has largely focused on how characterisation is created with intended purpose by
Almodóvar and Bigas Luna via the development of characters’ interrelations and the prominence of
visual motifs used in setting, props and costume. Specific to where such elements fit directly within
recommended approaches to the teaching and learning of Spanish, the arguments have considered
cinematic framings and distortions, again, with intended purpose surrounding Spanish ‘prototypes’
(Strick 1993: 57) and ‘the multifariousness of Spanish society’ (Evans 1993: 325). The remainder of
the section explores the extent of what, in a Spanish context, may be learned exclusively from the
directors’ toying with genre(s) and the many intertextual references visible in the two works (although
focusing particularly on Matador, due to word constraints). Evans (ibid) describes Matador’s
‘patchwork quilt of cross references’ and specifically notes the evident ‘Hollywood contribution to the
creative intertextual processes’. Equally relevant to any initial study of intertextuality used by
Almodóvar and Bigas Luna is Kinder’s (1993b: 30) own connecting of the two directors in question,
whereby Bigas Luna’s long shots are ‘punctuated with the kind of blatantly erotic crotch shots [that]
can also be found in Almodóvar’s work’.

As the opening credits roll and appear in a blood red font, a man - Diego - lies masturbating in front of
a television set playing a video montage of sadistic images of naked women being tortured and
murdered. From the opening sequence of Matador, it should be clear to students that the idea of, ‘film
within film’, and an exploration of genre, are important elements for both character identification and
narrative progression; incidentally, both key components of study within the reformed A level.73 Such
dramatic and violent images so early on also set the tone for a film that corresponds to typical (and
often stereotypical) traditions of the horror genre: the sadomasochistic central characters (Diego and
María) who share a compulsive obsession with sex and murder, and in Diego’s case, the burying of
his victims in his back garden; cat and mouse chase sequences through the city of Madrid and
various buildings (the fashion house, the cinema, the final car chase to the country-house where
Diego and María carry out a sexual sacrament of murder and suicide); chiaroscuro lighting and
church organ music. Further to the discussion earlier surrounding the need for students to be able to
identify, analyse and interpret methods and purposes within characterisation and mise-en-scène as
modes of meaning making, students are likely to acquire enhanced tools within such work should they
be able to deconstruct genre codes and references, such as those listed above. For Evans (1993:
325), the aesthetic quality of Matador lies in a combination of ‘sublime elegance with vulgarity and

73 AQA (2018a) ‘To what extent do you agree with the idea that this film is a comedy? (Abel, Luna 2010); AQA (2018b):
‘Analyse the techniques that the director uses to create comical situations’ (Ocho apellidos).
kitsch’, whereas for Kinder (1993b: 183), the film can be seen as one of ‘three outrageous comedies which blatantly eroticise violence within a homoerotic narrative and challenge [...] the genre’s traditional privileging of heterosexuality, family and motherhood’. However, there are also clear visual and thematic references to: The Psychological/Police Thriller; Film-Noir (particularly through María as a femme fatale); and finally, the blatant references to two genres almost exclusively associated with the USA: The Hollywood Melodrama and The Western.\(^{74}\) Almodóvar acknowledges Matador’s stylistic and narrative references to a number of American films,\(^{75}\) but it is King Vidor’s 1946 melodramatic western, Duel in the Sun, which is most directly referenced and of key interest to the discussion.

When Diego catches up with a fleeing María in an empty cinema, the final shoot-out of Dual between lovers, Pearl (Jennifer Jones) and Lewt (Gregory Peck) can be viewed as predicting, or even dictating, the destiny of Matador’s two lead protagonists. Almodóvar himself (cited in Kinder 1997: 33-44) states, ‘It’s like when you look into a magical crystal ball [...] it was exactly the ending of Duel in the Sun that is the ending of Matador’. An analysis of Almodóvar’s incorporation of this particular scene - and the evidence alluding to such intertextual purpose - provides a substantial case-study for how (the) Spanish cineaste(s) attempt(s) to mirror core components of mise-en-scène, aspects of characters’ relations and crucial narrative pointers. Despite very different locations, both works share a colourful artistic design of, mainly, reds and yellows; emphasised further in the case of Duel, as an early Technicolor production, but also because of its typical western setting, where the rising and setting of the sun dominates several shots.\(^{76}\) The sun plays an equally dominant role in Matador to create a bright and mystical atmosphere in several scenes, such as when Diego finds María on the bridge. It is worth noting that the bridge is in fact the Segovia Viaduct in Southern Madrid; a notorious suicide spot since the nineteenth century, and consequently, a landmark of deep significance in studies centred on setting and location as a key feature of aesthetical and symbolic analysis. As part of augmenting a sensibility regarding techniques within filmic storytelling, students also ought to be guided to consider visual markers of crucial fragments of the storyline, such as the red eclipse coinciding with the gunshot and subsequently, Matador’s conclusion. Similarly, the circularity symbolism in Matador represented through the sun, Eva’s (Eva Cobo) earrings, the bullring and the eclipse can also be read as being inspired by Duel, and perhaps westerns generally, whereby the sun (and the circularity of its shape and movement) is used to infiltrate and influence the development of the narrative and the journey of the characters.\(^{77}\) In such case, educators have a stage on which to guide students’ understanding of how lighting, colour, setting and costume may be used to reflect genre traditions, inform readings of content and purpose and/or be used to reflect or comment upon sociocultural identity; also relevant to recognising film in an industrial context and as key player in

\(^{74}\) However, ‘the French were making westerns and exporting them successfully to the USA at least until the First World War’ (Hayward 2006: 497).

\(^{75}\) Vertigo (Hitchcock 1958); Strangers on a Train (Hitchcock 1955); Cat People (Schrader 1982) and Pandora and the Flying Dutchman (Albert Lewin 1951), as cited in Vidal (1998: 135-64).

\(^{76}\) Compare also María’s red dress at the fashion show with the afternoon/evening sun. The works are also connected visually via the colours green and orange; compare Pearl’s clothes to Eva’s flat, for example.

\(^{77}\) El laberinto del fauno is another work which uses physical circularity in setting, but also in framing and camera movement, to match and further substantiate the circularity of the narrative and of the sociohistorical space that it encapsulates.
transnational culture. This is, after all, but one example of Almodóvar’s penchant for paying homage to genre oeuvres that notionally originate and maintain their identities outside Spain.

Not necessarily exclusive to westerns, but certainly typical of the genre, the central characters’ self-certifying statements of good and evil (in both works) appear to mirror the principles of law and desire (Hayward 2006: 497-509). Notionally good girl, Pearl (Duel), finds herself caught up in a passionate love triangle between two brothers, consequently disrupting the narrative’s equilibrium (see Todorov 1969), and specifically, her new family of distant relatives. Despite Lewt, the youngest brother, showing clear signs of a cold and selfish nature, Pearl is more attracted to him than to his warm and successful older brother, Jesse (Joseph Cotton). In Matador, it is the dark and murderous Diego who is passionately admired by Eva, María and even the wholly innocent, Ángel. Any work on intertextual studies relevant to a deconstruction of characters’ identities and driving forces within the narrative ought to address how the subjects of both films are controlled by their lustful impulses rather than any moral judgements. And also that, although Matador is predominantly set in the busy city of Madrid, its central characters share with Pearl a sense of frustrated isolation, with seemingly no escape apart from love, and death. This concept of relationships that are predicated more on loss than in gain (Evans 1993: 328) is reminiscent of Jamón Jamón, whereby all of the central characters’ lustful desires of sexual fulfillment collectively lead to disaster; specifically, multiple deaths. In addition to considering possible versions of the filmmakers’ social commentaries on any ruthless desire for self-fulfillment and the pursuit of pleasure, it is particularly useful here to note Evans’ (Ibid) reminder that the Franco period did not manage to completely wipe out any sense of resistance or rebellion in the face of dictatorship, and certainly not in the years that followed its demise; as can be seen in certain interpretations of Matador’s female characters. Single mother, Pilar (Chus Lampreave), who provides much of the humour in the film via ballsy confrontations with male authority (and living vicariously as a model through the life of her daughter, Eva), may be seen as functioning as a reminder of the country’s alternative non-conformist traditions, which were ‘all but extinguished under Franco’ (Evans 1993: 328). Similarly, spectators are led to believe that María and Diego have always been this way; compelled from birth to find each other and fulfil their ultimate destiny of an orchestrated death, while simultaneously reaching the highest climax of pleasure. Here, students have a platform to consider perspectives on the origins and outcomes of repressed desire in a Spanish sociohistorical/political context, and indeed, in the context of the cultural revolution known as La Movida (of which, Almodóvar was a key player), which, according to Jordan and Morgan-Tamusunas (1998: 81) (as one possible definition to follow in this context), was about ‘Spain’s rebellious youngsters [deciding] to explore alternative identities, sexualities and values in an orgy of experimentation and the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure’.

Educators must continually readdress issues surrounding oversimplification and, specifically, stereotyping, which includes any film perceived as representative of a domestic cultural movement (such as La Movida) or indeed, any film placed within an established national cinematic model. As a

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78 See also Hooper (1995: 344-5).
means of exposing students to the broader senses of repressive stereotyping endured by Spain from outside its borders, it is useful to consider Leigh’s (1991:61) classification of Jamón Jamón as a ‘licentious melodrama’ and a ‘critique of Spanish culture’s “rape” at the hands of modern Europe’. But while Matador appears to take a notable amount of its genre, narrative and aesthetic inspiration from Hollywood, Jamón Jamón retains the identity of a film with its roots firmly at home; ‘an exaggerated satire of classic Spanish cinema, in particular of Nobleza baturra.’ Different to the folkloric cinema that displays a tidy view of society, in this film there is a quality of excess that is, in the end, highly critical’ (Evans, cited in del Pino 2002: 212). Such readings frame the need for an extended analysis of both genre-based and direct intertextual referencing in both Matador and Jamón Jamón to facilitate the study of important and enlightening critical reflections of Spanish cinema’s domestically- and internationally-informed roots and artistic intentions.

As alluded to earlier, women at the centre of and/or framed as driving the narrative may initially be considered as a statement addressing a nation so long under the control of a patriarchal dictatorship, and it is of course no coincidence that Duel’s central character is a woman; somewhat unusual for a western. Enquiry into character placement and movement would, after all, reveal that María (Matador) and Carmen (Jamón Jamón) are frequently framed, literally, ‘on top’. Matador is double-focused, whereby it both looks back at past traumas, and forward (women on top) at new future directions in social ideology (Evans 1993: 330). Indeed, women depicted as, ‘the young virgin’ or ‘the (more mature) seductress’ commonly play important roles in The Western narrative. But, by encouraging spectators’ sympathies to be almost entirely directed at a confused and fatherless female, Duel sits apart, as a non-typical, somewhat unique western. In fact, it is in many respects much more loyal to the conventions of The Melodrama: ‘Less preoccupied with saloon-bar bravado, threadbare interiors and rugged outdoor objective correlatives […] it plunges audiences into the cloying, suffocating, but also code-breaking ambientes of Melodrama and the Woman’s Picture […]’ (Evans 1993: 327). A belonging to the oeuvre of melodrama is most literally portrayed through two poetic captions that appear in the beginning and final sequences of the film, respectively, as noted below. Based on the mirroring of subjective desires and pursuit of destiny discussed so far, there is a strong argument to suggest that certain lines/captions from Duel are as relevant to the western’s own narrative as they are to that of Matador’s, most notably: ‘All threats of hell and hopes of paradise, one thing at least is certain, this life flies […] the flower that once has blown, forever dies’, and, ‘For everything created, in the bands of Earth and sky […], it must couple or must die’.

In the same way, the somewhat uncontrollable passions of Diego and María/Pearl and Lewt may be viewed as ‘an indulgence of strong emotions, extreme states of mind and inflated and extravagant expression’ (Triana Toribio 1995: 2); emotions and states of mind, which highlight melodrama’s ‘idiosyncratic formulations of questions less easily accommodated by other genres’ (Evans 1993: 326). However, Mulvey (cited in Evans, Ibid) singles out Duel as a ‘crucial melodrama’ that explores the ‘vicissitudes, legacies and betrayals, laws and desires of American family life in the 1940s’. Unlike

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79 (Rey 1935).
*Duel,* though (or the typical conventions of *The Hollywood Melodrama*), *Matador* does not centre around one family (see Evans’ discussion of ‘the counter-family’, which can also be seen in *Jamón Jamón*), but rather, it looks at two maternal relationships. Firstly, that of sensitive, telepathic Ángel (who idolises ex-torero, Diego), psychologically smothered by his mother, Berta; and secondly, that of Diego’s cold and confused model girlfriend, Eva, and her more vivacious and contemporary mother, Pilar. *Duel* may, in these ways, be considered as an intertextual reference to be contrasted as much as mirrored within the traditions of the various genres and associated narrative conventions, representative qualities and any potential signifiers within socio-political and/or cultural commentary. By framing different characters’ complexities through less conventional relationships and from less conventional perspectives against a melodramatic/western backdrop, teaching and learning may wish to consider the ways in which Almodóvar deconstructs and redefines essential characteristics of both classic genres, making him something of an avant-garde influenced, and post-modern, cineaste, but one who simultaneously distances himself from any politically committed directors of previous generations. The discussion of core concepts within Spanish cinema studies continues in the next section, with some previously cited works making a reappearance. In a similar way to the recommendations made regarding approaches to the most thorough and revealing class/seminar room analyses of cinematic codes, conventions and aesthetics within Spanish cinema, the next section presents the recurring poignancy of children in a number of high profile works. The principal aim, and particular contribution to the field, is however to relate all such discussion to the particular context of Spanish education (in England); especially at school level, as is made clear.

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3.3: Child-centred works in the curriculum and repertoire: an example of impact in the classroom: a literature review and first-phase data collection

Child protagonists and childhood themes are a key feature of several of the Spanish works included in prescribed lists at A level (El laberinto del fauno; La lengua de las mariposas) and undergraduate modules (El espíritu de la colmena; Cria cuervos). Chapter 4 confirms that the majority of films included in the participating school's GCSE studies are also centred on children or adolescents (El laberinto; El orfanato; El espinozal del diablo; El bota). Turning, then, once again to GCSE as the foundation years for firmly establishing several of the core concepts required for the most extensive and appropriately developed (GCSE – undergraduate level) studies in Spanish cinema (see Section 2.1), it is the intention here to establish how GCSE students’ understanding of what it means to be a child or adolescent in Spain today or in the past can be affected or influenced by studying these, and similar, works. More broadly, the section also captures the particular resonance of such films for all students (but primarily focusing on GCSE) aiming to grasp the key themes, concepts and methodologies associated with Spanish cinema studies. Claims are made based on an analysis of twenty-eight GCSE and A level students’ responses (referred to using participant codes QA-GCSE-1 – QA-GCSE-20 and QA-AL-1 – QA-AL-8) to Questionnaire A (Appendix V) – as a first phase of questionnaire analysis and a lead-in to the first two sections of Chapter 4: Data analysis Phase 1 (both of which also focus on GCSE) - against the core literary works of Lebeau (2008) and Wright (2013) (among others). The analysis concentrates on the films, El bota, El laberinto del fauno and El orfanato (as the three works which feature most prominently in the questionnaires and selected literature). The section responds directly to Research Questions 1-3.

79% (22/28) of the participating GCSE students agree that they can identify more easily with child or adolescent characters on screen, which for QA-GCSE-3, comes via a sense of a ‘recently experienced’ or ‘lived through similar issues’. In El laberinto, spectators follow the childhood existence of Ofelia; a pubescent girl catapulted into different worlds of (self-)discovery, caught between the adult-made horrors of the remnants of the Spanish Civil War and a very childlike fantasy world featuring various quests, monsters and a magical kingdom. A core aspect of character, mise-en-scène and intertextuality studies in relation to this work concerns the host of physical and character references to iconic children’s stories, from The Wizard of Oz to Alice in Wonderland (Wright 2013: 122).81 Here, teachers are able to build on the mirroring visuals, narrative structures and semiotic traits of fairy-tales and well-known children’s books and films for a variety of purposes. The process permits students to further relate, compare or differentiate themselves, or indeed, other well-known fictional characters, to the protagonist as part of the processes of engagement in the material and the denotation of meaning and purpose. Students may feel more equipped to predict what lies ahead for the protagonist, which may either be confirmed as correct or contradicted. Arguably, it allows a younger audience to feel comfortable in (a) genre(s) they may be more familiar with (fairy-tale, fantasy), rather than the war or horror genres that have been applied to many readings of the film

81 See also: Greenhill and Matrix (2010); Lapolla (2011); and Noble (2017).
(Atkinson 2007; Vivancos 2012; Gómez Castellano 2013). The reliance on fairy-tale narrative structure and stereotyped, exaggerated characterisation also implies that El laberinto can be approached in the GCSE classroom as a relatively simple story of good versus evil, although a deeper reading is required for teachers and students seeking to move beyond blatant and polarised forms of representation, setting, lighting, and so on. What happens in Ofelia’s fairy-tale is in fact what provides her with the courage to oppose the real cruelty of monstrous people (Zipes 2008: 238). Here, Zipes reaffirms the tendencies of Spanish cinema to centre on monstrous figures (as first discussed in Section 2.3); often in the context of dictatorship and war within a child-orientated narrative. Spanish cinema frequently relies on child and adolescent characters to authenticate and emphasise the fears and horrors experienced in real events that shaped the nation, as is exemplified and explored below as a means to provide educators with a variety of case-study frameworks.

QA-AL-4 highlights El bola as a film that manages to expose the ‘difficulties endured by some Spaniards today’. This observation is presumably in relation to the abuse endured by Pablo (Juan José Ballesta) at the hands of his father, Mariano (Manuel Morón). However, the same student elaborates that it also concerns scenes where ‘the family struggles to care for the incontinent grandmother’ or via dialogue that refers to how older generations are ‘ignorant to the needs and struggles of the young’. This latter social commentary is demonstrated for students in the scene in Mariano’s hardware shop, where a sixty-something year old customer complains about the problems that the older generation has to deal with and tells Pablo that life for youth is so much easier; an uncomfortable inaccuracy in Pablo’s case due to the abuse he regularly suffers. QA-GCSE-4 meanwhile notes that it is ‘useful to see the good and bad sides to Spanish society’; a reminder perhaps of learners’ expectation to gain a balanced (and, arguably, more realistic) understanding of (foreign) national/regional identity, and in sufficient depth. In the case of El bola, this involves an uncomfortable exposure to the horrors of domestic abuse, but also, a lack of state support for the elderly and radical changes to defined gender and family roles; all of which are centred on the child protagonist. QA-AL-1 observes that such films ‘show how Spanish culture, Spanish society and Spanish problems are viewed from within Spain’. This comment points to the key recognitions that film is a true, authentic resource and that Spanish cinema has a tradition of aiming to capture a self-reflective and most frequently, self-critical gaze (often directed at society and/or political control), through the eyes of the filmed Spanish child. If fully understood by students, the multilayered extent for a subjectified critical appreciation of Spain in both a foreign and domestic context, as executed through child-centred Spanish cinema, is vast.

For QA-AL-1, ‘child characters can show youth views from real life’; a view echoed by QA-GCSE-11, who describes the role of adolescents on screen as ‘representing the younger generation; what they do, how they act and what they stand for’. Such comments depict a hunger among some students to see their own, perhaps, underrepresented, generation played out on screen in order to expose and explore the issues most pertinent to them and, crucially, told from a, perhaps, equally underrepresented, adolescent perspective. QA-AL-3 highlights that, ‘often child/adolescent characters
in Spanish films are seen to be directly compared to adult characters as a means to emphasise how children are more accepting to new ways and ideas’. One useful example for the classroom is the scene where Ofelia’s optimistic world of fantasy is dashed by her sick mother, who states, ‘Ofelia, magic does not exist; not for you, not for me, not for anyone’. A focus on this line of dialogue (or similar) can be particularly useful for students’ consideration of the lost hope among the Spanish post-Civil War society which del Toro strives to transmit. A second useful example for analysis comes in Laura’s (Belén Rueda) initial failure to see the child ghosts befriended by Simón (Roger Princep) in El orfanato. Such illustrations form a solid basis for students’ discernment of where the ability of children in many Spanish films to see things that adults at first, at least, cannot is commonly used as a means to expose (perceptions of) the reality of Spain’s past and present. QA-AL-4 appears to have witnessed similar ideas for themselves, stating that, ‘children in Spanish films explore the harsh reality of life in Spain’. The most enlightening scenes for use in lessons within an analysis of such concepts are in fact frequently defined through direct references to eyes and sight. The best instance of this is perhaps during the opening scenes of El laberinto, when Ofelia replaces the eyes on the statue. These shots can be seen as one of many strong intertextual references to arguably the most written about child-centred Spanish film of the dictatorship years; El espíritu de la colmena; specifically in reference to when Ana places the eyes on the classroom wooden doll, Don José. When such images and perspectives of the child become the ‘machine of the visible’ (Lebeau 2008: 13), what then do students deter from such an apparent encouragement by the filmmaker for spectators to focus on, question and share the child protagonist’s vision and perspective? In the specific context of El laberinto, QA-AL-2 answers, ‘repression in Spain’, while several other students mention ‘innocence’ and ‘victimisation’. But a closer analysis of the qualitative responses suggests a deeper understanding of the representation of ‘Spain’s lost children’ and ‘loss of childhoods’ (during the Civil War and under Francoism), as described by Wright (2013: 118). QA-GCSE-3 considers it a representation of ‘children’s levels of maturity’, which is seen to ‘coincide with aspects of their innocence’. QA-GCSE-4 (re)cites the quasi-paradoxical juxtaposition of a simultaneous representation of innocence and maturity, but one which leads to a represented lack of opportunity for children in Spanish cinema to ‘properly discover the world’. This observation is indicative of the many metaphorical references that surround all aspects of El laberinto: in this case, those referring to a Western country whose early 1930s liberal values were fiercely overturned while other Western nations’ democratically evolved. Within such classroom discussion, students may be directed towards the various forms of social repression endured during the early years of the dictatorship explicitly referenced in El laberinto, most commonly with visual symbolism and metaphors, and dominantly centred on the child protagonist. A particularly valuable scene for evaluation is where Ofelia discovers the Pale Man (Doug Jones); a scene that, for many critics, aptly recalls scenes of the Holocaust and, as noted by Wright (2013: 120), represents ‘a fitting alter ego for the instrument of Fascism’. For Ellis and Sánchez-Arce (2011: 12) meanwhile, the Pale Man is in fact the incarnation of the Falange and the Catholic Church. Such critical discourse emphasises that one of the key components to truly understanding this work lies in spectators’ abilities to compare the film’s human and fantasy characters, such as the most obvious interconnection between Vidal, the Pale Man and indeed,
Franco himself. Vidal can be viewed as ‘tapping into the fetishistic power of fascism’, whereas Ofelia represents the ‘loss of national historical memory’ (Wright 2013: 121-122). Such multi-layered mapping of characterisation within classroom discussion opens up a wide variety of cultural and cinematic concepts and perspectives, which, if executed successfully at GCSE, would no doubt equip students well for the demands of Paper 2 at A level. As stated earlier, both the legacy and reformed A levels collectively feature a number of essay questions on characterisation and sometimes specifically on a direct comparison between Ofelia - the child protagonist - and other adult characters. The examples cited above additionally stress the importance for students to consider the crossovers and conflicts between what child protagonists in certain Spanish works see alongside other characters, but even more importantly, what they only are able to see and share with the audience, as is now probed further.

From missing memory to missing children, several child-centred Spanish works offer students a significant opportunity to learn about the missing children of Spanish history (see: Tremlett 2006; Vinyes 2009). In reference to El orfanato, Delgado (2008, page unknown) observes a direct link to the ‘question of children who disappeared under Francoism from snatched innocence, exile or death’. Wright (2013 118-119) elaborates, to suggest that the orphanage in El orfanato ‘evokes the orphanages of the Auxilio Social’ and that ‘the incinerated bodies of the orphans in the film provide a poignant link to the Spanish Holocaust’. Both El laberinto and El orfanato are, in such case, well-furnished to take students on a journey through a growing compulsion in Spain for national understanding of all that had been lost during Spain’s darkened years. Also offering teachers valuable scope for important political references, the above coincides with the PSOE Government-led passing of the Law of Historical Memory after decades of agreed silence under the previous Pact of Forgetting (passed two years after Franco’s death to safeguard the peaceful Transition to democracy). Teachers are advised to pitch such works directly alongside the relevant studies of historical, social or political movement; perhaps more straightforward at A level, where such topics make up a core part of the course, as discussed previously. By doing so, students are able to better appreciate and evaluate pertinent links between the Spanish cultural text, and again, an aspect of Spanish historical ‘reality’. In this case, just as the new law enabled people to recall and commemorate the lost Spanish generation(s) between 1936 and 1975, El laberinto and El orfanato in this new epoch of remembering draw both child and adult audiences into the untold stories of all Spaniards who suffered for so long. As Wright (Ibid) concludes, this occurs by making the Spanish child both the object and the subject of the extent of the suffering that was endured.

In relation to El bola, the vast majority of the participating students - 89% (25/28) - highlight ‘child abuse’ as a saddening, yet all-too-real, problem within Spanish society that they had seen

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82 See also Lury (2010: 114).
83 See, for example, AQA AS Paper 1 (2018): ‘Examine the relationship that Ofelia has with her mother, Carmen’.
84 This acknowledges the memory of victims of the Spanish Civil War, passed by the Socialist government of José Luis Zapatero in 2007.
represented on screen (see Wright 2013: 139). QA-GCSE-5 discusses this in line within the somewhat understatement of ‘unfairness’, whereas QA-GCSE-6 lists the additional core matters of ‘friends looking after one another’ and ‘solidarity’. When embarking on the teaching and learning of this challenging film (due to its harrowing subject matter), it is vital to note its particular relevance at the time for the domestic (Spanish) audience.66 Along with other cine social films87 with similar contents, such as Bollain’s Te doy mis ojos (2003) - discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 - El bola had particular national resonance at the time of its release due to high profile, new domestic violence protection laws being passed in Spain (see Wright 2013: 131). Related films ‘favour as subject matter present-day social problems, such as domestic violence against women and children [and] aim to show the effects of environmental factors on the development of character through depictions that emphasise the relationship between location and identity’ (Hallam and Marshment 2000: 184). Such an observation is reminiscent of some of the university modules discussed in Section 2.1, such as ‘Barcelona and Madrid on Screen’. However, for GCSE teachers and students setting out to identify connections between storylines and real-life events, a close consideration of the cited scholars’ perspectives alongside relevant key scene analysis is likely to lead to enlightening and focal debates surrounding the fundamental (Spanish) cinema-studies related concepts of reality, believability and authenticity. Such linking also provides invaluable scope for the teaching and learning of the darker sides of nationhood, where ‘Spanish society’, and all that it encompasses, is framed and explored in a depth and breadth appropriate to the vast array of complexities and nuances that make up any other nation.

Specifically related to filming style and technique, although it is important for teachers to guide and facilitate the overall process, students ought to be consistently encouraged to develop their own opinions about to what extent and/or how the work unfolds as a personal narrative. A pertinent example is when Pablo speaks to and looks directly at the camera during the final segment of El bola. Such cinematic techniques remind students to (re)consider the established theories and cultural traditions surrounding the child’s gaze, as referred to earlier. With specific regards to camera work (an expected feature of students’ analysis at A level according to the examiners’ comments analysed in Section 4.3 and essay titles referred to in the previous sections), 46% (13/28) of the participating students pick up on the point-of-view framing used to tell Pablo’s story; a technique where ‘the camera [takes] the position of [the] child to show us what he or she sees’ (Lebeau 2008: 40), also known as a subjective camera. A recommended scene for examination is when Pablo stares at his own reflection while brushing his teeth after an enjoyable day spent with his new friend, Alfredo (Pablo Galán) and Alfredo’s family. Spectators then share with Pablo the view in the mirror reflection of Pablo’s father by the door as he orders him never to see ‘those people’ again. After Pablo mutters under his breath, ‘I wish you were dead, you son of a bitch’, Mañas cuts to a point-of-view shot of Pablo’s father’s foot, communicating to spectators that he heard his son’s insult; at which point, the

66 It is inevitable that spectators’ interpretations of such contents are contextualised and affected within a domestic, (in this case, UK) nationwide and multigenerational consciousness. Consider within the UK, for example, decades of uncovered scandals within the Catholic Church and Operation Yewtree.

87 See Wright (2013: 131).
camera fades into blackout, symbolising the subsequent punishment by the fists of Pablo’s father and implied knocking into unconsciousness. This sequence not only exploits further the power of vision, perspective and self-reflection, as is so common across many prominent child-centred Spanish works for a variety of reasons, but also, it insists on the spectator becoming Pablo, just for a moment, as he sees himself, sees his father, and finally, sees nothing at all. Added to the final scene where Pablo speaks to the camera, these cinematic techniques can be read as emphasising a sense of ‘victim meets voyeur’ (Begin 2008: 272) and as a new mode of engagement with the spectator for the purpose of the social issue film (Wright 2013: 141).

From a cinema studies point of view, it has been outlined that child-centred films are not unique or specific to Spanish cinema, but rather, are a distinctive and enlightening feature within Spanish film history. It has been pointed out that classroom analysis of such works and their child/adolescent protagonists is at its most powerful when, firstly, students are guided towards particular relevance to historical, political and social events and issues. Secondly, the dominance of associated intertextual references, either to other fictional narratives and fairy-tales or among each other (such as in the case of El espíritu and El laberinto), make child-centred Spanish cinema an ideal basis for GCSE work dedicated to plot structure, characterisation and mise-en-scène (such as camera work). There are inevitable practical reasons to expose younger spectators to films with younger characters, not least, related to identifiably and empathy (and therefore, engagement), but in the case of the Spanish works considered, such familiarity permits students to gain profound insight into the specific plights of youth in Spain, ‘today’, or (as in the case of some of the works cited), in the past. Beyond social ills and struggles exclusively experienced by youth however, the analysis of the cited works also reveals a significant advantage of child-centred Spanish cinema to expose GCSE students to important shifts in sociopolitical movement - a core component of the new A level for sure - from mass calls for changes in responses to national history, to the passing of new legislation. Sight dominates as a sense somehow afforded to Spanish children/adolescents in a superior way, whether it be via emphatic references to their innocence, or as suggestive of an enhanced ability to see the world as it should be seen. And it is fitting that it should be through an encouragement to look, see, watch and observe all that children represent, symbolise and convey in Spanish cinema that GCSE students are guided to share and interpret the child’s presence, including its gaze, as they seek to make better sense of what it means to be a Spanish child, or in others cases, just Spanish. Following this first phase of data analysis, the discussion now turns directly to the research questions set out in the Methodology, and incorporates each of the relevant questionnaires accordingly to lead the arguments, recommendations and pedagogical frameworks that are put forward.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis Phase 1: A direct response to the research questions

As set out in the Methodology section, this chapter aims to provide direct responses to the five research questions by analysing the questionnaire responses of students, teachers, trainee teachers and lecturers. Quantitative data is incorporated, but rather than attempting to suggest broad-scale trends, it is instead used to contextualise the overall data-set related to each participating institution and group of institutions. Percentages (rounded up to the nearest whole number) and total proportions are referred to, but these aim to guide the adjoining qualitative comments and selected literature, which includes (public record) documentary analysis throughout – GCSE and A level specifications, examiners’ reports, DfE statutory curriculum content, university (online) schemes of work and module descriptors - as is made clear. In the case of the trainee teachers, it is felt that enough data was collected (spanning two cohorts in two consecutive years; a total of 49 respondents) to make some wider judgements about film-related Spanish learning at both a teaching placement and initial teacher training provider level, at least in relation to the individual institution. On this basis, two bar charts are included as a means to clearly display some of the quantitative results. The fairly extensive number of different questionnaires; initially selected to ensure that all the relevant respondent groups identified in the preliminary research stage – GCSE pupils, GCSE teachers, A level pupils, A level teachers, undergraduate students, undergraduate lecturers, trainee teachers – and later extended in direct response to findings from the ‘Phase 1’ of data analysis to include ‘auteurism’, ‘realism’, ‘genre’ and ‘stars’ (‘Phase 2 – Chapter 5), are identified in the writing according to letters, B-L. It was also outlined in the Methodology that codes are used to refer to each respondent, which includes a code for the institution to which they belong. For example, the first student referred to in the section is ‘QB-HF-10’. This represents ‘Questionnaire B’, ‘School HF’ and ‘Student number 10’ of the cohort (refer to Table 2 and the details included in the Methodology). Each section of the chapter is divided according to the different stage of Spanish education - GCSE (4.1) and 4.2, A level (4.3) and undergraduate (4.4) and each of the research questions that it directly addresses. Commonalities, contrasts and concerns are identified throughout (largely in analysis of the qualitative data and in relation to DfE, exam board and university curriculum document contents); all of which collectively lead to the establishment of four cinematic themes – auteurism, realism, genre and stars - which are identified as recurring, valuable, yet problematic (within teaching and learning, as is made clear) and eventually, ‘core’ (in Chapter 5), with regards to the pedagogical models, frameworks and overall approaches recommended for the most effective teaching and learning of Spanish cinema.
4.1: Provision at GCSE (Research Question 1 and Research Question 2)

The data used in this section comes from the responses of a total of ninety-three GCSE students across five schools, (Questionnaire B (Appendix VI)), four teachers (Questionnaire C (Appendix VII)), and forty-nine trainee teachers (Questionnaire D (Appendix VIII)). Of the five GCSE cohorts (five different schools) who completed questionnaires, two have studied Spanish film during the course and three have not. At school, ‘HM’ (the author’s own school, at the time the data was gathered), varying numbers from a total of sixteen students have studied one or more of four films: El laberinto del fauno (sixteen), El orfanato (sixteen), Volver (eight) and El bola (eight). It is noted on Teacher, QC-HM-1’s questionnaire that students usually study one film in Year 10 and one in Year 11. These films are in the school’s scheme of work and for a number of years have been used to stimulate material for controlled assessments related to the topics of ‘Free time’, ‘Family’ or ‘School’. A number of worksheets are used along with booklets available on the HOME website (referenced earlier). At school, ‘ALM’, varying numbers from a total of sixteen students have watched one or both of two Spanish works during their GCSE studies: El orfanato (fifteen), El laberinto del fauno (six), plus Voces inocentes (Mexican) (seven) and Valentin (Argentinian) (sixteen), although teacher, QC-ALM-1 prefers to play ‘clips rather than whole movies’ and the film-related activities are not included in schemes of work or used for controlled assessments. The teacher makes use of an unspecified activity booklet for ‘comprehension purposes’, where the priority appears to be language-focused. The most relevant qualitative comments from participants who have not experienced Spanish cinema on the GCSE course – at school, ‘HF’ (nineteen students, two teachers) and school, ‘BIS-B’ (thirty-two students) and ‘BIS-G’ (10 students) - regarding how and why they may like, or not like, Spanish film to be incorporated on the GCSE course, are also discussed in order to provide alternative perspectives and as a means to measure how exposure influences appreciation. The analysis therefore begins by looking at perceptions of importance, leading to how Spanish cinema affects different forms of understanding at GCSE, and finally, the broader impact on interest and motivation, including that directly associated with subject choices for A level and beyond.

88% (28/32) of the students at HM and ALM see studying Spanish cinema at GCSE as, at least, ‘quite important’. An equal proportion - 88% (14/16) - of students at both schools noted the above, and 38% (6/16) of students at each of the two schools describe it as, ‘very important’. The extent of the magnitude placed on Spanish film at GCSE for both groups of students is evidently high. It is, then, interesting to note how these figures sit in sharp contrast to the comments supplied by several students at HF and BIS-B and BIS-G, where Spanish film is not used during the course. The comments range from, ‘it wouldn’t help’ (QB-HF-10), ‘I don’t think I would gain from it’ (QB-HF-9), and, ‘I couldn’t understand a Spanish film’ (QB-BIS-G-5), to, ‘I prefer to learn through textbooks’ (QB-HF-3) and ‘textbooks and vocab worksheets are better’ (QB-HF-4). There is most certainly a scepticism shared by several of these students regarding the learning potential of Spanish film, which is not mirrored by the data from ALM or HM. In such case, it may be suggested that a lack of opportunity or experience is more likely to lead to an unfamiliarity of the potential benefits, although for a greater
understanding of where the discrepancy comes from, it is necessary to look in detail at the qualitative comments offered by the students at ALM and HM, as well as the trainees.

Perhaps in a position to provide a more balanced perspective, the trainees provide their insight into the extent to which current provision is set up to meet the demand highlighted by the students at HM and ALM cited above. Only 16% (8/49) of the trainees say that they have had the opportunity to use film during any of their three teaching placements. In spite of this, the trainees are almost unanimous in underlining the importance of teaching foreign film training during the PGCE: 96% (47/49) describe such training as, at least, ‘quite important’, 37% (18/49) go as far as, ‘very important’ and 24% (12/49) describe it as, ‘essential’. In spite of this, only 2% (1/49) of the trainees describe their training in this area as, ‘excellent’ and 22% (11/49) rate it as, ‘good’. 41% (20/49) label it as merely, ‘adequate’ and over a quarter of the trainees - 27% (13/49) - feel that it is ‘inadequate’. Similarly, a third of the trainees - 33% (16/49) - describe the extent to which film study is embedded in MFL schemes of work as ‘not at all’; 63% (31/49) note, ‘not very much’ and only 4% (2/49) select, ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’. Trainees are also asked how much they think the current curriculum encourages film to be taught as part of MFL studies. 6% (3/49) remark, ‘not at all’ and 63% (31/49) declare, ‘not very much’. Only 29% (14/49) express, ‘quite a lot’ and most of them note that this is only at A level. Finally, trainees are asked how visually literate they think their students are. Only 8% (4/49) feel that they are ‘highly visually literate’ and 27% (13/49) estimate that they are ‘quite visually literate’. 59% (29/49) feel that their students are ‘not very visually literate’ and 4% (2/49) think, ‘not at all’.

Chart 1

1. How important do you think it is to teach national cinema in MFL secondary education?
2. How important would you say it is for trainee MFL teachers to be taught how to effectively use film in MFL lessons?
A significant recurring theme among the responses of many of the students surrounds the characteristic of studying film as being based on the visual and one that appeals to students with a visual learning style. Despite conflicting guidance about the reliability of learning styles, several of the participating students specifically refer to film’s strength in appealing to visual learners. QB-HF-14, for example, suggests that learning Spanish through film ‘would be good, as a lot of [students] are visual learners’. This idea is backed up by QB-ALM-15, who notes that ‘film gives you a visual, rather than just learning about it from books and the teacher’. For other students, it seems to be a simple case of preference; ‘students may prefer to learn Spanish in a visual way’ (QB-HF-13), whilst for others, it may be about enhanced learning; ‘it seems that some students learn better visually’ (QB-HF-8). QB-HF-11 adds to the detail, suggesting that, ‘for the visual learners, film helps students learn Spanish in a context’; a view shared by QB-ALM-15, who adds, ‘it allows you to see for real how you can actually use the skills you are learning’. The importance placed on contextualisation as a means to enhance identification and, ultimately, understanding, is backed up by teacher, QC-HM, who notes that learning Spanish in context, such as through film, brings students ‘a huge step closer to actually being “there”’. Moreover, it cannot be denied that a dominant aspect of cinema studies is based on visual analysis (see Section 3.1), and so it is unconvincing to suggest that students with preferences for other approaches to learning and modes of analysis and critique may instinctively be as engaged as others.

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88% (14/16) of the QB-ALM students claim that their general understanding of Spanish improved at least 'a little' through studying Spanish cinema; 36% (5/16) states, 'quite a lot' and 6% (1/16) assert(s), 'a lot'. 81% (13/16) of the QB-HM students note, at least, 'a little'; 31% (5/16) express, 'quite a lot' and 25% (4/16) articulate, 'a lot'. Teachers, QC-HM-1 and QC-ALM-1 agree that film can help tackle underachievement at GCSE; the latter conveys that 'it helps motivate some of the more disengaged pupils'. Teacher, QC-ALM-1 specifies that the main advantage is that it can help with better understandings of Spanish culture (although somewhat confusingly, the main objective of its use at the school seems to be language-focused, as pointed out earlier). Both teachers at HF - a school which does not currently make use of Spanish film at GCSE - agree that film 'could be quite useful' for enhancing the learning of Spanish language. Several students across all four schools make a general reference to 'language improvement' (although many offer more detailed comments of specific areas of language work, as discussed in the next section). In increasing order of detail, students note in relation to film in Spanish lessons: 'It increases [their] vocab range' (QB-ALM-5); 'It helps with language complexity and the development of vocab' (QB-ALM-1); 'It helps [them] to expand [their] vocab and get more used to the way Spanish people speak' (QB-BIS-B-20). Some students refer specifically to the benefits of the audio in particular: 'Watching [Spanish films] helps [them] to improve [their] listening skills (QB-ALM-12); 'It improves students’ listening skills and shows them how to pronounce certain words’ (QB-ALM-1); ‘I learn languages well from listening to conversations; learning Spanish in context, such as in film, would have been beneficial to me’ (QB-HF-17). The concept of film providing a 'context' for language development is echoed by QB-BIS-G-3, who notes that studying Spanish film 'shows me how to use Spanish in real life situations, which then makes it easier for me to remember words'. For other students, it is about other aspects of Spanish identity linked with authenticity: ‘Students get to see more about Spanish culture and history that is correct’ (QB-ALM-7); ‘It gives students an insight into the actual country and its culture (QB-ALM-15); ‘It gives students an understanding of what happens in Spain’ (QB-BIS-G-6). Finally, two students support the suggestions made in Chapter 3 about film being particularly effective when tied into other curriculum topics: ‘If we’re learning about school or culture, the teacher could show a film about these, for example’ (QB-BIS-G-4), and, ‘after studying a certain topic, students should watch a Spanish film about that topic to make the vocab more interesting and see it put into action’ (QB-ALM-14). Teacher, QC-HG-1 describes the potential of film at GCSE for improving awareness of history, society and culture as, ‘very useful’, and the other, ‘quite useful’. Teacher, QC-HG-2 specifies that the main advantage would be that it would make learning Spanish more ‘engaging and real [because] using authentic resources has the ability to show what Spanish life and society are really like’. In spite of these comments, neither of the teachers at HG feels that film can help tackle under-achievement at GCSE. It is crucial to readdress here the dangers associated with students’ and teachers’ comments about ‘correct’ history and what Spain is 'really like'. As highlighted in the previous chapter and explored at length in Section 5.2, reality and historical accuracy do not fit comfortably within cinema studies, but instead, must be approached with both a high level of caution and an informed, and ideally, theory-led, methodology. In short, studies in Spanish cinema must not be used explicitly as a means to teach historical fact or validate a gauging of social authenticity. Instead, it ought to be
framed carefully as a highly useful, cultural, artistic product that offers a variety of perspectives and interpretations that may or may not have foundations in factual truth.

As first suggested in Chapter 2, film provides a means to increase interest in Spanish as a subject and can play a major role in motivating students during the GCSE course, possibly to the point of choosing it as an A level subject (or equivalent) and beyond. 81% (13/16) of ALM students support this suggestion by noting that studying Spanish film has increased their interest in Spanish, at least, ‘a little’, with 25% (4/16) stating, ‘quite a lot’ and 6% (1/16) replying, ‘a lot’. Only 6% (1/16) of the same cohort feel that their interest in Spanish has not increased by studying Spanish film: 31% (5/16) remark, ‘quite a lot’ and 37% (6/16) affirm, ‘a lot’. A similar dominant perception is voiced by participating trainee teachers, who, despite suggesting a failure in some schools to formalise film in the Spanish curriculum, are almost unanimous in claiming that students enjoy or would enjoy studying Spanish film as part of the GCSE course, at least, ‘quite a lot’, and 43% (21/49) feel that students enjoy or would enjoy it ‘very much’.

A number of qualitative comments provide useful explanations for the quantitative data noted above. Teacher, QC-ALM-1 confirms that they make use of film in Spanish lessons, in part at least, for ‘enjoyment’ purposes, rating the practice, ‘four out of five’, for enjoyment. Teacher, QC-HM-1 is even more enthusiastic, rating the inclusion of Spanish film, ‘five out of five’, as an enjoyable aspect of learning Spanish, in their experience. Rather tentatively, although still continuing to manifest the positive perceptions outlined above, QB-HF-6 and QB-HF-7 note that studying Spanish film ‘might be interesting’ and ‘could make lessons more engaging’, respectively. Other students support the claims made in Chapter 2 that film provides an appealing addition to current classroom provision and a welcome difference to the norm. QB-HF-18 notes that, ‘it would be useful to use a bigger range of resources, such as film, to make lessons more engaging’ and QB-HF-15 suggests that film would provide ‘more variety and would be different to the normal stuff’. The ‘fun’ factor is again cited by both QB-BIS-G-2 and QB-BIS-G-9 and is echoed by QB-ALM-4, who feels that using film in Spanish lessons ‘is a more entertaining way to learn’. Similarly, not losing sight of learning as a priority among the fun-associated elements, QB-BIS-G-9 notes that ‘films are fun, yet you still learn the language’. These combined elements are picked up by QB-BIS-G-4, who feels that Spanish film provides a ‘fun and easy way to learn more of Spanish language and culture’. QB-ALM-1 ties the enjoyment into ‘keep[ing] students’ interest and focus through the interactivity of film [which is] key for today’s teenage students’ (reminiscent of the arguments put forward in Section 3.1 surrounding the multimodality of foreign film study). QB-BIS-B-14 further supports such ideas, noting that film ‘keeps students interested’ and specifies that it ‘teaches them about the culture’. QB-BIS-G-3 suggests that ‘studying films can make it a fun way to learn about history’ and can ‘increase interest in Spanish as a subject’. Again relating it to a concept of authenticity, QB-BIS-G-4 notes how studying through film ‘gives students the opportunity to see how real Spanish is used in real life situations instead of just memorising vocab, which makes it easier and more fun to learn Spanish’. Finally, QB-HF-16 suggests that studying film at GCSE ‘can engage pupils who are less academic to possibly take a language’;
once again suggestive of a perception that film can have a key role in encouraging more students to study MFL at A level and beyond, including and, arguably, especially, those who struggle to access other elements of the subject’s significant, academic demands. Teacher, QC-HG-1 claims that, ‘using film in the GCSE Spanish course can result in larger A level numbers’, however, teacher, QC-HG-2 denies that this is the case. Differences are also articulated among the responses of teacher, QC-HM-1 and teacher, QC-ALM-1. While teacher, QC-HM-1 ‘strongly agree[s]’ that film at GCSE encourages students to take Spanish for A level, teacher, QC-ALM states that, ‘it does not necessarily have a role in increasing uptake’. A significant, 38% (6/16) of teacher, QC-ALM’s students think that the extent to which film can have a role in encouraging them to study a language for A level can best be described as, ‘not much’ or ‘not at all’. Less than a third of the same group - 31% (5/16) - feel that it encourages them, at least, ‘a little’. In response to the same question, 56% (9/16) of teacher, QC-HM-1’s students comment, at least, ‘a little’, although almost half - 44% (7) - note, ‘not much’ or ‘not at all’.

This array of qualitative comments capture a majority cohort of students who firmly appreciate the place of film study on the GCSE Spanish course, either from current or previous experience, or as an aspect that they would like to experience in the future. It is, arguably, telling that the group where the largest proportion of students who do not rate the educational value of film in the learning of Spanish are those who have no previous experience of it as a pedagogical tool. It may also be deduced that where a teacher does not have confidence in the potential of cinema studies to enhance MFL learning, there is a greater chance of his/her students sharing the same level of scepticism. Trainee teachers are in a strong position to be able to both assess measures likely to enhance interest in the subject that they have chosen to teach and convey a non-biased perception of areas of strengths and weaknesses within school curricula. In such case, their collective voice regarding film’s impact on enjoyment in MFL learning ought to be listened to and, where necessary, acted upon. Several qualitative comments back up the discussion in the previous chapter related to multimodal literacies and, in particular, how the multimodality inherent to (foreign) film analysis is its most fertile platform for the development of students’ linguistic, historical and sociocultural knowledge. However, in order to provide a more detailed overview of where and how Spanish cinema studies is able to most effectively address the above areas of Spanish as an academic subject, qualitative responses to the second research question are exhibited and inspected below.
4.2: Impact at GCSE (Research Question 1 and Research Question 3)

The data analysed in this section derives from the same batches of questionnaires referred to in the previous section, with the addition of Questionnaire L (Appendix XVI). For those students experienced in studying Spanish film at GCSE, the data comes directly from responses to question two and question twelve of Questionnaire B (Appendix VI). For other students, it comes from responses to question eleven and question twelve, as a means of both, cross-checking the validity of the responses and, where appropriate, expanding on any trends or significant differences.

The data conveys that a majority - 84% (27/32) - of the participating students with experience of Spanish film have experienced at least ‘a little’ improvement in their language understanding and/or usage, with almost half of the students asked - 48% (15/32) - claiming that linguistic competence has been enhanced, at least, ‘quite a lot’. Just over half - 53% (17/32) – identify, ‘vocabulary learning and development’, as a core area of noticeable improvement. The same figure choose, ‘range of expression’, as an area of noted progress. Half of the students - 50% (16/32) - select, ‘tenses’, as an area where improvement has been sensed, although here there is a greater difference between the two groups, whereby 25% more of the author’s own students feel that their understanding of tenses has been improved. This difference is suggestive of the direct impact of activities selected by the teacher; the author’s own lessons contained a number of ‘predict the next scene’ and ‘describe what just happened’ activities. It may be that such activities are not routinely used in other schools, although professional experience of positive outcomes make them very much recommended. Again, it is crucial for the teacher to bear in mind that how students read foreign film and the ways in which they perceive its educational value inevitably depends on the knowledge, skills and preferences of the teacher. Similarly, learning outcomes, and indeed, any outcomes of a film viewing experience, are also wholly dependent on the spectator’s own previous experiences, interest, and, also, their critical competence, as discussed in the previous chapter. This latter component is however one where the educator can have the most significant role in what is a fluid and multilayered acquisition of skills; and certainly one that is expected at A level, where students need to produce an ‘excellent critical […] response to the question set’ (AQA 2017a: 28) if they are to achieve a top grade.

The specifics of language development and improvement also very much depend on the film(s) chosen. As noted in the previous section, El orfanato, El laberinto del fauno, El bola and Volver compose the selection of Spanish works shown in the two participating schools, watched by 97% (31/32), 69% (22/32), 25% (8/32) and 25% (8/32) of the cohort, respectively. Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from specific areas of language that can be developed through particular works (according to the data), it is possible to recommend pedagogical links between certain films and GCSE language topics. Several scenes in El orfanato are useful for developing and practising vocabulary related to the home and local area, for example. Much of the film is set within the grounds of an orphanage (as the title suggests), although the orphanage is essentially a house, containing several rooms and items of furniture, within which the central characters carry out a mixture of
mundane (routine-based) tasks (as well as many other non-mundane tasks), such as eating, going to bed and so on (useful for the language topics of diet and daily routine). However, some of the most dramatic scenes take place outside at the nearby beach or dark caves. The dominant role of setting (as also heavily implied by the film’s title) and various location-centred movements and actions of the characters make this work an ideal resource for building on, for example, the AQA-endorsed, Oxford GCSE (2016) course's Theme 2 topic, ‘Home, town, neighborhood and region’. As referred to previously, and as detailed further in the next chapter, one of El laberinto’s greatest strengths as a learning tool in the Spanish classroom concerns its direct relevance to law changes and an evolving social consciousness in Spain around 2000. However, as a work centred around family and a variety of family roles and relationships, including parenthood, childhood and friendship, it is an ideal subject on which to base language development related to Oxford’s Theme 1 topics, ‘Family and relationships’ and ‘Relationships nowadays’, for example. Additionally, scenes filmed in and outside Pablo and Alfredo’s school and also in Mariano’s hardware shop create opportunities for verbal and written descriptions of school buildings, school subjects, school day routine and places of work. These can be located within the Oxford sub-topics, ‘What is your school like?’, ‘The good and the bad aspects of your school’, and ‘Jobs and career choices’. El laberinto receives a significant amount of special analytical attention later in this chapter, and also in Chapter 5, due to its popularity in the participating schools’ GCSE classrooms and its dominance at A level. However, it is relevant here to (re-)emphasise El laberinto’s particular visual and stylistic qualities, largely defined by symbolic colouring and shading, classic visual features of popular genres (mainly, fantasy and horror) and, as referred to earlier, highly representative and blatant intertextual references via costume, make-up and special effects. Such visual attributes make it an ideal podium for language development related to description and comparison, particularly as a work set in two contrasting worlds (fantasy and ‘reality’) (see Kermode 2006). Finally, as a historical film, it also lends itself very well to classroom discussions dedicated to practising and developing the use of the past tense. Verbal presentation of observations and opinions may be directed to include the preterite - for example, ‘Si consideramos Vidal como una personificación de Franco, es importante tener en cuenta que Franco no murió hasta 1975’ - or the imperfect - Al estudiar esta obra, aprendí que durante la época posguerra, los españoles tenían que pedir comida con tarjetas de racionamiento’ - which are essential (grammatical) components of the GCSE course.

A number of participating students make more direct references to the particular benefits Spanish film brings to their learning. QB-HF-19 states that, ‘watching films like El laberinto del fauno in [their] spare time has really improved [their] Spanish language skills’. For the students who have not had the opportunity to study Spanish cinema during the course, there is a significant level of confidence expressed concerning film’s potential. QB-HF-5 feels that studying Spanish film ‘would help to integrate spoken language a lot more into lessons’. QB-BIS-B-20, QB-BIS-B-25 and QB-ALM-5 all explicitly mention, ‘expanding vocabulary’, as a benefit they would anticipate, and in the case of QB-BIS-B-20, this coincides with ‘getting more used to the way Spanish people speak’. Other students

89 https://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/nov/05/features.review1
have good ideas for how language development, including the widening of vocabulary, can be enhanced in the post-screening and/or analysis stage. QB-BIS-B-21 suggests ‘studying the characters and then writing a monologue for them’. QB-BIS-G-2 would like to use the dialogue of Spanish film for ‘translation purposes’. With translation being an essential element within the reading and writing exams of the reformed GCSE (2016), there is a fruitful opportunity here for teachers to make use of authentic and, ideally, stimulating, extracts of film dialogue for the development of translation and interpreting skills. Moreover, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, the combination of spoken dialogue and character action visualised on screen makes foreign film a less daunting and more accessible method of practising the skills of listening and general comprehension. In this sense, it is a highly suitable listening improvement platform for less able students or those who struggle with the lack of visual prompting or support commonly associated with listening activities’ high level of difficulty. Some students also write that it is desirable to coincide language from film dialogue and analysis with specification topic-based language, such as QB-BIS-G-7, QB-BIS-G-8 and BIS-B-25, the second of whom specifies that, ‘different films used with each topic [allows students to] see how the language is actually used’. QB-ALM-14 is in agreement, stating that, ‘after learning a certain topic, [students] should watch a Spanish film about that topic to make the vocabulary more interesting and to see it put into action’. It is evident that, for several students, seeing and hearing the vocabulary, expressions and structures required by the GCSE course in an authentic context (such as through film) very much has the potential to enhance and extend their learning of the (language-based) material. As emphasised in the previous two chapters, the re-modernisation of MFL education via extensive and the most meaningful use of authentic materials is a key step towards tackling both underachievement and worryingly low numbers at GCSE and beyond. It is therefore imperative that the views of students, such as those above, are considered with great care and, where deemed appropriate, acted upon. There is a clear majority among the participating students who support the range of literature sources and previous studies referred to in Chapter 2 (Fawkes, cited in Chambers 2001: 70; Sánchez-Requena and Alonso-Pérez (2018); Sánchez-Requena (2018) (and in Section 3.1; Swaffar and Vlatten 1997: 174-175)), which detail the scope for the specific development of listening. Three quarters of the participating students who had studied Spanish film - 75% (24/32) - highlight it as a key skill area where improvement had been experienced or acknowledged. QB-ALM-1 singles out the link between foreign film analysis and ‘helping [students]’ listening skills in experiencing how to pronounce certain words’; an idea that is echoed by several other participants, including those not experienced in Spanish film study. For QB-BIS-G-10, it would be about ‘enhancing […] listening skills through a better understanding of day to day spoken Spanish’. QB-BIS-B-15 (re-)highlights the important skill or translation, whereby studying Spanish film ‘without subtitles would help [students]’ listening skills as [they] have to translate what they are saying’. QB-BIS-B-26 and QB-HF-12 also see this as a useful challenge, as they note, ‘trying to understand a Spanish film would be a good listening test’ and ‘it would have been interesting to see how much [students] understand without subtitles and how much [they] can pick up by context’, respectively. Finally, for QB-BIS-G-2, a key advantage concerns the combination of ‘listening to spoken Spanish while learning about the culture at the same time’.
General expectations of improvement in speaking are noted by both QB-HF-13, who states that, ‘studying Spanish film may have improved [their] speaking’, and QB-BIS-G-2, who remarks that, ‘[students] can understand how to speak better by picking up from films a variety of terms and phrases [they] may have not learned before’. For QB-BIS-G-4, QB-BIS-G-6 and QB-BIS-G-2, it is mainly about developing ‘good pronunciation’. QB-BIS-G-10 suggests that studying film can lead to spoken fluency, specifying that, ‘Spanish film can help [them] expand [their] vocabulary for conversation and help [them] to speak Spanish without thinking too much’. Some students again identify the desire for language work through Spanish film to be related to the GCSE language topics, such as ‘local area’ and ‘future aspirations’ (Edexcel 2016b). QB-BIS-G-1 wants teachers to ‘find films related to the topics in order to help with the pronunciation of words needed for GCSE’ and QB-BIS-B-1 helpfully ties the practice into assessment, noting that, ‘listening to different accents and the way characters pronounce words would be useful in improving speaking skills, especially for a speaking exam’. Such comments make further calls for film study to be interlinked with topic-based, language and assessment preparation work, including for the development of correct pronunciation; an area of language learning where students are often greatly put off due to the perceived level of difficulty and fear of failure (Barton 2006: 36, Harris 2002: 196-199). This again calls for film to be sufficiently embedded into schemes of work and GCSE specifications in order to give students and teachers both the confidence and necessary guidance required for the achievement of optimum outcomes afforded by Spanish film studies.

QB-BIS-G-3 points out the advantage of ‘hearing the language being spoken fluently’, presumably in contrast to course book audio materials and/or the teacher’s demonstration of the target language for purposes specific to the context of the lesson. QB-BIS-G-10 reaffirms the authenticity factor associated with film dialogue, where students are exposed to ‘actual Spanish speech’. This is echoed by QB-BIS-B-12, who notes that ‘[students] get to see what a conversation between Spanish people should actually sound/be like’, and by QB-HF-17, who emphasises the benefit of learning Spanish within ‘a contextual use, such as film’. For QB-BIS-G-1 and QB-BIS-G-9, the authenticity is linked to learning benefits related to speed of delivery, where the former gains from being exposed to the ‘pace of how Spanish people speak’ and the latter, via Spanish film’s ability to ‘help with pronunciation and grasping how fast Spanish people talk’. QB-BIS-B-16 reinforces the desire to ‘understand native speakers better’, which for QB-BIS-B-29 comes via ‘showing [students] how Spanish people take in everyday situations’. Exposure to Spanish cinema provides an alternative to the norm for QB-BIS-G-3, who notes that it ‘gives [students] an opportunity to see how real Spanish is used in real life situations, instead of just memorising vocabulary’. QB-BIS-G-3 agrees with this effectiveness, noting that such experience ‘makes it easier to remember words’. The collective student voice in relation to an enhanced depth of learning about how to communicate in Spanish is resonant of several of the research projects’ and scholars’ claims presented in Chapters 2 and 3. Several of the students cited recognise what Kracauer (1973) – to cite him again - describes as the ‘unique property of film […] to make one see and grasp things which only the cinema is privileged to communicate’. Although Marsh and Bearne (2008: 26) specifically consider the improved attainment of boys, their claims surrounding
an enhanced sophistication on productive language skills are very much reflected in several of the qualitative comments above. It is also evident that the claims presented by the BFI (2013: 22) concerning enhanced attainment, largely focused on literacy, are supported by a number of the participating students, including those who have had the opportunity to study film during their Spanish studies and those who have not.

How Spanish cinema studies affects the other core strands of MFL learning at GCSE - history, society and culture, as suggested by the curriculum and various DfE documents cited previously – and indeed, how these strands link directly to learning of any foreign language, now needs to be assessed. This is done in order to both evaluate the various claims made by scholars and research groups cited in the first two chapters, and put forward a contextualised framework for educators dedicated to addressing the aspects of Spanish learning listed above and interested in doing so via Spanish film studies. As an initial step, it is particularly useful to think back to Pachler and Field’s (2001: 147) linking of language and communication development with cultural understanding, and also Ortí et al.’s (2011: 1) similarly articulated connections to sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.

Although lacking as explicit requirements of GCSE assessment, an expectation of students enhancing their knowledge of aspects in addition to language within GCSE MFL studies is confirmed in the reformed specifications. ‘[Students] will [...] develop a greater awareness of culture of Spanish-speaking communities and countries’ (Edexcel 2016a: 6). The omission of the terms, ‘history’, or, ‘society’, or indeed, any more specific strands of ‘culture’ presents an uncertainty for teachers (and students) regarding how much work on areas outside of language could and should be taught. Perhaps the most obvious addition related to ‘culture’ in the reformed GCSE is the inclusion of segments of literary texts for both reading and translation purposes, however, the forming of opinions on actual content or any form of critical analysis (so important at A level) is largely ignored. And unlike in the reformed A level, there is no prescribed list of texts, nor is there an expectation to study a full work in context. The effectiveness of making brief, authentic literary sources a compulsory component of assessments (and therefore a likely part of lessons in order to practise) remains to be fully established following the first assessments of the reformed GCSE in 2018 and 2019, although it is not literature that is of concern here.

The analysis below involves the scrutiny of qualitative comments provided by twenty-five GCSE students from schools, HM and ALM, who have watched El laberinto del fauno, and twenty-six students (from the same two schools) who have watched El bola. Analysis of the qualitative data from both Questionnaire B (Appendix VI) (HM and ALM) and Questionnaire L (Appendix XVI) (HM only) has, as is made clear, produced three types of answers, which provide the structure for this section. It begins by considering statements which are explained (by the author) as, ‘inaccurate’. This is followed by responses defined as, ‘basic’, and finally, by observations justified as, ‘astute’. By categorising responses in this way, the most specific commentary on the extent of learning potential identified or
fulfilled, along with examples of effective and less effective teaching and learning strategies, are provided.

The direct questioning inevitable in questionnaire-based data collection can lead to direct and, what may be considered, overly simplistic, answers, however, in some cases within the data, responses may be interpreted as, simply, incorrect. In relation to El laberinto del fauno, two qualitative comments display a level of confusion in terms of historical fact. QB-ALM-11 notes that by watching this film, they learned about ‘Spanish wars’ (in the plural). QL-HM-GCSE-6 notes how from watching the film, they picked up ‘information about the Spanish revolution’. On the one hand, elements of these comments can be considered correct, as of course during the years after the Civil War there were many ongoing battles (although not quite ‘wars’). In terms of a ‘revolution’, the ending of the film can fairly easily be interpreted as an attempt to represent the eventual cultural and social revolution experienced by the nation several decades later, following Franco’s death. However, at worst it can be read as the students having missed the unique relevance of the Spanish Civil War and indeed, the period’s exclusive shaping of modern Spanish history (and much of its present). At least a basic level of secure understanding related to this historical backdrop is crucial for a meaningful appreciation of El laberinto’s worth as a cultural product or even simply as a cinematic work. As argued in Chapter 3, one of the most praised elements of del Toro’s work lies in its multiple meanings and depths within the context of understanding the human effect of the Civil War on Spain, at least, from del Toro’s perspective. Any missed recognition of this work’s intricacy is likely to result in a significant failure to exploit the multilayered potential for learning from nuanced reflections of Spanish history and historical social identity. QB-ALM-1 and QB-ALM-5 both note that, ‘during the Civil War, society was corrupt’. These students appear to point to the corrupt characters of Mercedes (Maribel Verdú) and Doctor Ferreiro (Álex Angulo), who work under Nationalist Army Captain, Vidal while providing information, supplies and medical care to the Maqui rebels in the woods. The comment also raises a concern that certain complexities in El laberinto, and indeed, the reality which it attempts to capture or, as referred to in Chapter 3, subvert, can lead to a confused idea of exactly ‘who was what’, such as in this case of, who was actually corrupt: the Fascists?; the rebels?; general society? Such possible confusion in an educational context highlights the need for a shared consciousness between the teacher and the student that films are never an entirely reliable source of factual learning in a historical, social or cultural context. Instead, such as in the case of El laberinto, historical films are well-placed to provide a useful and effective starting point for learning that makes use of supplementary resources and encourages individual interpretation at both filmmaker and spectator level as equally valuable parts of the learning process.

QL-HM-GCSE-3 observes that, ‘Spanish films show that communities always help each other and work closely together’. In light of the fact that this student has in fact watched both El laberinto and El bolo, the observation presumably relates to the resistance of the rebels as representative of the non-

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Fascist-supporting Spanish society in the former and the kindness offered by Alfredo’s family following Pablo’s violent abuse from his father in the latter. While the idea of a close and cohesive community may be a positive and welcome image of Spain in terms of increasing students' appreciation and admiration of the target-language country, it may also be regarded as signaling an ignorance of the complexities of relations within Spanish cities and across regions that contain divisions and conflicts, just like most other nations. As outlined in Chapter 2, any accurate study of ‘Spanish identity’ inherently requires an awareness of Spain’s long history of marked regional diversity, and indeed, what gives the home nation the title of ‘Las Españas’. Moreover, the idea of all communities working ‘closely together’ was most certainly not true of Spain in 1944, nor is it true, incidentally, for much of Spain today. Teachers aiming to develop the most informed perspectives of Spanish identity/identities will no doubt encourage students to pay attention to historical territorial terrorism, including that relating to ETA, ongoing debate surrounding Catalonian independence or the recent rise of far-right groups, such as Vox, in shaping the current sociopolitical landscape.

Converse to simplistic descriptions of Spanish communities painted in a positive light, QL-HM-AL-3, in reference to El bola, suggests that, ‘Spanish society is very different to English society’, and that, ‘what people have to deal with at home and at school there is brutal’. Here, the student provides a reminder of the power and in many ways, inevitability, concerned with the reading of one (foreign) film as somehow being qualified to represent a whole nation. Such an interpretation is, at best, likely to be inaccurate, and at worst, eternally damaging to the student’s understanding of what the country is actually like. There is a difficulty here in that El bola provides a good grounding for students’ exposure to a significant period of Spanish social and political movement toward the end of the 1990, as clarified earlier. Despite such relevance in any understanding of ‘real’ Spain, there will, understandably, be some teachers of GCSE Spanish who do not wish for such as an unpleasant subject matter to be a prominent part of discovering Spanish identity. In this regard, El bola may be a film better suited to A level or undergraduate study. That said, from professional experience, the work fits very well alongside a number of GCSE language-based topics (as confirmed earlier) and, as a widely critically acclaimed work (largely related to acting), with family, friendship and adolescence at the core of the narrative, it has an established ability to be a highly identifiable, engaging and, as is further explored below, educational Spanish film at GCSE.

It has been underlined that the teaching and learning of one single film, or, more generally, insufficiently prepared, presented or explored studies in foreign film analysis, can present further inaccuracy-related problems related to over-simplicity, presumption and reinforced stereotype. QL-HM-GCSE-5 exemplifies this when they describe that, in El bola, it ‘looks like a strict society’. QL-HM-GCSE-13 generalises that, ‘children in Spain can't behave properly and they have little care for others’. Similarly, QL-HM-GCSE-12 deduces from the film that, ‘in Spain there are big behaviour problems and parents can't control children’. Such comments confirm the welcome advent of (student) spectator perspective and individual viewer response on films’ presentative qualities, but they also provide a stark reminder of tendencies to over-rely on a foreign film watching experience to
establish some sort of national identity or trend, which may either stem from and/or be made worse via a teacher’s failure to guide, facilitate and effectively manage the film learning experience. In short, such tendencies present an ignorance of films’ representative qualities (as opposed to presentative). It is therefore recommended for teachers to incorporate a series of works, or at least a variety of scenes from a series of works, into schemes of work which aim to develop and improve GCSE students’ knowledge of Spanish history, society or culture (as well as language), as represented by filmmakers, for a variety of purposes. It is crucial for views such as those cited above to be challenged in the classroom, should they occur, whereby inaccurate descriptions can provide ideal stimuli from which to base corrected and more substantially supported knowledge, by either re-addressing the particular points, re-accessing the material, or providing a broader comparison to additional sources.

Several of the qualitative comments in relation to El laberinto suggest a more accurate, although somewhat limited or basic understanding of aspects of Spanish history, society or culture. For example, QB-ALM-8, QB-ALM-10 and QB-ALM-11 cite that they have learned about ‘traditions’. QB-ALM-10 and QB-ALM-11 note that they have learned about Spanish ‘way of life’ and ALM16 specifies, ‘old buildings’. As a film praised for its multiple layers of meaning, as described earlier, such undeveloped responses suggest missed opportunities to capitalise on the learning potential provided by such a highly acclaimed and seemingly, diverse, authentic resource. Other students (including in relation to other works) however provide more detail about what they have learned in a historical, social or cultural context. QL-HM-AL-4 states that, ‘El bola taught [them] a bit about the state of some Spanish schools’. QL-HM-GCSE-2 and QL-HM-GCSE-11 both refer to aspects of the Civil War when they observe that, ‘a dictator came out of the Spanish Civil War’, and that, ‘during and after the war there were rules put in place in Spain - the country was not a free country’, respectively. QL-HM-GCSE-13 continues the increase in detail, observing that, ‘there was a war between soldiers and rebels’. ‘Rebels’ are also specified by QL-HM-AL-2 and QL-HM-GCSE-14; the second of whom notes that they ‘have learned how the “Spanish general guy” [presumably, Franco] was a tyrant’.

A number of qualitative comments display a broader and relatively more substantial acquisition of knowledge about aspects of Spanish history, society or culture from studying either El bola or El laberinto del fauno. QL-HM-GCSE-2, for example, points out how the former work depicts ‘how Spanish children can spend their free time’, and also, ‘what school life is like compared to the UK’. The scope for comparative work (in a social context) on isolated topics such as ‘school’ has already been highlighted, but the comments that follow reveal interesting perceptions about how such areas captured on film can also help inform students about the behaviour of particular age groups. QL-HM-GCSE-15 witnesses in El bola, ‘what it’s like to be a child/young adult in Spain’; a perception taken slightly further by QL-HM-GCSE-11, who claims that El bola ‘shows how Spanish children are with adults and how they live together’. Significant professional experience suggests that there is a genuine and significant desire among GCSE students to understand what it might be like to live in the target language country/countries, particularly as a teenager. Such a desire relating to empathy, familiarity, and indeed, an appreciation of difference, is to be encouraged as much as possible if
accepted as a crucial process in the steady engagement of MFL students and the development of lifelong language learners.\textsuperscript{91}

QL-HM-GCSE-4 recognises an additional depth, noting that ‘people are mostly very friendly to each other, [but also that] bad things take place’. Such a concept offers a worthwhile lesson to Spanish students in that Spain is not just the sunny, fiesta-loving nation that is traditionally presented in many of the textbooks. Instead, it can viewed as a country that has its troubles and dark sides like all others; an acceptance that not only makes its identity more accessible (in terms of understanding), but also, more relatable. Similarly, QL-HM-GCSE-6 observes through watching \textit{El bola} that, ‘Spain is actually similar to the UK; there is a poor side and a wealthy side’, and that, ‘poverty affects people everywhere’. The cited concept of ‘poverty’ in fact merits its own section in the Oxford textbook.

Based on the collective responses discussed above, it can be argued that there is a significant, but frequently underexploited, potential in incorporating Spanish film at GCSE to enhance students’ understanding of Spanish history, society and culture. A virtually entirely language-focused curriculum (currently) fails to both recognise such a potential and sufficiently prepare students for the next stage up (A level). The various examples of films and particular scenes demonstrate that there is not by any means a ‘one size fits all’ approach that can be applied to teaching and learning methodologies. Instead, it is essential to carefully plan and transparently share (with students) all related learning outcomes and maintain a high level of flexibility when managing students’ own perceptions and verbalised and/or written responses. Particular caution must be applied in any attempt to convey factual accuracy, although variations in how this is (re)presented in Spanish film, as has been demonstrated in the various examples, provide a welcome method for enriching the dimensions of perspective, subjectivity and bias. Moreover, the very nature of national identity and how it relates to foreign cinema’s role as a vehicle for (re)presenting, promoting, shaping and sometimes even, changing, the ‘reality’ of a country’s identity is in itself a hugely prosperous basis for higher order learning. It may be for some educators that parts of this go beyond the requirements, necessities or possibilities of the GCSE, but with film and target-language cultural identity more generally being such a prominent part of the A level, and indeed, undergraduate courses (as is explored in the sections that follow) a much more coherent, consistent and convincing approach to Spanish cinema provision at GCSE is undoubtedly, and somewhat urgently, required.

\textsuperscript{91} See again Ortl et al. (2011:22).
4.3: Assessment structure at A level (Research Question 1 and Research Question 4)

With the (legacy) A level in Spanish (see section 2.1 for details) in existence in England since 2009 drawing to a close in 2018, this section reviews how successful the cultural topic has been in meeting the objectives of the syllabus through the teaching, learning and assessment of Spanish national cinema. Focusing on AQA, exam reports from 2010 to 2014 and questionnaire responses from thirty-four A level Spanish students (Schools BIS-G, HF, HM and OSFC) (Questionnaire E, Appendix IX) and two teachers (Questionnaire F, Appendix X) are used as qualitative evidence to evaluate the outcomes of the cultural topic. With the reformed A level being first examined in 2018, questions are answered surrounding potential improvements, particularly regarding how the integration of individual films (from a prescribed list) into the new A level curriculum, are able to enhance students’ understanding of Spain’s linguistic, historical, social and cultural identity.

The thirty-four respondents are made up of seven of the author’s own students (HM) (a mixture of current and past students) and twenty-seven from the three other schools. In addition to providing an overview of what exactly students are supposed to be learning from the cultural topic and, crucially, the films selected by teachers, the section incorporates a much-needed, student voice in order to establish what learners think of recent practice and to shed light on students’ opinions of the works to which they are exposed. Finally, it seeks to establish the obstacles and challenges in the teaching and learning of Spanish cinema within the cultural topic (and more generally at A level), and the extent to which such a teaching, learning and assessment model enhances students’ learning of Spanish and their continued interest in the subject.

Through the A level course, including the cultural topic, students are expected to ‘derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning’, ‘develop a [general] interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning’ and gain ‘a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent’ (AQA 2014: 19). Although it is difficult to draw conclusions based on enjoyment from the exam reports, it is telling that the study of a director is consistently among the top two most popular choices (along with ‘a Spanish author’) of topic in both the essay and the speaking examination. AQA examiners (2011 Exam Report) are quick to confirm the popularity of this method of cultural learning (and teaching), noting that, ‘question 14\(^{92}\) [is] by far and away the most popular choice’ and ‘most students [write] about a film director’; an observation echoed in subsequent years’ reports. Year on year, many candidates display a keen interest in Pedro Almodóvar’s techniques and can express informed views and opinions on his work. Other popular directors include Guillermo del Toro, Carlos Saura, Alejandro Amenábar and José Luis Cuerda. Analysis of students’ questionnaire responses confirms their preference for this topic. In response to the question, ‘How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has increased your interest in Spanish as a subject?’, 71% (24/34) of the respondents note, ‘a lot’, or, ‘quite a lot’, and only two state, ‘not much’, or, ‘not at all’. These

\(^{92}\) ‘A director, architect, musician or painter from a Spanish-speaking country/community’.
figures not only reaffirm that many students derive enjoyment from the film studying experience, but also that it is an aspect of Spanish studies that dramatically enhances the overall appeal of the subject.

Perhaps even more exciting for Spanish teachers is the extent to which film can make a difference to the popularity of the subject at higher levels of study. In response to, ‘How much would you say the cultural topic has encouraged you to continue studying Spanish at university?’ 94% (32/34) declare that it has influenced their decision, at least, ‘a little’, and only one student notes, ‘not at all’. With ever-dwindling numbers of MFL graduates and ‘strong evidence that the UK is suffering from a [general] growing deficit in foreign language skills at a time when the global demand for language skills is expanding’ (Tinsley 2013), data such as this should not be ignored if regaining strong university MFL departments and producing a strong cohort of skilled British linguists form objectives for the future. Gee (2008) looks at one particular aspect related to this importance in his consideration of ‘primary discussion’ and ‘secondary discussion’, whereby ‘secondary’ concerns the power of film to maintain interest and encourage further discussion and investigation (see also BFI 2013: 22). This collective evidence points to a strong association between the enjoyment of language learning through film and an expectation of raised attainment, with the A level cultural topic in many ways having been in the best position to facilitate such an association. As is now revealed however, this potential has not been entirely fulfilled.

Students should ‘develop an understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres [and learn to] communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes’ (AQA 2014: 19). The June 2010 exam report notes that in the written essay, students use ‘generally good Spanish’ and that the level of language is ‘generally quite reasonable’. However, examiners also note that it was a shame that so many candidates seemed not to have practised writing in the foreign language on these cultural topics and were short of appropriate, topic-orientated vocabulary. There are clear signs of the difficulty that the students face in comments such as, ‘it is worrying to see how many candidates appear not to know how to plan and write an essay’, and that, ‘all too often, such candidates [do] not access the higher marks for the language categories because of their lack of focus on the question, which directly affect[s] their language marks’. In the first year of assessment for the cultural topic, one of the biggest problems surrounding it becomes clear. Factors outside true linguistic ability, which mainly concern expectations relating to exam technique, prevent large numbers of students from reaching the top marks. Consequently, it may be inferred that the teachers are not yet comfortable with teaching complex elements surrounding the content of the films in the target language, or, at least, they are not successful in equipping students with the knowledge and strategies to do this. Therefore, students are unable to demonstrate sufficient cultural understanding because of linguistic restrictions.

In the speaking exam of the same year (2010), the overall impression of grammatical competence is generally positive. Examiners comment on the wide range of vocabulary, tenses and constructions
used. Despite this, marks reach the top band in only a minority of cases, ‘because the effect was mitigated by recurrent familiar errors’. It is evident that, suddenly, students are having to deal with high expectations surrounding complex written structures, sound grammatical awareness and a wide and often technical range of vocabulary, in addition to demonstrating a clear and detailed understanding of a director’s work. Not surprisingly, for many students, this was a jump too far, and too quick.

There is not much improvement one year later, when examiners note in June 2011 (AQA 2011) that there are still some students who appear not to know how to plan or write an essay. In the speaking exam, fluent speakers are able to use a variety of tenses and moods in addition to a wide range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. However, even the more able students sometimes fail to achieve a mark in the top band. Examiners again report that many students have learned answers containing complex structures by heart and are then unable to use them appropriately to suit the question asked. At this point, there is enough evidence to suggest that the demands of the cultural topic, when added to those of other topics (such as the impact of technology on society and renewable energies), are such that, teachers (and, therefore, students) suffer from a lack of time to explore the complexities, and, apparently, some of the more basic areas, of Spanish grammar.

Examiners are pleased to note that, in June 2012 (AQA 2012), the quality of essays shows some sign of improvement. Basic language errors are still evident, and there are many ‘pre-learned, ‘stereotyped phrases, such as ¿si fuera’, but the most able students use more complex language effectively to express their thoughts in a spontaneous way. The highest marks are gained by essays that have a clearly focused and short introduction, followed by a series of clearly identifiable and structured paragraphs, each addressing one aspect of the question with an in-depth analysis supported by good textual justification; once again, technique is key. This is a further reminder of the importance of the GCSE course to begin training students on how to go about critically analysing and writing about cinematic works. It also raises questions about whether or not Spanish teachers have been exposed to a breadth of knowledge sufficient for developing students’ skills in critical analysis and interpretation (see trainee teachers’ responses earlier in the chapter about the level of training they have received).

Examiners’ comments continue to suggest in the 2012 and 2013 reports (AQA 2012; 2013) that, teachers, in a bid to improve the quality of language used by students in the exams, seem to be encouraging students to memorise chunks of language that can be applied to virtually any question. This is perhaps an inevitability of an exam of this kind, especially when considering the time limitations for teachers of A level Spanish. However, if the purpose of incorporating film, and, in fact, any of the potential cultural topics, into the curriculum is to allow students to access authentic materials as part of being able to ‘communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes’ (2014: 19), or ‘sustain a meaningful exchange’ while ‘responding well to regular
opportunities to react spontaneously’ (2014: 19), then clearly these objectives are likely to remain unachieved.

The students’ responses to, ‘How much would you say your understanding of Spanish language has improved by watching this/these film(s)?’ are reassuring: 65% (22/34) of the participants feel that their understanding of Spanish language has improved ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’ by studying Spanish cinema within the cultural topic. Some of the students specify that this is because of the fact that they are listening to ‘real Spanish voices’ in ‘an authentic context’. Most of the students feel that their ‘general listening skills’ have improved (thanks to the audio language material). 76% (26/34) of the students recognise the value of the moving image with sound to enhance attainment in listening, reminiscent of claims made by several scholars (Fawkes, cited in Chambers 2001: 72; Ortí et al. 2011: 2; NLG 1996) in the previous chapters.

Interestingly, half of the students asked note, ‘slang’, as the aspect of Spanish language in which they feel they have made most progress. There is clearly great potential in the use of film to teach students popular and often humorous slang, although it is questionable how many marks a good knowledge of slang is actually worth. Examiners do not praise students’ use of slang in any of the reports; nor do they mention it as something they are looking for. Pleasingly, the majority of the students asked mention vocabulary or range of expression as two further areas of noted progress; 59% (20/34) and 56% (19/34), respectively. The information presented here supports the arguments put forward earlier, which propose that the strength of studying film in MFL studies lies in its ability to expand students’ linguistic range for a variety of purposes, with dialogue components often providing handy, poignant or memorable points of reference for new words, expressions and linguistic constructions.

In addition to encouraging A level students to ‘consider their study of the language in a broader context’, the cultural topic should allow students to ‘develop an awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken’ (AQA 2014). In June 2010 (AQA 2010), the examiners comment positively on most candidates’ breadth of knowledge of the cultural topics they have studied. However, they also remark that there are too many prepared essays and answers to ‘the question [students] hoped to get’, and there are some ‘fairly weak essays which describe rather than analyse the chosen films’. In the speaking exam, the works of Almodóvar are again very popular, in particular, Volver, Todo sobre mi madre and Hable con ella (2002). Many candidates show a keen interest in the director’s techniques and can express informed views and opinions.

In June 2011 (AQA 2011), the examiners comment that there are, once again, too many ‘all-purpose’ essays and that students seem to have reproduced teachers’ notes with little attempt to mould them to the specific requirements of the question. Many of these responses lack a clear focus on evaluating the director’s contribution to the popularity of the work. Conversely, the examiners note that there are answers that display excellent knowledge and a high level of discipline, in the sense of producing
well-planned and well-reasoned essays. In the speaking exam, Almodóvar is again the most popular director. Many students talk knowledgeably about a range of his films, although the most frequently discussed are, again, the three works cited above. Among the reasons cited in essays for Almodóvar’s success in June 2012, themes, plot, connections to his background, choice of actors, cinematographic artistry and cinematic intertextuality stand out as key features.

In June 2013, echoed again in 2014 (AQA 2013; 2014), examiners note that ‘there [are] many very poor essays on Volver: with too many hackneyed responses about the use of the colour red, strong women and the traditions of La Mancha’. Alejandro Amenábar is also popular, with responses mostly on the theme of euthanasia, characters and landscapes in relation to his film, Mar adentro. As ever, many candidates write about Guillermo del Toro, usually with the focus on special effects, the worlds of fantasy and reality, and the theme of the Spanish Civil War. In the speaking test, the examiners note that the majority of students have a very good knowledge of their cultural topics and report hearing many interesting discussions.

In response to the question, ‘How much would you say your understanding of Spanish history has improved by watching this/these film(s)?’ it is, perhaps predictably, the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship which provide the main subject of the historical context. More specifically though, students highlight that some of the films helped to teach them about the ‘causes and consequences’ of the War and the notion of ‘social oppression’. QE-HM-3 specifies that they gained a valuable insight into ‘the position of women and civilians at the time and their treatment by the military’, and for QE-HF-1, the work(s) studied highlight(s) ‘the importance of female role models for young people at the time’. 76% (26/34) of the students feel that their understanding of Spanish history has improved, at least, ‘a little’, from studying Spanish cinema within the cultural topic. However, as referred to previously, it is the vital responsibility of the teacher to ensure that historical fact is not confused with artistic representation and/or interpretation.

In response to the question, ‘How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish society has increased by watching this/these film(s)?’, 76% (26/34) of the participating students feel that their knowledge of Spanish society has improved, at least, ‘a little’, and over one third (12/34) note, ‘quite a lot’. QE-OSFC-2 specifies, ‘the film shows the societal values of the time, and how they differ from modern Spanish values, which shows a contrast in values between the fascist regime and democratic approach’. The same student remarks, ‘El laberinto del fauno helps [them] to understand the lives of different demographic groups of people (e.g., women and children) in the context of a civil war’, [and that], ‘the film has some aspects of hierarchy such as the male characters being “above” the female characters in terms of rank and importance’. Such helpfully detailed comments suggest that at least some of the films being used are able to map significant movements within Spanish society; and how groups fitted into that society then, and how they fit into it now. In this case, the word ‘then’ is used to refer to a generic ‘other’ and unspecified period of time, as historical films inevitably differ in terms of when exactly they are set and how the director chooses to represent it. Caution, as always, must be
applied to make the most of Spanish cinema as a window into periods and particularities of Spanish society, although the greatest challenge for the Spanish teacher is, arguably, to somehow convey and classify the identity of Spanish society, or indeed, societies, while ensuring that students understand it/them as complex, conflicted and ‘unstereotyped’.

Finally, students are asked, ‘How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish culture has increased by watching this/these film(s)?’ Somewhat ironically (given that film is a cultural product), fewer students studying cinema within the cultural topic feel that they have increased their knowledge of Spanish culture than their knowledge of aspects of Spanish language, history or society. Only 29% (10/34) feel that their knowledge of Spanish culture has increased ‘quite a lot’, with 41% (14/34) of the students choosing the, ‘not much’, category. Of those who do identify the cultural value of learning Spanish through film, one of the most interesting comments describes _El laberinto_ as a film that ‘strikes many contrasts between oppression and the lack of free will under Franco’s regime, and highlights how modern Spanish culture by contrast is one filled with innovation and freedom of expression’. This statement provides a useful reminder of the inherent potential of film to allow its audience to compare national culture at different times (see also Ortí et al. 2011: 2; Council of Europe 2001: 103). As has been demonstrated by several examples within this section, this can be achieved either through films set in the present day, or through historical films, such as _El laberinto del fauno_, which give students the opportunity to look at Spanish culture in the past and present, and to experience culture as interconnected and/or conflicted with historical fact and/or societal perspectives. A disadvantage of such works is suggested by QE-HM-4, who notes, ‘culturally, Spain is very different from what it was during the Civil War, mainly due to the dark period of censorship under Franco that Spain endured. As such, the film doesn’t teach us much about current culture’. This student insinuates that they may in fact miss out on learning about contemporary Spanish culture via the cultural topic if historical works are selected, which in many ways are, arguably, the most significant era for today’s A level students. Additional concerns involve the compression of this ‘cultural’ element into just one part of the final year of A level study, which in some cases may not only be insufficient, but also counter-productive. Some of the evidence presented in the section has suggested that students can easily suffer from a highly limited and/or undefined biased representation at various levels, from the stance of the director to the cultural experiences and knowledge of the teacher. This includes such basics as the teacher’s choice of film (essentially from any Spanish-speaking film ever made, as permitted by the entirely open choice facilitated by the cultural topic).³ In essence, the various findings and claims collated in the section underline the importance of a Spanish curriculum that provides sufficient space for a meaningful and varied appreciation of Spanish culture, which, based largely on the examiners’ comments, has been largely lacking due to, among other factors, an unintended encouragement towards and an unbalanced reliance on the production of regurgitated target language. If the objective is truly to establish what students know and understand about Spanish culture (via cinema studies), why not let them express it in English?

³ See Herrero and Castiñeiras’ (1999: 1).
A second important conclusive point concerns the value of recognising the study of a Spanish film within the context of the national cinema industry; in itself, a highly valuable aspect of learning about Spanish culture. QE-HF-2 comments, ‘studying the film provided an insight into Spanish cinema and I learned about the most prominent directors in the industry, with whom I was previously unfamiliar’. By simply watching and appreciating a Spanish film, students naturally absorb a significant element of Spanish culture and one that has its own very important value related to teaching and learning. However, if restricted to one film, it is necessary for teachers to choose a work that contains a maximum amount of national cultural content in order to avoid a missed opportunity for students to explore, contextualise and link the cultural identity of the language they are studying, which, unfortunately, is all too often ‘alienised’.

The cultural topic has in many ways been a great success, as it has added to the enjoyment of studying Spanish at A level and has been a motivational factor in some students’ decision to continue their study at undergraduate level. It has encouraged a much needed modernisation of MFL learning, in a subject that has often struggled to convince students of its relevance and contemporary nature, with students frequently suffering from a detachment of authenticity, diverse resources and tangible points of reference, despite teachers’ best efforts. There is evidence of A level students recognising the value of Spanish film to enhance their understanding of Spanish language and Spanish history, society and culture, and several of the qualitative comments cited confirm that, by nature, perceptions and interpretations vary in detail, depth, or even, accuracy. Subjectivity should be very much embraced; indeed, many of the assessment requirements of the cultural topic are designed so that every viewpoint and opinion is considered equally important. However, the lack of consistency and, for some, transparency, of the assessment requirements is highly problematic, especially when they fail to measure students’ true ability in the subject or, indeed, their actual understanding of a film as a cultural text and, therefore, ‘the work of a director’.

In order for the Paper 2 component of the reformed A level to be a true success, students and teachers must first receive adequate training and have ample practice over an appropriate timescale. Secondly, schools need to be provided with the means and the confidence to facilitate a MFL curriculum that prioritises ‘culture’ (encompassing history and society) and includes film (and other cultural products) much earlier, much more consistently and in much greater depth. For that to happen, it must be prioritised in the national curriculum at primary level, KS3 and GCSE, in addition to the A level specifications. This would permit a consistency in students having the sufficient knowledge and skills required to critically appreciate and understand foreign cultural identity. Finally, specification objectives and mark schemes must be designed so that MFL exams are able to reflect students’ true abilities, rather than penalising students through what is, for many, an overly ambitious assessment structure that shows little consideration for the inadequacies of cultural studies and related assessment at all previous levels. It is pleasing therefore that the mark scheme for the reformed A level’s Paper 2 is equally split between ‘language’ and ‘critical analysis’, as described earlier. However, it remains to be seen in an analysis of examiners’ comments and students’ responses over
the next few years if this revised mark scheme, and indeed, the reformed A level itself, will make a significant difference to either enjoyment, language development, or historical, social or cultural knowledge.
4.4: Spanish (undergraduate) scholars: progression, priority and practicality (Research Question 1 and Research Question 5)

This final section of the chapter draws largely on the questionnaire responses (Questionnaire G – Appendix XI) of seventeen Spanish film students on the ‘Spanish National Cinema: Identities in Transition’ module at Manchester University (see module detail and discussion in Section 2.1). Two lecturers’ (from the same institution) responses (Questionnaire H – Appendix XII) are also scrutinised; one of whom is the lecturer of the aforementioned module and also the modules, ‘Madrid and Barcelona on Screen’ and ‘Social Issues in Portuguese and Spanish Film’, and the other is a lecturer on the module, ‘Modern Spanish Literature and Cinematic Responses’. Incorporating a selection of pedagogical theory and existing research in the field, the data is firstly analysed in terms of (students’ and lecturers’) perceptions of impact and effectiveness with regards to course objectives in a sub-section entitled, ‘Progression’. The analysis then outlines two of the most pertinent responsibilities of undergraduate foreign film studies, as laid out by module descriptions and selected academic literature focused on undergraduate foreign film studies. Firstly, the move from the linguistic to the intercultural is discussed, drawing on the work of those scholars initially referenced in Chapter 2, and also Pegrum, Hartley and Wechtler (2005); this sub-section is entitled, ‘Priority’. Secondly, in a section entitled, ‘Practicality’, there is a focus on the postgraduate potential afforded by Spanish undergraduate film study for the development of life skills and particularly those relating to employability, drawing mainly on the research of Daly (2016).

As outlined in Section 2.1, the ‘Spanish National Cinema’ module is ‘a final year film course which incorporates the films: Bienvenido Mr Marshall, Viridiana, El espíritu de la colmena, Cría cuervos, Los santos inocentes and Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios. To recapitulate, the online course description confirms that, through studying the module, students will: [obtain] a good grounding for further study in Spanish cinema’; ‘demonstrate […] expertise in cinematic analysis and an awareness of the specific context in which these films were made [and an] awareness of major developments in cinema in Spain’. Alongside the ‘course content aims’ (see Section 2.1), these objectives reaffirm three of the crucial concepts relative to undergraduate foreign film study set out above. Firstly, progression is considered in the sense of increased knowledge and understanding that is able to be evidenced, and also the successful encouragement towards ‘further study in Spanish cinema’, and therefore, by nature, further study in Spanish more generally. Secondly, the identification of priority is considered, in the sense of both an ability to critically analyse (or gain ‘expertise in cinematic analysis’) and understand the broader national circumstance, or, ‘intercultural insight’ (Pegrum et al. 2005). Finally, the relation to ‘practicality’ is put forward in respect of the industrial and broader economic knowledge gained, and therefore an appreciation of the financial and commercial sides to Spanish cinema (or, ‘economic contexts’, as set out by the course content aims and in relation to Daly’s (2016) findings on ‘enhancing employability skills’), and indeed, how the extent to which such an appreciation plays a role in preparing students for postgraduate life and work.
Both lecturers (MA-1 and MA-2), perhaps unsurprisingly, consider the study of Spanish film within undergraduate Spanish studies as, ‘very important’, and both note that students enjoy learning in this way ‘very much’. Lecturer, MA-2 also states that studying Spanish film at this level encourages students to watch other Spanish films ‘quite a lot’. 94% (16/17) of the participating students feel that the film modules have motivated them to watch other Spanish films, at least, ‘quite a lot’, and 88% (15/17) claim that studying Spanish film has increased their interest in Spanish, at least, ‘quite a lot’. At undergraduate level, ‘there is ample evidence that students are highly motivated and engaged when presented with film material’ (Daly 2016: 144; see also Allan 1985; Lonergan 1984; Ryan 1998; King 2002; and Sherman 2003). Additional studies in this particular field provide details of where and how the enhanced motivation and engagement takes place. The MLA report (2007: 238) notes that ‘[i]t is expect[ed] that more students will continue [their language studies] if courses incorporate cultural inquiry at all levels’, which Pegrum et al. (2005: 55) attribute to students already being interested in cinema, and ‘presumably hav[ing] a certain level of cinematic literacy’ (see Section 3.1). Despite the extent of evidence in favour of film in MFL studies however, the same authors (55) point to ‘findings [which] reveal students' limited exposure to, and relative lack of familiarity with, non-Anglophone cinema’. Weaknesses in exposure and familiarity have been discussed at length in relation to GCSE and A level, although there are additional suggestions from the data that the problem continues at undergraduate. Three students refer to the fact that their studies in Spanish cinema only came towards the end of their course, including UG-17 who notes, ‘there should definitely be a similar module in the first year’, and over a third of the trainee teachers (37%) (18/49) confirm that they had not studied any foreign cinema whatsoever at undergraduate (and for many of those who did, it was only one film or a one-semester module). It is of concern, therefore, that film is generally not fully capitalised upon at any level, including at undergraduate level. It is encouraged for MFL degree providers (as experts in relevant fields) to lead the way on maximising film’s potential in helping to reduce such a disturbingly high level of unmotivated MFL students and post-KS3 drop-outs. After all, as Pegrum et al. (55) conclude, foreign cinema studies ‘may be one of the earliest rewards of language learning and an impetus to further exploration’.

There is a very wide spread of views among the respondents regarding how individual films help lead to a sense of academic progression and it therefore difficult to provide definitive answers to questions surrounding the choice of particular films. That said, a lack of responses regarding the impact afforded by *Mujeres* stands out, although this could be because of the fact that students had spent less time studying this film at the time of questionnaire completion. As is also discussed, responses surrounding ideas for course development suggest a wide-spread interest in Almodóvar and desire to study his work in even more detail. Buñuel's *Viridiana* is seen as particularly helpful (in learning ‘Spanish’) to the participating students; 41% (7/17) of the cohort find it, the ‘most helpful’, although an analysis of qualitative comments allows for the details of this to be more thoroughly scrutinised shortly. *Bienvenido* is also popular among the students: 29% (5/17) of the participants cite it as both the ‘most helpful’ and ‘most enjoyable’ film on the course, while only 12% (2/17) cite it as, the ‘least helpful’, and, ‘least enjoyable’ (details below).
At this stage of the analysis, it is valuable to consider lecturers’ views on classifications of usefulness and also best practice. In reference to all the modules mentioned above, lecturer, MA-1 notes that, ‘these films fit the various aims and objectives of the individual course units and the overall aims of the various degrees that students are following [and that] according to their own degree programme and/or choice of course units, different students find different films the most useful to them; but no one, two or three films come out as consistently the ones best responded to’. These comments issue a reminder of both the necessity to qualify notions of ‘success’ in terms of pedagogy according to specific learning objectives and outcomes, and the inevitably high level of individual subjectivity involved in film watching/studies and audience response data collection more generally, as set out in the Methodology Chapter and sections of Chapter 2 (see particularly Punch 2009: 294; also Gaut 1999: 200; Perriam and Waldron 2016: 10; Seiter 1999: 28-9). So, in terms of progression beyond undergraduate, at this stage it may seem impossible to say which films are most likely to encourage further study and/or work stemming from undergraduate studies in Spanish cinema, but what the quantitative and qualitative data does show, as further explained below, is that a range of films, range in content, style, periods and so on, is important in the sense of appealing to the broadest range of students possible, and that the most valuable experiences cannot possibly come from the study of just one film; a common problem at A level and GCSE, as discussed earlier.

Undergraduate modules by nature are not just progressive from GCSE and A level in terms of variety and depth, but seemingly, also regarding teaching strategies, which is another area where schools can learn a great deal from the expertise of foreign film lecturers. Previous sections related to A level suggest that booklets for reading and writing work, and essay practice, constitute a large proportion of Spanish film-based work, however, lecturer, MA-1 notes that, ‘making plenty of room for small-group discussion and mixing close analysis and wider contextual study’ are the most useful of teaching and learning strategies, and that, ‘close analysis of scenes placed in context provides the most effective methods of assessing students’ understanding’. In terms of structuring foreign film study, lecturer, MA-2 notes that ‘a thematic approach can be very useful’, as can a ‘film history approach’, and that, ‘the discussion relating solely to responses to the film prior to [the gathering of] extra-textual knowledge are often a productive teaching strategy’. Considerable thematic discussion and analysis, both in Spanish and English, is therefore also recommended at A level and indeed at GCSE (which, according to the data explored in the previous sections, is very much lacking); this would allow for both a move away from the focus on writing (in the case of the (reformed) A level essay-based work, for example, which students find less motivating, and indeed, a more substantial and personalised understanding of each film’s content, identity and, crucially, purpose.

Also relevant to enhanced practice at A level and GCSE, lecturer, MA-2 notes that, in undergraduate Spanish film modules, most obviously in ‘Modern Spanish Literature and Cinematic Responses’, ‘course commentary and close reading allows for comparison between […] literary text[s] […] and [their] cinematic adaptation’. Not only does such work encourage higher level thinking and sophisticated intertextual critical analysis - a move away from what Pachler (2000: 26) calls a ‘narrow
transactional-functional orientation in which pupils are prepared for the linguistic (and non-linguistic) needs of tourists’ - but also, related activities very much support the requirements of the reformed A level and GCSE, which both contain a significantly increased emphasis on appreciating Spanish literature (as referred to earlier). This intertextual and inter-art form crossover mirrors the (also discussed earlier) multi-purpose and multimodal nature of foreign film study - as further supported by Pegrum et al. (2005: 55); foreign film study is ‘multimodal in nature’ - where students gain a lot more culturally than just experiencing the film itself and a lot more linguistically than just undertaking an authentic listening exercise. For a long time, film has been understood as a ‘multisensory medium which offers students more than listening comprehension’. Moreover, ‘learners supplied with video materials understand and remember more’ (Swaffar and Vlatten 1997: 174-175). This seems to move beyond the popularised communicative language teaching approach, where the aim is communicative competence (Omaggio Hadley: 2001: 117), towards ‘content-based instruction’ (Charlebois 2008: 124), where ‘[t]he goal is to increase language proficiency through the medium of a content area’, such as through a film. This is certainly supported by the comments of the lecturers cited above regarding thematically-, historically-, or indeed, geographically- (in the case of Madrid and Barcelona on Screen) based core content, which further highlights the lack of clarity and direction provided by the A level specifications and virtual complete omission in the GCSE specifications regarding the teaching and learning of Spanish film. School curriculum designers, both at national and individual school level, would do well to better understand and exploit content-based learning, and also ‘task-based language learning’, as recommended by Markee (1997: 81) two decades ago due to the appeal and success of an ‘analytic approach to syllabus design and methodology in which chains of information-gathering, problem-solving and evaluative tasks are used to organise language teaching’. There is evidently a wide range of theoretical and practical approaches towards enabling maximum progression in Spanish studies via film study, and it is of course not possible to incorporate every one into practice, but an awareness of the most relevant existing research findings, theoretical background and, crucially, the consideration of what fits best for each course, each objective and each group of students, lay the foundations for enabling tangible learning progression to take place.

The priority at undergraduate, according to the module outlines and descriptors explored in Section 2.1 and details discussed above, appears to be focused on an increased intercultural insight, or rather, deeper understandings of the particularities of national (and in some cases, regional, identity) gained from Spanish film study and, undoubtedly, a move away from the linguistic. That said, the benefit of enhancing undergraduates’ grasp and usage of Spanish language should not be ignored or underestimated, reaffirmed by the quantitative and qualitative data that follows. Lecturer, MA-2 notes that undergraduate Spanish film study is ‘very useful’ in terms of language development, particularly regarding vocabulary, expressions, regional accents, slang and general listening skills; and for lecturer, MA-1 it is ‘quite useful’. 65% (11/17) of the participating students feel that Spanish film study helps develop their language, at least, ‘a little’, and 12% (2/17) of the students feel that it helps develop their understanding of language, ‘quite a lot’. It is perhaps surprising to observe a relatively low proportional response to the development of Spanish expressions and accent (mentioned a total
of six and seven times, respectively). This lies in sharp contrast to the dominance of ‘listening skills’, mentioned sixteen times in total as a notable area of progression. *El espíritu* comes out as the film on the course with the largest impact linguistically, mentioned twelve times across four out of five categories. The slow-paced and child-centred dialogue of *El espíritu* certainly makes its dialogue easier to understand than some of the other films on the course, although it may also be that the slow-paced editing and use of bare and monotone settings draw further attention to the dialogue and close interaction between the characters, suggesting that *El espíritu* is a film that works particularly well within a language development-based learning objective.

The desire for further exploitation of film study for language development at undergraduate level is evidently there: QG-12 notes that they would like the lecturer to make ‘more of audio description to improve knowledge of grammar’, and QG-15 suggests that lecturers should ‘upload sections of film to Blackboard[94] with relevant vocabulary, slang and themes for students to use alongside the course. This would be a fun way to reinforce language learning.’ These undergraduate students, just like many of the GCSE and A level students discussed previously, find value when specific language elements (and ‘themes’) are highlighted and linked to language covered in the course topics during the film study process. This of course takes time for the teacher/lecturer in planning; implementation into schemes of work, the preparation of resources, and, in some cases, the writing of actual lesson plans. It is apparent that it is often through a lack of planning and clear direction, rather than a lack of interest and/or intent, that insufficient progression takes place and objectives fail to be met. Significantly increased cross-topic film-based work planning is therefore highly recommended.

Pegrum et al. (2005: 56) refer to students’ ‘recurring comments on the “real”, “authentic” or “everyday” nature of the language encountered in film’. As outlined in the previous chapters and discussed in detail in Section 5.2, perceptions of realism and reality extend far beyond an authentic use of language and, as is now explored in reference to various theoretical perspectives, becomes inherently interlinked with a vast range of other aspects of MFL studies and broader set of cognitive and interpersonal skills. Melin (2010: 352) highlights that, although there is a traditional divide between language instruction and literature/culture instruction, it is, in fact, a ‘false dichotomy’. There is also an abundance of literature from the last fifteen years (Byrnes 2008; Kern 2015; Magnan 2004; Melin 2010; MLA 2007) that has underscored the need, not just for acquisition of proficiency in the target language, but also for the need to be able to engage with target language culture(s) through its texts: prose, poetry and film. Daly (2016: 143) reaffirms however that the importance of intercultural learning for students of languages has been well documented for even longer (Barro, Jordan and Roberts 1998; Byram 1997; Herron 1999); Jones 2000). Contemporary communicative competence is now ‘intercultural’ and it is increasingly important to for teachers and lecturers to develop the ‘intercultural speaker’ (Pegrum et al. 2005: 56; see also Byram and Zarate (1997); and Kramsch (1998). This may be the most neglected element in language courses and, perhaps as a consequence, the least understood by students (Pegrum et al. 2005: 55).

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94 An online platform for the sharing of resources at the local university.
With twenty-three mentions for ‘history’, as opposed to ten for ‘society’ and just six for ‘culture’, it appears that the participating students perceive the historical value gained from the selection of films to be particularly prominent. The low number of references to ‘culture’ is surprising, in the sense that a) each film is a unique cultural entity in itself (as referred to previously and again below) and b) so many of the GCSE and A level students specifically mention ‘culture’ as an aspect of Spanish identity in which they had learned a great deal; indeed, the legacy A level includes the ‘cultural topic’.

Lecturer, MA-1 supports the consensus of the school students, noting that most undergraduates enjoy ‘insights on culture and mores’, to which they add, ‘cultural politics’. The data here suggests varied perspectives on the cultural value gained from undergraduate Spanish film study, or more likely, differing appreciations at this level of how ‘culture’ itself is classified and extracted from cinema in the specific contexts of these films/modules or foreign film pedagogy more generally. Teachers and lecturers are advised to make time for sufficient understandings of what ‘culture’ actually is, and the details of where it lies in both film studies and broader studies related to MFL.

Lecturers, MA-1 and MA-2 agree that the Spanish film modules they teach are, at least, ‘quite useful’ (‘extremely useful’ for MA-1), with regards to the teaching of Spanish history. In relation to the ‘Modern Spanish Literature and Cinematic Responses’ module, lecturer, MA-2 refers to the particular ‘cultural and historical context[s] of dictatorship’ (Tristana, Buñuel 1970),\(^5\) ‘issues of gender [and] the policies and problems of the PSOE government in the 1980s/1990s (La casa de Bernarda Alba (Camus 1987) and Historias del Kronen, Montxo Armendáriz 1995), and finally, contemporary issues of historical memory (Soldados de Salamina, Trueba 2003). Lecturer, MA-1 highlights the ‘aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (internal exile; repression) [Bienvenido, Cría cuervos], censorship [Bienvenido, Viridiana, El espíritu]; the period of aperture; New Spanish Cinema and its relationship to politics; collective memory [El espíritu, Cría cuervos]; cultural policies of the early 1980s; La Movida and Spain’s arrival on the modern European stage [Los santos inocentes, Mujeres]’ as the key historical and, according to the qualitative comments, social and cultural components of the other two aforementioned modules. Moreover, providing a reminder of both the social responsibility of film and also the nature of cinema as a cultural entity within itself, lecturer, MA-1 also points to the ‘development of film industries in the major cities; development of the built and planned environment; [and] social issues impinging on urban life’.

Declaring Spanish cinema as, ‘very useful’, for enhancing the teaching of Spanish culture, lecturer, MA-1 summarises that, ‘studying key films and directors shows how cinema is integral to Spanish culture in the “high culture” sense, with directors like Almodóvar also offering “a glimpse of popular culture forms”’. There is clearly a wide scope afforded by this selection of films for enhancing students’ intercultural competence, although due to word count constraints and the prioritisation of certain films for detailed analysis in Chapter 5, it is not possible to discuss at length every one of

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\(^5\) In the case of lecturer, MA-2, the films noted in brackets are explicitly linked by the lecturer to the various themes noted, however, in the case of lecturer, MA-1, in the absence of noted films, suggestions are made by the author linking each theme to films on the ‘Spanish National Cinema’ module.
these possibilities. However, what can be said for certain is that each film on the Spanish courses possesses its own unique potential in enhancing both students’ linguistic capabilities and intercultural competence, and more simultaneously than might first be appreciated. There is not a single generic approach, but rather, teachers and lecturers should aim for a film-/module-specific and evolving approach according to time, purpose and resources in each specific pedagogical context. Reflective of this, one student (QG-7) alludes to the necessity to see a ‘greater variety of time period/themes’, and another (QG-12) wants to see ‘more films that reflect Spain today’. In summary, ‘the mediation between languages and cultures [must be] viewed as multiple, hybrid, divided and in flux’ (Pegrum 2005: 57, see also Barro, Jordan and Roberts 1998: 97; Corbett 2003: 36).

As outlined above, competency in a foreign language should not be considered the only outcome of a MFL degree (or at GCSE and A level), nor is it correct to assume that the ability to communicate in another language alone equals ‘employability’ (Canning 2009: 8–9). A broader skill set is expected of MFL graduates, which, increasingly, as far as employability and moves within international development are concerned, extends into the intercultural competencies outlined above. There is an ‘increasingly crucial ability in the twenty-first century [to] understand new cultures’ (Sturm 2012: 246). While linguistic competency may still be an important outcome of an undergraduate MFL degree, perhaps particularly regarding the most tangible of job-based language skills, such as translation and interpreting - which, incidentally, have ‘clear employability and professional benefits’ (Daly 2016: 141) - there are a wide range of other useful advantages afforded by film within a broader learning of socio-political- and economic-related understandings and perspectives. Lecturer, MA1’s comment about the ‘aftermath of […] war, […] censorship; […] cinema and its relationship to politics; collective memory; […] and Spain’s arrival on the modern European stage’ emphasises a number of key aspects in the Spanish learning context about national psyche and identity. Each of these concepts (related to Spain) are however open to much wider understandings in an international, and indeed, global, context. Echoing Daly’s (2016: 144) recommendation of foreign film study as a vehicle for the ‘development of commercial awareness’ and gaining a unique ‘glimpse into working businesses [and] the work life of the target country’, lecturer, MA1 highlights the key objective of appreciating the ‘development of film industries in the major cities’. Such studies are particularly relevant to socioeconomic-based plots, such as in Los lunes al sol - discussed in detail in the next chapter - although it is possible to see how several of the aforementioned films also provide a context for particular focuses on Spanish working life: 1950s retail trade in Bienvenida; the 1970s farming and agricultural (and indeed, bee-keeping) industry in El espíritu; the 1980s dubbing and film-making industry in Mujeres. Once again, the versatility of film in the Spanish classroom is affirmed as highly useful in the contextualisation of appreciating everyday aspects of Spanish identity, but also as a vehicle for broader linking between trade, money and working life, and a country’s socio-economically evolving status.
There are also the broader, international socio-political concepts to consider, such as dictatorship, as referred to above by lecturer, MA-1, and indeed, concepts such as ‘historical memory’; neither of which are exclusive to Spain. However, putting into context the traditionally close relationship between the plots of many iconic Spanish films and representations of changes in ‘current’ Spanish society, lecturer, MA2 highlights the ‘current [at the time of questionnaire completion] debates surrounding memory in the media [and how students] engage well with films that represent [such] contemporary cultural themes’. This is a reminder of what Daly (2016: 143) considers to be ‘other important aspects of the [imminent] employability spectrum, which have not received due attention in projects undertaken to date’, namely, the combination of contemporary, ‘commercial and intercultural awareness’. This is further echoed by lecturer, MA-2, who notes that, ‘social marginalisation and life in contemporary cities in Spain is […] a topic that contemporary Spanish film engages with and can be popular with students’. In addition to fulfilling a key function in Spanish pedagogy, therefore, such contexts are well placed to educate undergraduate students in the current, broader European and global climate of crisis concerning migration and rising levels of poverty and economic inequality, for example.

In addition to the valuable skills acquired in developing broader understandings of contemporary, international socioeconomic issues, it is important to highlight the particular academic skills pertinent to undergraduate foreign film study. Lecturer, MA-2 notes how essays are ‘a useful means of assessment for allowing students to expand on critical interpretations’ (see also Canning 2009: 8–9). As discussed previously, the pursuit of enhanced critical thinking should not be underestimated, especially where the role of politics and ideology in the discursive construction of cultures is examined with a view to raising students’ critical awareness and empowering them as agents of change (Pegrum et al. 2005: 57; see also Kubota 2004). This is additionally suggestive of the significant potential to provide a learning context for exploring contemporary, global ideological perspectives, with the objective of producing graduates who are able to take forward their skills and intellect acquired at university into lives and careers where others receive a direct benefit. At undergraduate level, lecturers are well-placed to ‘capitalis[e] on [students’] interest in their own identity, and where they locate themselves, culturally and ideologically, on the world map’ (Tomic 2000: 239), with a view to identifying where each student is best placed to make the most valuable contribution to the world. Such cognitive processes, self-identification and construction naturally occur more prominently at undergraduate level due to students’ matured abilities, although it would be both patronising and incorrect to suggest that such vital processes and skills are not also entirely appropriate at A level and GCSE. In strong favour of foreign film study as a vehicle for drawing out learners at all levels’ cognitive, emotional and intellectual processes in interpreting the world around them, Sturm (2012: 248) underlines the potential of language, culture and literature being taught as a continuous whole, and of ‘literature, film, and other media [being] used to challenge students’ imaginations, and to help them consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling and understanding things’.
'In order to challenge simplistic views of "real" native speakers[...], it is important to show speakers of different nationally inflected dialects [...], as well as delving into sub-national geographical diversity' (Pegrum et al. 2005: 60). Lecturer, MA-2 refers to students gaining an appreciation of ‘representations of reality’, where Spanish cinema is able to provide ‘insight into certain aspects of Spanish culture and society; often selected by a director to make a political/ideological point.’ Lecturer, MA-2 also flags up the potential danger of students being very literal in their understanding of history, society and culture obtained from Spanish film, and how it is important to situate films as cinematic objects, and that the theories surrounding cinema as a ‘representational’ art form are sufficiently approached. It is only by doing this, according to lecturer, MA-2, that ‘students understand the nuanced representations of history, society and culture as part of a wider cinematic tradition which might be concerned with reflecting or critiquing certain facets of the society and culture in which they are made, or which they purport to represent’. In essence, it is important for all those involved in Spanish pedagogy to remain conscious that, arguably, graduates of a MFL degree have an even greater opportunity than graduates of other disciplines to develop skills that cross and have the ability to bridge cultural divides, increase socioeconomic awareness and, as part of understanding not just one nation, but the world around, allow for the development of sophisticated and diverse artistic appreciation and application of theoretical and critical understandings.

96 L2 notes the following examples: La pelota vasca (Medem 2000); En construcción (Guerin 2002); Aguaviva (Pujol 2006).
Chapter 5: Data analysis Phase 2: A research-led approach to (core) theme-based Spanish cinema studies

This chapter provides a second phase of analysis of the core findings set out in Chapter 4, according to the predominant (as highlighted by the data) film-studies categories of Auteurism (Section 1), Realism (Section 2), Genre (Section 3) and Stars (Section 4). Much of the discussion in each section stems from the quantitative and/or qualitative data, whereby students, teachers and, in some cases, examiners, have raised points deemed to be most significant to this investigation as a whole. The most relevant and insightful pedagogical and film-studies literature is incorporated in support of and as a means to measure and contrast the ideas, theories and hypotheses which derive from such analysis. Ultimately, these sections provide an evaluation of current thinking and practice, which sets up final conclusions surrounding recommended frameworks for optimum teaching and learning. Specific relation to individual research questions, participating students, teachers or examiners, and literary works is identified at the beginning of each section.
5.1: Auteurism at A level: methodologies for the reformed specifications

In large part, this section follows on from much of the analysis carried out in Section 4.3, which considers how between 2010 and 2018 (although using data gathered up to 2014), a dominant proportion of A level students studied ‘the work of a Spanish-speaking director’ as part of the cultural topic. As confirmed a number of times, the reformed A level gives teachers and students the option to study ‘a Spanish-speaking film’, omitting the term ‘director’, and in that sense, it encourages a focus away from the individual or individuals responsible for making a film, and instead, on the film itself. Such a change raises important questions surrounding the impact of different forms of film categorisation in a learning context (as considered below and explored further in the sections that follow). But more specifically, it questions the precise significance of attributing a film’s overall identity and/or ownership to one person (‘the work of a director’) and the identifying of specific traits and representative qualities present in a particular filmmaker’s work, especially, although not exclusively, in light of specification and assessment changes to the film element at A level.

This section provides direct answers to Research Question 1 and Research Question 4. However, by evaluating the extent to which auteur-based Spanish film studies at A level may still allow for specification assessment requirements to be met, it is also suggested how pre-A level experience at GCSE and post-A level experience at undergraduate level already is, or could be further, incorporated to enhance the A level experience and outcomes for students (and therefore additionally responds to Research Questions 2, 3 and 5, respectively). In addition to drawing on some of the qualitative data outlined in Section 4.3 (Questionnaire E – 34 respondents), and additional data gathered from undergraduate students (Questionnaire G – 17 respondents) (total of 51 respondents), as a means to inform and support the claims put forward - some of which have initially been referred to in Section 4.4 - the discussion incorporates key observations by D’Lugo and Smith (2012), Lázaro-Reboll (2012) and Triana Toribio (2003); all of whom have done considerable work on the identities of prolific Spanish auteurs. Pedro Almodóvar and Guillermo del Toro are key to the discussion due to their dominance at A level, as outlined previously, and as two of the contemporary Spanish filmmakers most commonly labelled by authors and critics (such as those listed above) as, ‘auteurs’. The discussion also incorporates students’, authors’ and critics’ views of Víctor Erice; a prominent feature on several undergraduate courses and, as discussed in more detail shortly, one of the most prolific auteurs to come from the Nuevo Cine Español. By establishing the foremost features of Erice as a Spanish auteur and the impact of his prominence on undergraduate programmes, it is aimed to establish the extent to which Erice deserves to be on the new prescribed lists of films at A level (which he is not, currently). Additionally, it is intended to set out the associated significance of his status as an auteur, both adjoined and in contrast to the more contemporary filmmakers, Almodóvar and del Toro. Throughout the discussion, it is intended for the auteurist, professional and personal identities of

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97 A decisive movement in Spanish cinema history which produced a number of acclaimed directors who would become known as auteurs. See below for further details.
all three filmmakers to be scrutinised in relation to their specific value in today’s (predominantly, A level) Spanish class/seminar room.

In order for students to be able to interpret their own meanings of auteurism, and indeed, for teachers and students to be able to assess the extent to which the term may be applied to their own A level studies - including the teaching and learning methods exercised, the particular films and filmmakers involved and the specific resources used - it is firstly advised to look at its origins and, namely, the ‘auteur theory’; famously associated with the neighbouring national cinema of France towards the end of the 1940s. An appropriate starting point for studies of this kind is with legendary film theorist, critic and co-founder of the film magazine, Cahiers du cinéma, André Bazin, who argued that a film is very much the product of a director’s personal vision and that a film’s worth stems from its auteurs (Bordwell 1989: 45). It is then recommended to consider Alexandre Astruc’s influential 1948 article, ‘Birth of a New Avant-garde, “La Caméra-Stylo”, which established the seminal concept of the auteur as an expansion of the concept of the literary author, with the film seen as an analogue to the literary text (D’Lugo and Smith 2012: 114). As outlined previously, the legacy A level required students to study both the work of a director and the work of an author (if chosen from cultural topics), while the reformed A level provides the option of studying two literary works or one literary work and one film. It has been described how both specifications offer significant scope for the comparison of techniques between the two art forms - The ability to do so is picked up by QG-13, for example, who praises the scope to ‘compare cinema techniques with those used in other art forms, as a means to evoke ideas and messages about history and current reality’ - although based on professional experience and the data produced in Section 4.3, it is questionable at best how much use is being made of this opportunity at school level. However, students ought to be aware that, in contrast to following traditions of analysis and criticism used in the firmly established art of literature, (film) auteurism aimed to dislodge film from the French ‘tradition of quality’, subservient to literary adaptations and theatrical codes of acting (Greene 2007: 8). Understandings of auteurism and ‘authorship’ as a cultural product should be considered a useful topic of study in itself, as the study of MFL encompasses all of the major arts and therefore the development of major cultural theories, such as auteurism. This is not just important in the contextualisation of individual works and their creators within Spanish as a single academic subject, but in students’ appreciation of knowledge within a broader and cross-curricular, intercultural learning context. After all, such work and outcomes are in fact encouraged by the DfE (2015) (in relation to KS4): students should be ‘encouraged to make appropriate links to other areas of the curriculum’; ‘the study of a modern foreign language at GCSE should […] broaden students’ horizons and encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop new ways of seeing the world’.

98 See Sarris (1962) for coining of ‘auteur theory’: various writings of French critics and filmmakers from the 1950s onwards; Hayward’s (2006: 31) discussion of the term, auteur, dating back to the 1920s, and also the coinage of ‘author’s film’ (Autorenfilm) in 1913, Germany.
Any analysis of auteurism specific to Spain should begin by looking at the establishment of *El Nuevo Cine Español (NCE)*,\(^{99}\) which attempted to translate to Spanish circumstances the young European cinema movements of the 1960s (Triana Toribio 2003: 72). It resulted in the emergence of a number of new Spanish filmmakers who would become well-known as auteurs, such as José Luis Borau, Carlos Saura and, eventually, Víctor Erice. By the end of the 1960s, the auteurist tradition had the obvious advantage of offering a pattern of critical approach that seemed the natural extension of literary study (a further reminder of the significant opportunity for comparing and contrasting with literature studies at A level). D’Lugo and Smith (2012: 115) however highlight how this involved an exclusive focus on aesthetic consistency; crucial to the discussion due to the inherent nature of film analysis and pedagogy being centred around the visual, although similar to other art forms by being compartmentalised into various groupings, such as according to genre, nationality (a genre in itself, as discussed earlier), and of course, individual filmmakers. It is discussed later how particular professional and/or artistic reputations based on aesthetic quality and commonality are central to the identities of certain Spanish auteurs. But firstly, in a bid to break down the overly general term of ‘aesthetics’, it might be more accurate to refer to ‘look’ or ‘style’. Typical questions for teachers ought to be, ‘What can be learned by establishing how an Erice film “looks” different to a Saura film?’, or, ‘How can audiences tell an Almodóvar film just from the style of setting or shooting?’ It is worth reiterating that the legacy A level enjoyed a significant level of success in this regard, as outlined in Chapter 4.3: ‘Many candidates have shown a keen interest in Pedro Almodóvar’s techniques and can express informed views and opinions on his work’ (quote the author’s own, based on examiners’ comments). Ultimately however, teachers need to ask themselves, ‘What, if anything, can the study of such elements bring to their own students’ learning of Spanish?’; be it, language, history, society or culture. In general terms, the consideration of such questions reveals not just a great deal about the make-up of auteurs’ individual identities, as suggested by Bazin, and as cultural products themselves - recognised by QG-15: ‘the films themselves are an important part of a country’s culture’ - but that also, via guided analysis, can reveal much about the context in which they work(ed), and indeed, where their influences came from and who they come to influence. In the case of Erice, despite making only four films, he achieved the reputation of having a uniquely personal style and of being a filmmaker whose practice is identified with the most prestigious forms of art cinema (D’Lugo and Smith 2012: 136). Such attributes lay the foundation of his perceived auteur status and identity as a cultural figure of huge significance in the learning of Spanish in the broader context. Beyond this however, Erice and a select number of directors who identified with the NCE have become synonymous not just with Spanish art cinema, but with national cinema as a whole (Triana Toribio 2003: 83). But just why and how has Erice, as a director of just four feature films made between 1973 and 2006, come to be considered by many as one of Spain’s greatest auteurs, and, to this end, to what extent is Erice’s place on undergraduate programmes deserved? Several scholars and critics (Triana Toribio 2003: 103; Smith 2006; Bartolomé 2016) argue that the answer lies not simply in Erice’s skills in art cinema aesthetics, or as one of the key names of the NCE, but in the masterful

subtlety within the dialogue and aesthetics of his films. This is, arguably, most notable in *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973), which marked a pre-empting of the nation’s most significant political and social upheaval in recent history; the Transition to democracy. Also significant for teachers to note is the legend of *El espíritu*, as a film which was a direct target of the regime’s censorship, although, most interesting for the A level Spanish classroom, ‘its content and style is as much the result of abiding by the censors’ rules as evading them’ (Triana Torbio 2003: 103). An understanding of this is demonstrated by a number of the participating undergraduate students who had studied the film. QG-2 states that they ‘learned about the difficult combination of censorship and the values that Spain wanted to promote’. QG-4 notes that they ‘learned a lot about the relationship between censorship and the Franco regime’. QG-15 remarks that they ‘now understand how censorship affected Spanish cinema during the Francoist dictatorship, and also how it was challenged’. Finally, QG-13 arises that they ‘learned about getting around censorship’. As a means to introduce A level students to the didactically rich issue of Francoist censorship alone, this film, and Erice more generally, are, based on the undergraduate students’ responses, highly profitable points of reference. It is noticeable that on the A level prescribed lists there is a complete omission of films produced during (or before) the dictatorship; in fact, the oldest works are from 1985 (*La historia oficial*, Puenzo (Edexcel)) and 2004 (*María eses lleno de gracia* (AQA)). Consequently, there is a wider danger of A level teachers being discouraged from exposing students to films from a broader variety of time periods and the particular production, editing and distribution issues, such as those relating to censorship, involved. Incidentally, analysis of A level essays (in Section 4.3) in relation to the legacy specification (when any Spanish-speaking film could be studied) failed to find any mention of such important elements in Spanish film history, and thus, the collective findings suggest that such gaps in school students’ knowledge of Spanish and Spain through film have been present for some time. Moreover, A level students are very often not given the opportunity to study pre twenty-first century cinema and instead are reliant on retrospective, contemporary genre films (see Section 5.3).

Although *El espíritu* is well-known to have received a great deal of critical success and is, for many (Evans 1982; Kinder 1983; Malcolm 1999; Smith 2006; Arigho Stiles 2016), a film with huge depths for studies in direction, cinematic symbolism and allegory - further justifying its frequent appearance on undergraduate programmes - it could be argued that this does not necessarily make Erice a true auteur, not least because of his small body of his films. Whether Erice fits the bill as an auteur or not, and in spite of some negative comments from undergraduate students – reflective of the comments: QG-4: ‘Many of the meanings are quite difficult to find’; QG-7: I found it difficult to interpret; QG-2: It is very slow-moving and very hard to understand without academic readings’; QG-3: ‘It is very slow-paced and it felt like it dragged on’; QG-5: ‘It is very interesting but quite slow and dull if you don’t read up on it’; QG-7: ‘It is difficult to interpret’ - it is highly recommended to see the work of Erice, particularly *El espíritu*, feature prominently on the A level course(s). Erice can be considered as not just a pioneering director of Spanish art cinema (as referenced earlier), but more importantly, a key figure to help students understand the place of Spanish cinema in representing the complexity and confusion of the national psyche during the final years of the dictatorship and subsequent Transition
to democracy, including, but far from exclusive to, the issue of censorship. There are of course other films, including several on the prescribed A level lists, which deal with similar themes; the majority centre around the impact of civil war (Spanish or Mexican) and its aftermath. However, the unique productive qualities of El espíritu (recognised by QG-17, as: ‘a metaphorical approach to the travesty caused by the Spanish Civil War and one which contains many messages’) - specific to its period of filming and release - merits its place in pre-undergraduate courses, not least, as better preparation for undergraduate studies.

Despite the academic and critical acclaim of filmmakers labelled as auteurs, such as Erice, it is crucial for A level (and undergraduate students) to be aware of debates denying auteurism as in any way a natural cultural phenomenon and automatic attribute of the most talented or most ‘unique’ of filmmakers. This is particularly important for students’ appreciation of auteurism as a construct and their understanding of the inherent association of art, commerce and auteurism. Caughie (1980: 2) draws attention to the place of the author (filmmaker) within institutions (production companies and distributors) and the construction of the auteur for commercial purposes (box-office returns). Looking at the extent of the issue in recent times, ‘the auteur is no longer a figure with mere minority appeal [as was the case originally with Erice]; the crossover attraction of popular genres [has] muddled the boundaries between “popular” and “auteurist”’ (Delgado 2013: 3, as cited earlier). It is useful for teachers to observe how auteurism generally, but specifically in the case of Spain, has moved beyond artistic merit for the primary purpose of critical acclaim, but this does not negate the associated ‘stamp of approval’ applied to such filmmakers, or its usefulness in film and Spanish studies. Corrigan (1990: 43-57) however argues persuasively that the effect of auteurism was, and (still) is (at least to the time of writing), to serve commerce. To take del Toro (although Mexican) as an example, with seven films under his belt at the time of the citation - now ten as a director (see Filmography) - but several others as a writer/producer, del Toro has become ‘a bankable transnational figure whose name is highly regarded in the global film industry’ (Lázaro-Reboll 2012: 234). The Mexican’s standing also means that smaller film industries like that of Spain benefit when he is fronting co-productions and acts as the producer of commercial ventures. Prominent examples include the commercial successes of El orfanato and Los ojos de Julia, where del Toro’s name helped to ensure a guarantee of access to international markets and of putting Spanish cinema on the global film map. Some legacy A level essay questions identified an importance for students to weigh up a director’s professional success in direct relation to the contents and particular cinematic characteristics of their film(s) – see Legacy Paper 3, June 2018: ‘Referring to one or more works, what were the reasons for the success of the director whom you have studied?; Legacy Paper 3, June 2014: ‘With reference to one or more of the works of the director whom you have studied, explain the aspects of their work that, in your opinion, could guarantee their fame in the future’ - and it is likely for this to remain a popular and useful aspect of Spanish film studies at A level. This is particularly the case if students consider, for example, to what extent commercial success, multiple roles in the filmmaking process and auteur status go hand in hand. Emphasising these intertwined links in the case of del Toro, Williams (2011)100 points out

that, in relation to another of del Toro's assignments as producer, *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* (Nixey 2011) - the remake of Newland's 1973's film - the name of the director has become 'a discernible franchise and banner, complete with discernible – and requisite – tendencies'. Del Toro may therefore be considered a prominent example of the common identity of successful, contemporary Spanish cinema auteurs, as not just 'Spanish' (or Mexican), but as transnational, cineastes who take on a variety of responsibilities in the filmmaking, and indeed, marketing, processes. In addition to setting up A level students to gain a broader awareness of the workings of the film industry and Spain's place within it, this is also able to astutely represent Spain's development as a country of international trade (along with, and in competition with, the rest of the West), high cultural influence, and evolving national/regional diversity. In doing so, A level students are likely to gain an enhanced appreciation of Spaniards' own perspective of their own image and that perceived by the rest of the world, as referenced earlier (Graham and Labanyi 1995: 312; Triana Toribio 2003: 92; Perriam 2003: 49).

As has been discussed in previous chapters, one of the most dramatic changes to Spain's represented image on screen came via *La Movida* between 1977 and 1985, and it is well-documented (Graham and Labanyi 1995: 396-406; Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 1998: 82; Stone 2002: 126; Oliva, 2009: 389) that Almodóvar was one its key players. To study Almodóvar's early films, such as *Pepi, Luci, Bom* (1980) and *¿Qué he hecho?* (1984) - suggested for clips-based examples and discussions at A level - reveals some of the most prominent artistic examples of the rebellious social spirit and liberation of gender and sexuality fluidity to hit Spain after the end of the dictatorship and so-called, Transition years. Referring to key elements within these films informs students about the origins of Almodóvar's reputation as a Spanish (feature) filmmaker, whose body of works are synonymous with shifts in Spanish cultural identity (Triana Toribio 2003: 134). As such, Almodóvar has justifiably become among the most popular of Spanish directors, or indeed, Spanish auteurs, within foreign university programmes,101 and more recently, A level specifications. The dominance of Almodóvar on the international film circuit, in academia relating to Spanish and on undergraduate modules and A level specifications is, in general terms, both a wholly justifiable event, and the opening to a fascinating realm of complexities in national cultural pride and self-reflection. Moreover, it provides a case-study for mapping the evolutionary nature of what it means to be a (Spanish) auteur and icon of contemporary, Spanish cultural identity. That said, as is outlined below, such attributes do not come without their particular intricacies.

What might be considered auteurism these days is less a theory than a series of interpretative practices (D'Lugo and Smith 2012: 113), or perhaps even, 'exegetical film criticism and a [convenient] strategy of reading movies built around the figure of the director as the author of the film' (Bordwell 1989: 48). Such readings are both convenient and problematic in the context of studying foreign cinema as somehow reflective of components of national identity. It is worth pointing out that some Spaniards prefer to consider established Spanish auteurs, such as Almodóvar, as, first and foremost, an individual, with an individual’s perspective and agenda - see QG-1: 'studying Spanish cinema

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101 For further details explaining Almodóvar’s popularity internationally in film and Spanish studies, see Martin (1998: 15).
allows you to see film from the director’s perspective’ [and to] ‘question the reality of truth’ - and not accurately representative of a nation. It is important for A level Spanish teachers and students to recognise when studying Almodóvar that, in spite of huge commercial popularity, critical acclaim and prestige within international academia, Almodóvar is a source of embarrassment for many in his own country.\textsuperscript{102} For certain Spaniards, their country’s most highly acclaimed filmmaker projects an image of contemporary Spain unfamiliar to them, highlighting an intriguing particularity surrounding auteurs and auteurism as a whole; auteurs are not always a cultural product fully endorsed by their home nation. Far from being a negative attribute however in the context of Spanish studies (and it certainly has not done Almodóvar’s career any harm), it could be argued that this makes the most controversial of Spanish filmmakers, such as Almodóvar,\textsuperscript{103} even richer in pedagogical potential. This refers particularly to an analysis of the make-up of Spanish auteur status, thanks to varying debates about what an auteur should be, can be, and ultimately, is, according to different audiences. When studying a Spanish film or Spanish films at any level, it is important to plan time to adequately analyse, debate and discuss the identity and status of the filmmaker(s), as both (an) individual(s) aside from the film(s) being studied, and the creator of the selected (cultural) product. Critical commentary specific to individual artists and their body of works, style or reputation from undergraduate students (as discussed in Section 4.4) supports the idea that the means and knowledge to execute wider studies on directors and/or auteurs is more readily available at university level. And many of the examiners’ comments included in Section 4.3 strongly suggest that, since 2010, many A level students have significantly struggled to display a substantial understanding of Spanish filmmakers’ professional identity and achievements. Despite the change in the wording of foreign film assessment in the reformed A level, there is undoubtedly still a great need for many students to be able to better appreciate the overall entity of the filmmakers responsible for the works they are studying. This is necessary for students to be fully equipped to ‘engage critically with intellectually stimulating [...] films [...] in the original language, [...] and understand them within their cultural and social context’ (AQA 2017a).

An example of this can be seen by returning to Almodóvar’s work, which may also be able to provide a context for students’ understanding of core shifts in the meaning of contemporary Spanish auteurism related to advances in technology and communication. It is here that the extent to which an auteur, such as Almodóvar, can and should be studied as the product of their own making; the means with which such an idea may occur, and indeed, the significance of such self-creation on students’ appreciation and interpretation of a Spanish film’s (and its auteur’s) intentions. The discussion earlier suggested that Spanish auteur status has been in large part instilled by ‘outsiders’; critics and scholars whose first points of reference are the prerequisites set out by the French auteur theorists. However, there is significant evidence to suggest that auteur status in Spain (although also true for other national industries) is increasingly the self-created (aided by critics) product of the most


\textsuperscript{103} See also the various controversies surrounding Luis Buñuel’s cinematic œuvre.
successful and powerful directors of popular cinema. This concept may help educators (and subsequently, students) better understand both the, arguably, inherent nature of auteur-based professional motivations; desire for critical acclaim, and the key measures of such pursuits’ evolution, such as a growing social media presence. Affirming the shift beyond artistic merit and the wider cultural movement, Triana Toribio (2008: 2-5) notes how auteurism is useful to the industry principally in that fight for control of the media, and the author picks out Almodóvar as the auteur who has set the terms of reference by which other producers/directors operate vis à vis marketing. Perceptions of stardom and the cult of the celebrity are key to this - and key to this study as a whole (see Section 5.4) - and one only need look at the vast amount of interviews and celebrity appearances carried out by Almodóvar in his extensive career for proof of the filmmaker’s desire to promote his own personality, postmodern creative tendencies, and intimate, if at times, turbulent, relationship to his films’ leading actors. Looking at the director’s homepage during the Spanish release of Volver in March 2006, for example, allows users to witness the very process by which his production company, El Deseo, creates demand for a film at the all-important moment of its initial release through interviews, images and music (Triana Toribio 2008: 7). The hype created by Almodóvar and his creative/production team has become almost as much of an event as the release of his most recent films themselves, and thus, the idea of ‘The Spanish Auteur’ as merely a filmmaker of quality or reflector of a cultural movement has become something much more calculated, controlled and, basically, commercial. Relevant particularly for the Spanish A level student, but also for those studying at GCSE and undergraduate, this reaffirms a core aspect of Spanish Auteur identity today, as not just a successful director and the authentic source of their own creative product, but as the face and personality principally responsible for ensuring the film’s critical and commercial success. This is an increasingly significant aspect of understanding ‘the work of a director’ (legacy A level), or indeed, ‘the study of a Spanish-speaking film’ (reformed A level). Such information, presented within articles and videos - most often accessible online - are essential materials in guiding students to a better understanding of the make-up of and motivations behind the formation of the auteur status, both related to the individual work(s) and the Spanish film industry as a whole.

In addition to A level students gaining a broader and more detailed understanding of how filmmaker and auteur status in Spain (relevant to the works being studied) can be constructed - in order to meet assessment requirements (as outlined below) - it is necessary to delve further into the resulting impact of them for (student) spectators. Auteurism has long been received and used in Spain to construct certain perceptions of Spanish cinema (and indeed, ‘Spanishness’; see earlier reference to Triana Toribio 2003: 67) and subsequently, to encourage certain kinds of cinematic production (D’Lugo and Smith 2012: 113). There are established trends in using auteurism as an ideological tool (see earlier reference to Delgado 2003: 1). Following traditions set out by auteurism (as described by filmmakers and critics) in the 1960s, ‘as an effort to embrace an international model through which to counter the stifling containment of Francoist culture’, and as ‘a politically charged artistic posture’ (D’Lugo and Smith 2012: 114), it is clear that a critiquing of Spanish politics and synonymous acts of

104 For details, see Strauss (1994).
control ought to be a key feature in analysis of contemporary Spanish cinema; highly useful when teaching ‘aspects of political life in the Hispanic world’ (AQA 2017a), for example. This can be seen in some of del Toro’s most famous (and among the participating students, most viewed) works; El espinozadel diable - watched by 24% (12/51) of the participating A level students who had studied Spanish cinema at A level - and its ‘sister film’, El laberinto del fauno - watched by 69% (35/51). This latter film has been variously interpreted as ‘a political fable in the guise of a fairy tale. Or maybe it’s the other way round’ (Scott 2006, cited in Lázaro-Reboll (2012: 261)). It has already been discussed at length in Section 4.3 how this film - which has remained one of the most popular films used for teaching at A level - directly juxtaposes fairy-tale and children’s story iconography against the harsh reality of the Spanish Civil War. As discussed, this evokes enhanced dramatisation in a variety of forms, but as a war film that adopts the child’s point of view, it promotes itself as a vehicle for framing the notion of innocence (see Section 3.3). Del Toro is credited with being able to tap directly into Spanish memory in both El laberinto and El espinozadel diablo through a variety of techniques, while simultaneously tapping in to current topicality (at the time of the films’ release), surrounding debates about the legacy of the Civil War and historical memory. Debates and laws to arise in Spain concerning the excavation of mass graves and the exhumation of the victims of Fascist repression, as well as the controversial, Law of Historical Memory, are likely to be deep-rooted in a native audience’s (and Spanish scholar’s) consciousness. For such spectators, this reinforces the persistence of commentary on the current, Spanish political situation via an auteur’s interrelated work and preoccupations. In doing so, it adds a further layer to the significant learning potential at A level afforded by a detailed analysis of Spanish auteur status; one that involves reflecting on movements and new perspectives on the most significant aspects of Spain’s twentieth century history; a potential achieved by QG-9, who notes, ‘studying Spanish films has taught me a lot about Spanish history, especially the differences between a Franco and post-Franco Spain and the tradition of Spanish directors to redefine memory, and even the past’. By employing such a methodology for teaching and learning, educators are able to embark on studies related to law, public mood and reaction, moral understanding, and subjective stance, which relate to Spain at different time points.

Also marking a crucial time period in Spanish cinematic history, both El espinozado and El laberinto provide useful examples of the growing transnationality in the twenty-first century of contemporary Spanish films, and perhaps most notably, contemporary Spanish horror, as exercised through established auteurs, including del Toro. Although both films can be viewed as rooted in local history, their respective plot, story and characterisation contribute to a transnational comprehension of the historical background for audiences, and lend themselves to allegorical textual interpretations (Lázaro-Reboll, 2012: 259). A useful example of where this is exercised by del Toro is located via the confinement of the orphanage in El espinozado, although this is perhaps even more explicitly exercised in El orfanato (produced by del Toro); seen by 12% (6/51) of the participating students. A second example for classroom study includes both the ranch and the labyrinth in El laberinto, as symbolic of

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105 See Gómez-Castellano (2013: 2).
the entrapment and suffocation evoked by the surrounding conflict. Moreover, the unexploded bomb in the courtyard in *El espinazo*, and the series of monstrous creatures in *El laberinto* (The Toad, The Pale Man, and to some extent, Vidal) also act as frequent reminders of the horrors of the war, and other characters, such as Carmen (Marisa Paredes) in *El espinazo*, and Carmen (Adriana Gil) in *El laberinto*, come to represent the tragic and lost-cause nature of the conflict, via an amputated leg and death following childbirth, respectively. The use of ‘buried symbolism will slip past American [and possibly, British] audiences not familiar with the Spanish Civil War, [but] del Toro’s symbols work first as themselves, then as what they may stand for, and so it does not matter if the audience has never heard of Franco, as long as it has heard of ghosts’ (Ebert 2001). Part of the modern auteurs of Spanish cinema’s transnational success is due to their works’ cross-border appeal and ability to tell Spanish stories somehow masked, or at least, complemented, by internationally understood conventions in plot, characterisation and audience response. This leads to one important final question: How should A level studies best approach who and what exactly defines a Spanish auteur?

Setting, original aesthetics, specific references to intertextuality and the particularities of artistic and personal subjectivity stand out as core aspects of auteur-related teaching and learning, as is now explained. Returning to Almodóvar - as arguably the best known Spanish director to be associated with a specific location (Madrid) (as first discussed in Section 2.3) - the auteur may be usefully placed alongside other internationally acclaimed directors whose auteur status is linked to their recurrent settings, such as Woody Allen and New York, or Federico Fellini and Rome. Despite *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999) (the director’s first Oscar-winning film) - seen by 18% (9/51) of the participating students - bringing the beginning of breaks from an exclusive Madrid setting by being partly set in Barcelona, the capturing of spaces and landmarks in the capital remains a key Almodóvar trademark. Basic studies in setting allow for A level students to enhance their general knowledge of Madrid, perhaps as part of the sub-topic, ‘Spanish regional identity’, which students ‘must study […] in relation to Spain’, rather than other Spanish-speaking countries. As an example, one of the two essay questions on *Volver* in the Summer 2018 AQA A level Paper 2 asked students to ‘analyse the differences between country and city life’. However, it would be particularly useful for A level teachers to explore how the city as a space is used in much of Almodóvar’s oeuvre - beyond just *Volver*, or *Todo* - to map the country’s evolved liberation and modernisation, and indeed, how such an association is central to Almodóvar as a Spanish auteur. This can be effectively studied through characters’ movements and endeavours through the capital in the majority of the director’s works, such as *Matador*, or *Mujeres*. However, it is perhaps most markedly represented in Almodóvar’s 1995 feature, *Carne trémula*; a work taught on the University of Manchester’s ‘Barcelona and Madrid on screen’ module. The first of Almodóvar’s films to be set in the past, it begins with the superimposed caption, ‘Madrid, 1970’, during ‘a state of emergency’, while outside workmen take down Christmas decorations. Simultaneously, a young prostitute, Isabel (Penélope Cruz), gives birth to Víctor, on a

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110 See module aims set out in Section 2.1.
moving bus. Doña Centro (Pilar Bardem), who helps deliver the baby, says to Víctor, ‘You were in a hurry to get to Madrid’, then lifts the new born baby to show him, arguably, Madrid’s best-known landmark, the Puerta de Alcalá, as she says, ‘Look Víctor, Madrid’. The film then jumps to some twenty years later in 1990, to Víctor (Liberto Rabal) circling the same landmark, this time on a motorbike. ‘Just as the movie’s historical specificity is impressed upon [the audience], so too is its precise location: Víctor is a character indelibly associated with Madrid’ (Marsh 2004: 56). This sequence provides one of many informative examples of where Almodóvar cements his characters’ identity in direct relation to their location within the capital. Others include: Silvia (Carmen Maura) in ¿Qué he hecho?, who is confined by her suffocating high-rise flat located next to Madrid motorway; Pepa in Mujeres, who plays out her modern-day dilemmas on her lavish apartment balcony overlooking the city; María and Diego in Matador, embracing for the first time as they peer over the edge of the Segovia viaduct (in Madrid). And as Carne trémula unfolds via various relationship twists and turns, including first-time sex, adultery and, ultimately, jealousy-infused murder/suicide, the capital is framed as a city compelled by desire, where ‘the ideas and icons of Francoist cinema are set up as foils to stimulate the audience to embrace a new, post-Francoist aesthetic’ (D’Lugo 1995: 125). It seems likely that students may be assessed on their ability to compare and contrast The Spanish City, for example, Madrid, with rural Spain, particularly in light of past/specimen papers such as the AQA Specimen Paper 2 (2016): ‘Analyse the way in which Almodóvar explores the notion of the “Spanish town/village”’ (Volver).

A perceived consistency in aesthetics, which make a director’s films almost instantly recognisable, can, arguably, be considered a core aspect of virtually any auteur’s identity, and indeed, essay exam questions for the reformed A level confirm an expectation for students to recognise, understand and interpret such visual consistencies. In general terms - additional components discussed in the sections that follow - for Almodóvar, this includes the prominence of bright colours, mainly red, seemingly to represent love, passion, death and, as discussed earlier, either to emphasise or subvert notions of (stereo)typical Spanish identity. For del Toro, this is done mainly through his love of monsters and use of make-up and special effects for fantastical intentions. And finally, in the case of Erice (recommended for A level study, as discussed earlier, despite not being on the prescribed lists), this can be viewed through the open and empty landscapes, and characters’ longing gazes of sorrow, as symbolic of society’s anguish and uncertainty in the final years of the regime. Benefits for A level students in recognising such trademark styles concern, firstly, the facilitation of artistic merit and/or commercial success often synonymous with the establishment of an auteur, as alluded to earlier. But the effect for the spectator, be it student, scholar, or even passive, unenthusiastic viewer, can involve an increased sensibility in regard of truly understanding a filmmaker’s identity. In the case of del Toro – to return to him – this can be witnessed via the director’s ‘creative depiction of monstrous creatures and settings […] the merging of religious and secular iconography, and, above all, his commitment to the fantastic, fairy tales and mass-mediated horror traditions’ (Lázaro-Reboll 2012: 255). These aspects of del Toro’s work are given high importance in the reformed A level’s Paper 2 assessment;
see, for example, ‘Analyse the techniques used by the director to represent the regime of horror which was predominant during this post-war period’ (AQA 2018b), or, ‘Explore the representation of the fantasy and real worlds of Ofelia’ (AQA 2017c). Lowenstein (2005: 1) poses two pertinent questions in this regard - both useful in framing a thorough (and methodical,) pedagogical approach to understanding the relationship between Spanish auteurism and cinematic techniques specific to certain genres. Firstly, he asks, ‘What does cinematic horror have to tell us about the horrors of history?’, and secondly, ‘How does a film access discourses of horror to confront the representation of historical trauma tied to the film’s national and cultural context?’ (9). With specific regards to the auteurist identities of the filmmakers discussed above (del Toro, Almodóvar, Erice), the broad answer seems to lie in a simultaneous confirming and contrasting of typical genre conventions (although additional answers are put forward in Section 5.3). For del Toro, this largely lies in placing typical fantasy against the harsh realities of war, loss and entrapment. In the case of Almodóvar, this is commonly done in his melodramatic comedies via exaggerated or ironic uses of colour, setting and performance, often with extreme and multiple genre contrasts, such as in Matador; in many ways a typical thriller, although with a number of comedic devices included. And with Erice, it is a reliance of long takes and unrehearsed close-ups, seemingly designed to disturb the spectator’s gaze and the passivity often assumed as inherent within film watching as entertainment. The most successful use of Spanish film at A level is set up as a subject of enjoyment and intellectual stimulus, but as a means to truly enhance students’ ability to critically interpret and analyse authentic cultural texts, as part of their overall understanding of the nation’s language, history, society and culture being studied.

A key aspect of such analysis at A level ought to include a close look at the technique of intertextuality (as discussed at various points previously). A number of legacy essay questions indicate that students have been expected to know about where many of the filmmaker’s choices (visible or audible in a film) come from, including direct artistic references to other works; see AQA (legacy) (2017): ‘The best artists have many sources of inspiration. How are these sources of inspiration reflected in their work(s)?’; AQA (legacy) (2016): What were the influences on the artist whom you have studied? How are they reflected in their work(s)?’. In practice, and based on the teaching and learning resources most readily available for films such as those directed by del Toro, such references point to a variety of cinematic works (some of which are pointed out below), but also a number of famous paintings (see: McDonald and Clark 2014: 12; Ohara and de Semlyen 2013). It is both likely and advisable that studies within the reformed A level also require students to be able to interpret (and probably answer essay questions related to) the artistic inspirations and specific intertextual references pertinent to the films and auteurs being studied (although intertextuality or director’s inspiration has not yet been the subject of the reformed A level’s Paper 2 exam (2017-2018). Almodóvar is also well-known as an intertextuality enthusiast, concerning both the works of other artists and his own body of works, be they subtle, or incredibly obvious (see Rodríguez (2015) and also earlier references to the legacy Paper 3 assessment in Section 4.3: ‘among the reasons cited […] for Almodóvar’s success [included] cinematic intertextuality’. 
Across both Almodóvar and del Toro’s cinematic oeuvres – and incidentally, the importance of studying a ‘body of work’, as opposed to just one film by one filmmaker, is recognised by at least one participating A level student (QE-HM-1): ‘Studying different Spanish films at A level provided an insight into Spanish cinema and I learned about the most prominent directors in the industry, with whom I was previously unfamiliar’. See also comments in Section 4.3 about multiple works aiming to reduce the alienation factor - visual and aural continuities in the films are also able to be traced in the reappearing of several members of the same technical team and cast. Almodóvar, the filmmaker, but also the owner of production company, El Deseo (managed by his brother, Agustín), is very much associated with the recurring faces of his films, from Carmen Maura to Penélope Cruz (see Section 5.4). And in the works of del Toro, regular performances from actor, Federico Luppi (Cronos, El espinazo, El laberinto) and clear parallels in filming and production qualities (pointed out below), often at the direct hands of del Toro himself, cement the breadth of consistencies in his unique work, as a prominent auteur of Spanish horror and fantasy. Lázaro-Reboll (2012: 258) highlights notable ‘captions of horror’ across del Toro’s films, such as the wounded body of Santi in the basement of the orphanage, and the subsequent disposal of the corpse in the cistern in El espinazo, compared to the close-up of Ofelia’s wounded face, as she lies dying within the ruins of the labyrinth in El laberinto. Students should be directed towards how camera work, and specifically, the framing and angles concerned with point of view, also work closely together to cement del Toro’s own perspective on his films’ contents and the surrounding ‘reality’ (discussed at length in the next section). Some of the participating undergraduate students show a stronger awareness of point of view than the A level students discussed in Section 4.3, such as QG-16, who ‘understood a lot more through the different points of view and directors’ takes on events such as the Civil War and Francoist dictatorship - all of which helped to shed much more light on a complex era’; A level teaching and learning ought to take inspiration from this. It is crucial to consider carefully how both works unfold through the eyes of a child (see Section 3.3), while at the same time, presenting an adult horror allegory on Fascism; highlighted by undergraduate QG-16: ‘I learned quite a lot about aspects of Spanish culture through the eyes of film characters and the Spanish film makers themselves’. Moreover, both films reference strong visual concepts related to the aesthetics of children’s literature; comics in the case of El espinazo and classic fairy-tale illustrations in El laberinto. This link not only provokes further comparison between the two films and possibly across other works by the same director, but also encourages studies in multi-art form, intertextual linkage and reference; a topic A level students often very much enjoy, according to professional experience, and one which is expected to be a feature of assessed essays in the future. Finally, both films evoke a, broadly speaking, Spanish cinematic tradition in which the protagonist is a child dealing with traumatic experiences, as indeed seen before in Erice’s El espíritu and also, incidentally, Saura’s Cria cuervos. QG-17) describes the child’s perspective on such traumatic experiences as ‘framing the scars of war’. Erice himself and several other auteurs to come from the NCE are also classified by many as great fans of intertextuality (see also Canet 2018:2).
There is strong evidence to support the interconnected artistic homages and evolution of auteurism in Spain at the hands of individual filmmakers. Such connections have been capitalised upon by students to some extent within the legacy A level (see earlier citation taken from Section 4.3). However, despite the change in assessment wording from ‘Spanish-speaking director’ to ‘Spanish-speaking film’, there is room for much more to be made of such details if A level students’ feedback is to match the detail provided by the undergraduate students cited above, or at least, display ‘a robust foundation for those wishing to study a modern language to degree level or equivalent’ (Ofqual 2017: 25). It is additionally necessary for A level students to be equipped to interpret ‘authentic […] sources from a variety of different contexts and genres’ (DfE 2015). It has also been underlined that the reformed A level rightfully shifts some of the focus away from the director as the source responsible for artistic decisions, such as intertextual references, and that often a more accurate and nuanced understanding is gained by recognising that, increasingly, Spanish auteur identity is the product of a whole team of filmmakers and surrounds all aspects of a film’s pre-production, filming and post-production. This should allow for interesting debates surrounding views of the Spanish auteur as firmly and perilously between art and commerce and, as referred to earlier, home and abroad, in ‘an institutional position that embodies unique strains and tensions’ (D’Lugo and Smith 2012: 135).

Far from being a strain however on filmmakers’ careers - and instead offering enlightening material for increasing A level students’ understanding of Spanish cinema as an industry and a commercial product, as well an aspect of Spanish culture - it should be noted how del Toro successfully deploys commercial expertise and knowledge of popular tastes by bridging the gap between art house, mainstream and horror, and by doing so, produces films with international currency.111 As an interesting classroom or homework activity, students may look at the other ways in which certain Spanish directors’ webpages are used to construct the directors’ individuality, such as their choice of colour palette. Using Álex de la Iglesia as an example, red, black and white are juxtaposed in strong contrast, which predominate de la Iglesia’s background and illustrations; a choice consistent with the design of the film posters for his most successful films (Trian Toribio 2008: 13). Teachers and students can observe how the promotion of some of Almodóvar’s most highly acclaimed works (in terms of festival and ceremony awards) firstly capitalise on bright colours (most notably, red) and images of striking femininity to initially attract attention. Secondly, they may be viewed as having the intention of becoming icon images, synonymous with his films’ artistic and ideological identity; take, for example, the cartoon poster of Manuela for Todo sobre mi madre, and the photo of a beautiful and unmistakably Spanish Penélope Cruz (as Raimunda) in Volver. For del Toro, the sketched drawings of his monsters and other fantasy characters have become a major part of his works’ much loved memorabilia. Not only do these materials offer huge learning opportunities when exploited for their significance in the film-making and film-promoting process, but they also provide additional material for building on language and cultural work surrounding readings of the films themselves, for example, as pre-watching activities, such as ‘plot prediction’.

111 See: Lázaro-Reboll (2012: 260); McDonald and Clark (2014: 12).
Within all of such work, and whether or not accreditation is applied specifically to the director, it is crucial for A level teachers to emphasise the inevitable personal and professional motivations, and subjectivities, behind the making of a film. The theme of subjectivity must also be fully extended to the students themselves, whereby each student should be encouraged to develop their own personal views and interpretations of the various elements being studied. This is reminiscent of comments about encouraging subjectivity in Section 4.3, however, in spite of this, several of the examiners’ comments suggest an abundance of overly generic observations and uses of pre-learned language and information. Meanwhile, undergraduate students, such as QG-5, are able to observe ‘techniques to show how directors feel about modern life and through that, what they feel needs to be thought carefully about by the audience’. Conversely, in best helping students to learn about Spain itself, it is especially enlightening when the perspective offered by the filmmaker or filmmakers appears to directly relate to popular and/or dominant national preoccupation, either at the specific time or more generally. Arroyo (2006: 66) observes that, ‘in a Spain currently obsessed with issues of historical memory arising from the Civil War, [El laberinto del fauno] is bound to cause comment’. And as French (2006: 14) puts it, del Toro’s work can be read as ‘an allegory] about the soul and the national identity of Spain, and, in a wider sense, about the struggle between good and evil, between the humane and the inhumane, the civilised and the barbaric’. The opening scenes of El laberinto offer an ideal platform for such ideas to be explored. Ofelia is introduced as a curious, sensitive and wholly innocent character: a caring daughter; a fan of fairy-tales; fascinated by nature and local surroundings. Her first encounter with evil is the stern, obsessive and controlling Captain Vidal (immaculately dressed in Nationalist Army attire, audibly unsettled by his new family’s fifteen minutes-late arrival, radically offended by Ofelia’s reaching out of her left hand); the embodiment of Franco, or at the very least, the ‘sadistic machismo’ (Smith 2013: 150) associated with Nationalist ideals. In this segment, students are able to witness how del Toro directs spectators’ visual and ideological point of view via a somewhat simplified and, arguably, overly biased, commentary on historical memory. This stamps del Toro’s (as director and writer) own perceptions of right and wrong, good and evil, and, specifically, left and right wing ideologies, by using a variety of cinematic techniques which increasingly mark him as an auteur. These scenes also offer an opening basis for del Toro’s interest and acclaimed skills in creating a sense of continuity between reality and fantasy; indeed, the ending of El laberinto in some ways rewrites the real ending of the Civil War conflict as the Maqui Rebels are seen to be victorious. In doing so, del Toro declares ‘his own cinematic lineage’ (Lázaro-Reboll 2012: 264), and from that, A level students are able to gain an in-depth and highly fruitful appreciation of some of the key representative, stylistic and cinematically-specific tools used for ideology-shaping purposes that are characteristic of the films, filmmakers and auteurs they are studying. Such work may be considered particularly useful preparation for essays such as, ‘Examine the Spanish society represented in the film’ (AQA 2018c), and, ‘Analyse the techniques used by the director to represent the regime of horror predominated in this postwar period’ (AQA 2018b).
The ability to understand and interpret auteurism has, according to the evidence, a crucial place within A level studies with specific regards to the study of a film as a cultural text, and additionally, has the potential to be highly effective within the teaching and learning of additional core topics. Despite the changes to the assessment outline and marking criteria, it remains imperative for A level teachers and students to rigorously question the true authorship of the film, or ideally, films, being studied, not least if students are to gain a broader and more accurate perspective on Spain’s past, present, and possibly, its future. Spanish auteurism carries a particular importance when students are encouraged and enabled to question and interpret what the term means to them, to Spaniards, to global audiences, and finally, to the filmmakers themselves. By mapping the evolvement and diversity of such perspectives in relation to a variety of artistic works, it is projected that A level students will be much more confident and equipped to meet and possibly exceed the expectations of the reformed A level. Subsequently, they may be more likely to successfully embark on and excel during studies at undergraduate level, where students invariably face the challenges of a significantly broader, and much more self-onerous, approach to reading foreign cinema.
5.2: Realism and the question of socio-cultural understanding

Pioneering cinematic works, such as the Lumière brothers’ L’arrivée du Train en Gare de la Ciotat (1985), set the tone for film’s ‘extraordinary power to imitate reality [which ever since] has made realism a central figure of cinema aesthetics’ (Lapsley and Westlake 2006:156). During an illustrious period of film theorisation in the 1950s, legendary scholars and critics, such as Bazin (see Gray 2004: 16-40), revealed that the connection between cinema and realism moves beyond aesthetics, famously labelling cinema, ‘the art of the real’, whereby it is within such references to the concept of reality that the seventh art form attains its true fullness. Varying definitions of ‘real’ Spain, Spanish, and Spanishness have been considered in the previous three chapters. To this point, they have been summarised as crucial aspects of the aspiration to achieve the most rounded, most enjoyable and most appreciated (by students) learning of Spanish at all levels. This section aims to further contextualise realism in Spanish cinema in terms of how exactly it is to be defined in the classroom setting, where it can be seen in some of the films most used by teachers/lecturers, how it is best approached in teaching and learning, and, ultimately, the pedagogical impact that answers to such questions have for the Spanish student.

The 2000s is the decade of focus for this section. This is firstly because many of the most prominently used films in the participating schools and universities (and according to examiners’ reports and the reformed A level’s prescribed lists) have been made and released in this decade, as confirmed earlier. Secondly, it is because the 2000s became known as a decade heavily associated with cinematic realist qualities, including films which are highly reflective of issues at the forefront of social and political change in Spain, as outlined previously and unpacked in the section. It is made clear throughout however that realism in film is always still a construct and any perceptions of reality need to be challenged on the basis of whose and what forms of reality are in question. The content for analysis stems from the qualitative questionnaire responses of a total of seventeen students. Eleven are undergraduate students at the University of Manchester, who are studying either of the modules, ‘Barcelona and Madrid on Screen’, or, ‘Social Issues in Spanish and Portuguese Cinema’ (indicated by student codes including ‘BM’ or ‘SP’, respectively). The other six respondents are the author’s own A level students (at the time of data collection), indicated by student codes including ‘AL’. Comments are measured against module objectives and AQA A level Spanish examiners’ commentaries. Literature from scholars and critics is simultaneously incorporated to reflect the most relevant theories and existing research dealing with the nature and place of realism in Spanish cinema (studies). The section provides answers most directly to Research Question 1 and Research Question 5a – as is made clear – although the analysis bears significant relevance to foreign film studies as a whole (and in that sense, responds to all Research Questions), where concepts and perceptions of realism – theoretical or otherwise – penetrate virtually every aspect of the process.

The vast majority of questionnaire respondents identify, ‘society’, or, ‘social issues’, as directly linked to a definition of what ‘realism’ in cinema represents (for them); a recognition shared by Dudley
Andrew (1976: 104), who notes that, ‘realist film theory is closely linked to a sense of the social functioning of art, hence, art and (social) realism […] go hand in hand’. Responses to the statement, ‘Define realism in cinema in the context of film in your own words’, provide several generic comments containing ‘society’ or ‘social’, but also the following responses, which lead into a more specific perception of interconnected realism and social identity: ‘current society and way of life’ (QI-BM-4); ‘social realism is best’ (QI-BM-2); ‘realism makes the movie more enjoyable’ (QI-AL-3); ‘themes that reflect current situations’ (QI-BM-1); ‘problems within society’ (QI-BM-3); ‘films that mirror as closely as possible the reality of the country’ (QI-BM-6); ‘real social political issues affecting people at the time of filming’ (QI-BM-5); ‘a device especially prominent in drawing attention to social issues’ (QI-BM-1); ‘how realistic aspects of a film relate to modern life’ (QI-AL-1); ‘a set of themes that provide a greater focus on real life’ (QI-AL-4). In reflection of all such comments, it is useful to consider that late 1990s Spanish cinema became well-known for its cine social; a late twentieth century sub-genre, but, one which has its artistic origins in the realismo social of the 1950s in the films of directors such as Bardem and Berlanga (Hallam and Marshment 2000: 184). Any meaningful, present-day exploration of realism in Spanish cinema should begin by tracing its roots, and by appreciating the long-standing and deeply embedded relationship between the realities of Spanish society and Spain’s national cinema. This process is affected by students’ previous exposure to the historical background of any studied works, and indeed any previous definitions of realism that the students had encountered. It is not possible to deduce from the questionnaire responses such previous exposures or experiences, but educators (and researchers) are firmly reminded of the necessity to remain conscious of students’ inevitably varying prior knowledge and experience related to any artistically-associated theory or concept.

Cine social favours ‘present-day social problems (crime, drugs, domestic violence against women and children’ (Hallam and Marshment 2000: 184); a link anticipated by several of the students noted above. These topics, along with the topic of unemployment, provide the focus for much of this section by looking at two films taught on the University of Manchester’s and the University of Liverpool’s undergraduate courses: Los lunes al sol and Te doy mis ojos. Such works enjoyed significant critical success, including winning several Goyas, in part, at least, it could be argued, because of their accuracy in reflecting and denouncing the prominent social ills of the time; those which have ‘shaken up’ Spanish society since the late 1990s (Triana Toribio 2003: 157). The social ills referred to centre largely on the re-evaluation of economic stability and gender equality in Spain at that time, such as the ‘Organic Law on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence’, passed in 2004. The core to Spanish cinema’s realist trend towards the beginning of the new millennium was in the rooting of the national cinema ‘firmly and confidently in the present’ (Triana Toribio 2003: 157); a core dimension to perceptions of realism shared by several students, including QI-A1 and QI-A4, as noted above, and one which, as is demonstrated, offers significant scope for mapping portrayals of both socioeconomic and social equality movement.

112 See also Stone (2002: 20) for traces of (Spanish) cinematic realism as early as the late 1800s.
113 See earlier reference: Hallam and Marshment (2000: 184); a link explored further later.
At the time of writing, *Los lunes* is used at the University of Manchester in the teaching of ‘Social Issues in Portuguese and Spanish Film’ and in the University of Liverpool’s sub-module, ‘Global Spain’, where students are expected to gain a ‘critical awareness of the relationships between social issues and cinematic representation’, and, ‘examine the relationship between location and the formation of national, regional and marginal identities in Spain’, respectively. The module titles and course objectives provide a strong indication of the context in which the film is studied, that is, in relation to the film’s association with a very current social (perceived) reality, and additionally, the crucial connection between location and identity, as explored in detail later. *Los lunes* deals with a group of Galician men who struggle to find work and the castrating effects this has on their emotional state, their relationships and their masculine (Spanish) identity. The very real problem of unemployment is a recognisable and wholly empathetic reality for many Spanish spectators, true both the year of the film’s release in 2002, as reaffirmed by the use of documentary footage of shipbuilders’ demonstrations in Gijón (in Asturias), and today (still in the aftermath the global financial crisis of 2008, where Spain was hit particularly hard). QI-BM-6 states that, ‘as a language student, realist films are often useful for finding out more about the social issues [...] in the present day’, echoing Triana Toribio’s and additional students’ comments (as cited earlier) about realist cinema’s responsibility to explore the problems hitting society ‘then and there’. QI-BM-3 refers specifically to, ‘problems within society’, and later explains how such themes within realist films encourage the spectator to ‘get involved in the film’, and ‘live the film as you watch it’, [because spectators can better] ‘relate to the characters and their journey’. QI-AL-5 states that, ‘realism allows [spectators] to relate what is happening [to being] a possibility in [their] life’. Concepts of heightened empathy and identification continue, as QI-BM-4 talks about becoming ‘emotionally attached to the characters, especially if something goes wrong, which it usually does’. Finally, QI-BM-6 describes how such films encourage the spectator to ‘sympathise with the characters’. For these participating students, it can be summarised that the empathy experienced largely takes the form of reacting to characters’ misfortunes and rough deals.

The themes of unemployment, poverty and the resulting personal and relationship breakdowns are typical of realism (related to presenting social injustices) in a national cinema entering the twenty-first century with an apparent desire for distinct honesty and socio-political transparency. As pointed out previously, in the case of Spanish cinema, this is a particularly sharp contrast to the frills, excesses and desires to shock that was characteristic of much of 1980s, most obviously, in the camp and outrageous melodramatic comedies of Almodóvar. Evolving national audience perspectives can be mapped in comparison with screenings of much earlier works, such as Buñuel's *Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan* (1932), and its depiction of poverty, hunger and the social backwardness of the rural Spanish region. At the time in Spain, *Las Hurdes* was seen as ‘offensive’ by many spectators (D’Lugo 1997: 6) and ‘a virulent attack on the selfishness of society, and on man’s inhumanity in general’ (Stone 2002: 27). *Los lunes* however can be studied as a film of dual purpose, whereby students experience the

dystopian realism that both extends and modifies the aims of the social realist films of the 1950s (and earlier), but also gives rise to a new type of realism that offers the possibility of resistance to neoliberalism and the market today (Brady, Izurieta and Medina 2014: 113). As a teaching tool, this film offers scope for not just mapping a continuing inheritance of previously established, Spanish, cinematic social realism, but also, for exploring attitudes in a changing Spanish society, often caught between facing up to the grim realities it is, or was, up against, and the desire to see cinema take up a firm stance in striving for an invigorated present, and an optimistic future.115

In educating students about how Spanish film facilitates such representation, it is fundamental to identify the novelty that cinema brought in terms of a newfound space. Bazin (1956: 112) finds the root of the ‘reality’ associated with watching a film as associated with a ‘visual and spatial reality’, in which film ‘registers the spatiality of objects and the space they inhabit’. Faulkner (2013: 13) describes this concept as, ‘a sense of spatial promiscuity’, and Larson and Woods (2007: 112) specify, a ‘new experience of space’ in Spanish works as early as La Puerta del Sol (Promio 1896). The depths of perceptions of spatial reality as relative to discussions of where realism starts and ends are highly pertinent to many of the most used films at school level, where works such as El laberinto del fauno and El orfanato highlight the significance of enclosed spaces in the film titles alone. A prominent example of a scene providing scope for developing students’ appreciation of enhanced and/or distorted realities through space is found in the scene of El orfanato where Laura runs through the shallow sea towards the cave in desperate search of her missing son, Simón. Bayona’s jagged camera movement mirrors the erratic action of the manic central character, whilst capturing the empty vastness of the ocean behind. Bayona then cuts to a point-of-view shot of a brief glimpse of a masked young boy in the opening of the cave. This scene provides a fruitful demonstration of the sense of distance and perspective shared by the characters (afforded to spectators by film), and also the flexibility of movement that allows spectators to feel that they form part of the action, or even temporarily take on one of the characters’ roles within the frame.116 Essentially, it enhances the association with reality in the sense of heightened emotional engagement and empathy through the employment of techniques largely unique to cinema.

It is important to point out to students that meaningful space may not however be explicitly visible. D’Lugo (1991: 199) notes how the camera emerges as a ‘socially regulating apparatus’, which implies ‘the off screen presence of a social community’, or as Bazin (1956: 105) confirms, ‘there are no wings to the screen’. In the most used Spanish film in schools - del Toro’s El laberinto - spectators are laden with a constant feeling of otherness and of being surrounded by external forces in the shape of both the Republican rebels hiding in the woods and the fantasy creatures who either appear suddenly from walls, or undisclosed out-of-shot locations. Examples include The Faun, or other creatures discovered

115 Also see D’Lugo’s (1991: 200) and Faulkner’s (2013: 172) analyses of Saura’s Bodas de sangre (1981).

116 For a more detailed look at subjectivity and perspective-related film theory, see Münsterberg (1970).
by Ofelia in various mystical (‘non-real’) locations, such as The Pale Man. The feelings of entrapment and enclosure associated with such movement and presence, so central to the film, once again, as the title reaffirms, are incorporated by del Toro to evoke a shared sense of ‘no escape’ from a war already won by the Nationalists. Students may therefore benefit from grasping the notion of an audience being pushed into an uncomfortable, yet wholly relatable, reality; in many ways equal to the various forms of social repression experienced throughout much of Spain in 1944. It is worth noting here that, although ultimately a fantasy film (but also a work of magical realism), El laberinto is a prominent example of where the complexity and blurring of stylistic codes and genres, as well as the handling of cinematic space, can convey a much more profound feeling of realism. In the case of a film set in post-War Spain, this relates to a comprehension of the true horrors of the period. As also a historical film reliant on the codes and conventions of fantasy and fairy-tale genres as a means of encountering the trauma of Fascism (Clark and McDonald 2010: 52), del Toro’s work is a prime example of the (common) juxtaposition of realism and its most opposing genres in contemporary Spanish cinema. This process allows for new levels of understanding of either historical or present day reality to be met. Using QI-AL-2’s definition of realism as, ‘the opposite of fantasy’, del Toro’s work may, in such case, be seen as a useful illustration of where intertextual and genre-blurring strategies permit the deconstruction of the fact/fiction dichotomy, whereby fantasy is singled-out as an important (and incredibly useful) tool for general audiences’, and, in this case, students’ readings of historic trauma.

Te doy mis ojos is taught on the ‘Spanish and Latin American Cinemas: An Introduction’ course at the University of Liverpool and the ‘Social Issues in Portuguese and Spanish Film’ course at the University of Manchester. On the former module, students are expected to ‘explore the relationship between film, society and politics’, and develop ‘an awareness of the economic forces which frame the film industry in Spain’. On the latter module, the aim is for students to ‘gain a critical awareness of the relationships between social issues and cinematic representation’, which includes ‘marginalisation through economic hardship’ and ‘domestic violence’. In relation to the first aforementioned course objective, as a film that explores the horrific personal struggles associated with domestic violence, the work had particular resonance at the time it was released due to the new domestic violence laws being passed in Spain, as referred to earlier. This not only follows the trend of capturing prominent national news stories, but also refers to the commercial (and artistic) demand in Spain in the first part of the new millennium to highlight the issues that really matter in society, with cinema having an important role in providing a voice, and even a platform, for social change. The participating students who had seen this film unanimously agreed that it could be classified as, ‘very realist’; at first glance, perhaps due to the severity of the theme and contents. It is however important to recognise that (cinematic) artistic realism does not always have to be synonymous with such topics. The students’ responses do in fact suggest that realist films have (for them) more to do with the specific reaction of the spectator, who, as suggested by QI-BM-3, finds themself exposed to – in their words – ‘real

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117 See also Rabinger’s (2007: 276) description of ‘Alice in Francoland’.
issues, such as domestic abuse’, in a way that forces them to ‘get involved in the film’, thereby resulting in a film which ‘has a real impact on a spectator’. A particularly interesting potential offered by this film lies in the way in which Bollain encourages spectators to sympathise with not just Pilar (Laia Marrul), who suffers various forms of abuse from her husband, Antonio (Luis Tosar), but also with Antonio himself, and his efforts to overcome his own plight of being an abuser by attending counselling. This allows students to identify to some degree with deeper concepts within recognising and dealing with domestic abuse, whereby the perpetrator is, arguably, himself a victim, and indeed, how Spanish society more broadly is involved in overcoming a larger-scale social problem. At least one student participant displays an awareness in this regard, writing that, ‘in Te doy mis ojos, [spectators] are encouraged to relate to the characters and their journey’, referring to characters in the plural and using the third person plural possessive adjective, thus, implying recognition of both the abused, and the abuser, as victims. For teachers of film in the Spanish class/seminar room, enhanced identification, empathy and engagement are likely to be sought after reactions as a means of ensuring the most effective learning via film to take place. Of course, this does not always have to be through such traumatic material, but, in the case of the works considered in the section so far, strong emotional connection to characters and plots (and therefore students’ engagement) is facilitated via heightened sympathy for the quandry and struggle of the victimised central character, and the cinematic capturing of their physical surroundings.

The most balanced and informed pedagogical approaches to such heavily theorised and critically subjectified concepts, such as cinematic realism, should also be aware of counter perspectives and more disapproving critique. Although both films are labelled under the seemingly flattering title of, ‘popular social realism’, this term is renamed by some as, ‘timid social realism’. And although encompassing numerous, formal realism techniques attributed to cine social, and being centred around the typically social realist themes of unemployment (Los lunes) and domestic violence (Te doy mis ojos), some critics rejected the films’ dramatisations, as they were, in their view, an obfuscation of reality (Faulkner 2013: 238). Quintana (2008: 253), for example, criticises this, cine social, or, ‘timid social realism’, for insufficiently addressing the social problems they are based on, and, although adopting the aesthetic forms of Italian neo-realist, they are unsettlingly fused with ‘drama’, or more specifically, ‘melodrama’ and ‘comedy’. Moreover, Quintana (Ibid) views them as, ‘giving in to the more commercial demands of the Spanish star system’, such as with the casting of Bardem in Los lunes (see Section 5.4). Here lie several important lessons in approaching the theories surrounding artistic, social, and even political, subjectivity on screen, and indeed, lessons about the precarious balance and much debated perceptions concerning cinema as a medium of entertainment, a distinguished art form and a tool for (re)presenting the real. Reflective of this, various responses suggest an element of naivety regarding films with realist qualities as, films that ‘represent the truth’ (QI-BM-1), films that carry ‘credibility’ [...] in depicting the world’ (QI-BM-4), or, ‘a text that faithfully

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118 La mala educación (Almodóvar 2001) is recommended as another contemporary Spanish film to, although very differently, explore similar ideas.
and accurately represents everyday issues and one which avoids implausible elements' (QI-SP-4). An astute awareness of the multiple identities and purposes of cinema, and a hunger for stimulating discussion and extended learning is however suggested by others, who define cinematic realism as work that explores the ‘reality that a director perceives’ (QI-BM-1), ‘mirror[s] as closely as possible the reality in which the director lives’ (QI-SP-1), and finally, ‘encourage[s] debate about what is perceived as reality’ (QI-BM-2).

In line with such thinking, Faulkner (2013: 244) puts forward the positive perspective of, rather than condemning such films as those discussed above as anything ‘timid’, a work such as *Los lunes* should be approached ‘on its own terms: accepting the tensions that arise from fusion and exploring their wider significance’. Similarly, in the case of *Te doy*, its elision of actual physical abuse - which some may argue reduces the realism associated with the film - in fact ‘only increases spectators’ perception of the horror’ (Mira 2010: 290). Such a cinematic approach may be considered something of a homage to the famous, *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960) shower scene, for example, whereby, famously, not explicitly showing the physical horrors - still made vividly implicit via alterative cinematic means - intensifies the emotional response of the spectator, and thus, their identification of sympathy, fear, or general trauma for the victimised character. Thus, teachers/lecturers should remain conscious that the most profound understandings of how the study of such Spanish films enables students to react, interpret, and essentially, learn, from representations of ‘real’ social ills, difficulties and insecurities does not lie solely in the plots and narratives unfolding on screen. Instead, it is vital for students to be guided to observe, examine and evaluate the various techniques employed by the filmmakers to capture factual themes and/or achieve any form of realist authenticity, and indeed, their multiple motivations for doing so.

Specific locations as central to filmmakers’ realist intents has been implied a number of times thus far. The association of contemporary Spanish cinema with specified locations is expected by certain students: QI-BM-1 anticipates a ‘realistic setting’, while QI-SP-1 expects a ‘shoot on location’ and ‘natural light’. Such a trend did become prominent in Spain in the 1990s (see earlier reference to Hallam and Marshment 2000: 184) and is a trend that would continue into the 2000s across several works, including those most frequently used at the participating institutions, such as *Volver*. In addition to being one of the top two most frequently used works in the participating schools (and nationally at A level, according to examiners’ reports (see Section 4.3)), it is also present on the University of Liverpool’s sub-module, ‘Returning to the rural’. Although widely considered another Almodóvar melodramatic comedy, the film is reliant on its rural setting to capture both the typical identity of rural Spain (La Mancha), and isolation of the troubled characters. In observance of the long series of family and local traditions presented in *Volver* - framed as characteristic of the region - there is clear scope in the class/seminar room for establishing the extent of Spanish ‘reality’ afforded or intended by an apparent use of exaggeration and stereotyping in the context of characters’ actions and dialogue, such as excessive kissing, no note an obvious and jovial example. Scrutiny of the
director’s own upbringing in the same region also allows for reflection on autobiographical representation, which adds a further layer to interpretations of the ‘real’ for informed spectators; see Almodóvar’s description of his own origins in La Mancha (for example, in Levy 2015:5). Most revealing however – and useful to the student – are directors’ varying specific intentions regarding their own representation(s) of reality, which in the specific case of Almodóvar is devoted to a pursuit to ‘improve or strive to improve on […] reality, no matter what that reality is’ (Almodóvar, cited in Levy 2015: 3).

In summary, the mapping of realism within contemporary Spanish cinema is dependent on tracing the roots of realist representations, intentions and associated perceptions from within society itself. It is also vital to compare contemporary works that have similar realist motivations, but also, to consider and reflect upon key films from different points in Spanish film history. Ideally for Spanish teachers/lecturers and students, such a quest facilitates immense potential in terms of understandings of Spain, Spanish and Spanishness, both from a Spanish domestic viewpoint, and a foreign observer’s perspective. After all, ‘Spanishness [is] synonymous with realism’ (Triana Toribio 2003: 27), and ‘the Spanishness of Spanish cinema is often identified with the mission to safeguard or extol Spain’s image outside’ (Camporesi 1994: 32) (this latter point is explored further in the next section). Priorities must remain in emphasising to students that learning from foreign cinema is not about witnessing factually documented events, encountering realistic characters, or simply, the practice of being exposed to authentic (‘real’) material, but rather, for the most meaningful learning to take place, it is about recognising, exploring and evaluating those multiple layers of reflection presented by every stage of the film making and screening process.
5.3: Genre as a way in for students and teachers

It is the intention here to establish the nature and significance of genre, as both a regular feature in Spanish class/seminar room practice (as evidenced throughout the data collection), and as a fundamental, theoretical cinematic concept (as evidenced by cinema studies literature). To do so, the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from seventeen (of the author’s own) GCSE students’ (QJ-HM-1 – QJ-HM-17) questionnaire responses (Questionnaire J - Appendix XIV) is analysed alongside the claims of the most relevant critics and scholars; principally, Beck and Rodríguez Ortega (2013) and Altman (1999), due to their direct relevance to many of the qualitative comments, as is made clear. The students have collectively watched a total of four Spanish-speaking films: *El bola* (all seventeen students), *El laberinto del fauno* (sixteen), *María eres llena de gracia*119 (seven) and *Mar adentro* (one). This section primarily responds to Research Question 1, but also aims to address each of the other four research questions, as relevant to where genre studies bear most significance at each level of Spanish (film) education, and as suggested by the section title, where genre offers an approachable, practical and fruitful route into deeper analyses and understandings of Spanish films’ representative qualities, as is made clear.

It is firstly useful to reflect on what genre is perceived to be. A logical start is to consider the study of film genre as no more than an extension of literary genre study. 24% (4/17) of the students explicitly mention, ‘books’, as the source of their initial perceptions of genre: QJ-HM-15 and QJ-HM-17 both note, ‘books at school’; QJ-HM-12 notes, ‘cartoons and books’, and QJ-HM-13 notes that ‘[they] would look for books with similar themes or in the same genre as [they] had previously enjoyed’. The practice of turning to perceptions of literary genres as a means of better understanding genre in film studies is recommended by Altman (1999: 13), who encourages educators and students to look to ‘centuries of literature as an established art form in order to understand both what constitutes a “genre” and consider the impact of genre identity on audiences’. Approaching the third decade of the twenty-first century however, it is naïve and quite obviously wrong to assume that much of children’s experiences of story, narrative, and therefore, also genre, comes from books; it is highly evident that a significant proportion of children’s early experiences of genre are through the moving image (see Section 2.3 and Section 3.1). Several of the students make comments to this effect: QJ-HM-11 mentions, ‘television’, and QJ-HM-12, QJ-HM-14 and QJ-HM-15 all mention, ‘cartoons’, as early sources of an appreciation of genre. The nature and prevalence of this screen-related process is reinforced by the BFI: ‘Thanks to TV, DVDs and videos, four and five-year-olds arrive in school with [an] understanding of narrative, genre, character, setting and time[,] long before they learn to read, they can readily answer questions about films like, “can you tell what is going to happen next?” and “how can you tell?”’.

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119 Colombian, therefore details not discussed, but generic observations as relevant to foreign film studies or other points seen as relevant are included.
The majority – 65% (11/17) - of the participating students refer to ‘types’, ‘sorts’, or, ‘categories of films’. Five students refer to ‘themes’ or ‘content’ in relation to the plot, such as QJ-HM-16, who notes that genre is ‘dependent on topics and themes’, and QJ-HM-12, who notes, ‘it’s connected to the theme the film revolves around’ and ‘what happens’. Other students make direct contrast with different genres and refer more to the stylistic tendencies associated with them: QJ-HM-6 exemplifies their understanding of genre by ‘comparing comedies to action’, and QJ-HM-11 relates the term to ‘setting, characters and lighting’. Many academic definitions match such plurality, and open up further enlightening aspects to genre studies. Allinson (2001: 124) succinctly labels the two constituents of the genre of a film as, ‘narrative’ and ‘iconography’, and the author uses classic Hollywood cinema as an example of how genre identity allows the audience to ‘make sense of the film’. Cook (1985: 58) describes genre as a ‘repertoire of conventions running across visual imagery, plot, character, setting, modes of narrative development, music and stars’. For Ryall (cited in Neale 1980: 7), genres are ‘patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films, and which supervise both their construction by the filmmaker, and their residing by an audience’. To pick up firstly on this latter point, the appreciation of genre as a construction, and therefore with a desired goal by those who construct it, is fundamental to any understanding of what cinematic genre is. Genre can be considered first and foremost as a marketing tool; ‘genre and the marketing of a cultural product [have] been synonymous [since] long before cinema’, and such a connection has become useful for the ‘classifying and diversifying’ of films (Sklar, cited in Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: xi). Genre codes, along with stars, (see Cook and full analysis in Section 5.4) constitute two of the most significant aspects of attracting an audience to a film (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 46), and it is important for students to be aware of such motivations during the film watching/studying experience in order for the most all-rounded critical analysis to take place; as discussed previously, students must recognise and understand film as both a commercial and an artistic product. ‘Genres are […] the ultimate meeting spaces between spectators and films within the multi-layered mediascape in which the filmmaking takes place’ (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 61). Beyond the various elements to consider surrounding commercial motivations and film as an industry, students have greater access to a film’s identity and meaning through concepts of prior knowledge, a set of expectations, and a space within which a film can be measured and interpreted; to recapitulate, genre is a creative and subjective concept, and one which also needs to be understood as an artistic phenomenon, and much debated area of film theory.

Since theorists have attempted to define genre since the 1960s (see Altman 1999: 13-14), for many, it has come to represent an opposition to the auteurist approach. Genre’s arrival into discussion in the second half on the twentieth century was in fact an intellectual move to displace author-based approaches in favour of wider social and cultural influences and the industrial nature of cinema (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 28; see also Dudley Andrew 1984: 110). But does this suggest a conflict within the nature of recent studies in Spanish cinema, which, as outlined at various points in Chapter 2 and discussed in detail in Chapter 4, often centres around the director as an auteur? Despite this approach to teaching and learning having its obstacles and, in many cases, negative results, with
regards to genre, it, in fact, reinforces the necessity of recognising an individual filmmaker’s work as a genre in itself. For example, in ‘an Almodóvar film […]’, Almodóvar-author can be thought of as a mobiliser of the diverse [genre] codes which make up his films’ (Allinson 2001: 123). Similar could of course be said for Guillermo del Toro, best known as a filmmaker of Spanish horror/fantasy, whereby the filmmaker’s name is instinctively associated with an additional specific genre category. This not only reinforces the cultural and critical sway towards matching Spanish/Hispanic filmmakers to popular film genres, but it is also a reminder of the simultaneous drive to echo the marketing strategies of other Western film industries in maximising genre’s potential to attract mass audiences, both nationally and internationally. In the US, for example, this process brings to the fore different understandings of the interaction between authorial status, generic categories, and the adherence to the label of ‘Spanishness’ in terms of the marketing of their cinematic outputs (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 47). This therefore provides a third level of genre; one based on nationality, and therefore a ‘Spanish film’, can be added to students’ interpretations of ‘traditional’ genre categories, such as, ‘comedy’, ‘horror’ etc., and also, ‘a film by “X”’.

76% (13/17) of the participating students identify genre as a factor that is, at least, ‘quite important’ in terms of them being attracted to a film. A smaller majority – 65% (11/17) - agree that genre conventions help with their understanding of a film. Genre approaches ‘have been exceptionally significant […] in establishing the popular sense of cinema as a cultural and economic institution’ (Grant 2003: xvii). Genre functions like a brand, evoking in the consumer familiar associations and tastes, and it ‘takes away the guess work of deciding what film to see’ (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: xi). In a Spanish class/seminar room setting, such ideas contain their own unique complexity, primarily because the vast majority of students will presumably have little say in the choice of film(s) being studied. Good practice involves selecting a film based not only on its educational value and relevance to a particular topic and/or specific learning objective(s), but also based on an awareness of the genre-related interests and interpretative capabilities of each cohort. For example, a highly motivated A level group may be suited to, say, Almodóvar’s La mala educación, as a narratively complex (heavily reliant on flashbacks), multi-generic (melodrama/thriller/film noir) exploration of paedophilia in the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, a low-ability GCSE group may be best equipped to approach a film, such as El orfanato, as a narratively straightforward ghost-story (comfortably remaining within the horror genre), largely set in one location (see earlier references to location-related GCSE topics), but with its own set of symbolic and metaphorical complexities, related to fundamental social and political shifts in Spain; knowledge so valuable for subsequent A level study, as set out previously. Genres are, after all, ‘specific systems of expectations and hypotheses which spectators bring with them to the cinema, and which interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process’ (Neale 2000: 31). Moreover, ‘genres allow the spectator to engage with models of representation they can recognise, understand, appreciate, and reimage, according to their own cultural codes, as they continuously negotiate the dynamic between repetition and novelty that is central to the process through which genrefication addresses them’ (Beck and Rodríguez

120 See Wright (2013: 118).
Ortega 2013: 46). Genre can enable students to interpret and appreciate a film via universally understood generic conventions - in some ways, comparable to understanding grammar concepts, and similar cross-language connections (as referred to in the previous chapter) - thus, allowing them to feel more at ease within the foreignness (in this case, ‘Spanishness’) of the films, through a sense of pre-established (genre-based) knowledge. Accepting that these cultural and cognitive processes largely go hand-in-hand for (student) spectators, they provide an ideal opportunity for assessing and comparing pre-established and post-watching notions of various aspects of Spanish identity/identities, or, at least, as students believe them to be.

Genre is about the ‘believability’ associated with the relationship between industry and audience (Altman 1999: 16), whereby ‘genre films essentially ask the audience, “Do you still want to believe this?” and popularity is the audience answering, “Yes”’ (Braudy 1977: 179). There is a ‘generic pleasure’ associated with the spectator’s anticipation of a set of codes and conventions (Altman 1999: 147). In addition to emotional connection through believing what is being seen and heard, and the pleasure enjoyed by the confidence in genre familiarity and association, as referred to earlier, genre may, therefore, be employed to steer the specific emotions of both the characters and the audience in relation to narrative and character development, and, in the case of the participating students, 76% (13/17) agree. Characters can be read as ‘custodians’ of a film’s genre, such as Agrado in Todo sobre mi madre being the exclusive custodian of both comedy and optimism in the film. Such optimism, crucial to the carrying of the comedic elements of the film, also has the essential function in the development of the other characters who are apart from the comedy, such as Manuela. Far from restricting the overall comedic identity of a film, at least in Almodóvar, this in fact intensifies the humour, as ‘the comic impact of […] brief comic asides [in other genres, such as melodrama] is greater because of the non-comedy generic context’ (Allinson 2001: 136-137). Genre has a crucial function within (foreign) film pedagogy to not just help to define and contextualise (foreign) characters, but to accentuate emotional engagement and response, frequently based on familiar, and therefore anticipated, generic conventions, or sometimes contrasting, often unexpected, genre blending.

It has been pointed out that ‘a Spanish film’ constitutes its own genre, just as ‘a French film’ or ‘a British film’ also do. However, to understand the role and significance of Spanish cinema within this larger discourse (of the complexity of Spanish identities and discontents) is one of the greatest challenges for the English-speaking spectator (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: xvii), including students in English schools and universities. When discussing films working within transcultural fields and across geopolitical borders, they become the very spaces of a variety of negotiations between different cultures and modes of cinematic address (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 46). Whilst this highlights the complexity of the pedagogical process, it is also a reminder of the very purpose of incorporating Spanish cinema into Spanish studies, that is, (in reflection of teachers’ responses and school and university curricula objectives discussed previously), to enhance students’ understanding of ‘Spanish’ as a language, and its various national identities. In the case of ‘Spanish identity’ (solely related to Spain), it has been pointed out how such categorisation is highly problematic when the
geopolitical divisions in Spain are considered. Altman (1999: 80) defies further received notions of language’s straightforward referential nature, explaining that the term, ‘nation’, proves to be anything but a single coherent concept referring to a single coherent referent, and consequently, ‘every word, every cultural artefact, remains implicitly a permanent site of conflict among multiple possible meanings and locations’. In the cases of GCSE and A level Spanish studies, according to the data gathered from participating schools and A level examiners’ reports, non-Castilian Spanish films are largely non-existent, whereas regional non-Castilian films appear quite frequently in undergraduate programmes in Spanish or Hispanic studies.

Adding to the complexity in recognising and understanding national and regional cinema as their own generic identities, Grant (2003: xx) observes that, ‘almost all national cinemas have been influenced to some degree by American genre movies’. This can certainly be said for several of the Spanish directors scrutinised within this research, perhaps none more so than for Almodóvar. ‘[Almodóvar’s] use of genre (the often wholesale borrowing of generic codes from Hollywood) is what sets [the director] apart from many of his European “art-house” peers’ (Allinson 2001: 123). Assuming that Hollywood-style filmmaking is the most familiar to students (based on some of the qualitative comments and several years of classroom experience, where students’ recognition of European stars, directors and various cinematic-related interpretative skills are directly linked to Hollywood production), can it therefore be claimed that, Almodóvar, out of all the Spanish auteurs, is the most advantageous for English classrooms? Does the director’s reliance on classic Hollywood narrative and visual style make his films seem less foreign, than, say, the celebrated works of Saura, or Erice? In reflection of the very different socio-political landscapes and related cinematic aesthetics in which these films were made, Beck and Rodríguez Ortega (2016: 3) highlight the noticeable change in genre formations in the early 1990s within Spain that was reflected in ‘shifts in generic patterns and genre formations’, citing Triana Toribio (2003: 141), who describes the ‘aesthetic and thematic break with the politically responsible cinema’. Here, there is a reminder of genre’s fluidity as an entity over time, and different genres’ varying popularity according to not just trend and cultural demand, but as a reflection of changes in social norms, boundaries and appeals. In scrutiny of Altman’s (1999: 20) claim of genre as being ‘transhistorical’, it could be argued that movements in genre trends and time-specific, genre-based visual styles within national cinemas can teach students a great deal about the mood and psyche of a film’s country of origin. One only needs to look at the very particular genre identity of explicit, sexual social comedies that many cineastes, most famously, Almodóvar, were able to show off during the Movida movement (and to some extent, still to this day). These lie in sharp contrast to the much less colourful, much more subtle (and perhaps for these reasons, less popular on school-level curricula), psycho-fantasy dramas from the mid-1970s mentioned above.

Horror deserves its own particular analysis here in light of the international popularity of Spanish horror from the 1990s to the present. Willis (2004: 237) speaks of the ‘revival of the genre’, which came partly from Filmax, such as the highly commercially successful REC films (1-4) (Balageró and Plaza 2007, 2009, Plaza 2012, Balgueró 2014), and partly from big-name profitable co-productions,
such as *El orfanato* and *Los ojos de Julia*. Leading the way however from the very beginning of the century was a director already regarded as ‘the most commercially viable Spanish filmmaker among the new generation’ (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 50): Alejandro Amenábar. Following the successes of *Tesis* (1996) and *Abre los ojos* (1997), the release of *The Others* in 2001 took the acclaim of the director to a completely new level, as the horror film enjoyed huge commercial and critical success across the world. Filmed in English, starring Nicole Kidman, and having Kidman’s then husband, Tom Cruise, on board as executive producer, Amenábar had well and truly brought Hollywood to Spain. Amenábar’s commercial success is undoubtedly rooted in the fact that he managed to capitalise on the mainstream appeal of genre films (including before *The Others*), in a country where this tradition was notoriously underexploited within the mainstream arena (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega: 2013: 50). Genre has the power to bring Spanish film to the masses, and on an international scale, just as Almodóvar did with comedy and melodrama, and more recently, del Toro with horror and fantasy. Studies of the success of twenty-first century Spanish cinema should undoubtedly turn to the creation of this new subgenre of Spanish horror/fantasy, thanks to Amenábar and del Toro primarily, with which comes an increased expectation and anticipation among domestic and international spectators for the continued production of such a popular product.

Despite this, traditional genres, such as ‘horror’, or ‘drama’, can very quickly be replaced by another method of categorisation, or perhaps better put, ‘sales category’, if deemed to be more commercially beneficial. In Fineline Features’ trailer for Amenábar’s later film, *Mar adentro* (2004), the director’s name is placed prominently in the foreground, alongside the statement, ‘acclaimed director of *The Others*’, in favour of any kind of clarification about the type of ‘traditional’ genre that the film belongs to, thus, deprivitising its ‘traditional’ genre of ‘horror’ in an effort to capitalise on Amenábar’s established ability as a filmmaker. Fineline explicitly avoids addressing the genre dissimilarity between *Mar adentro* and *The Others*: genre is thus conveniently effaced and strategically subordinated to Amenábar’s status as an auteur (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 54).

The clear genre definition of, ‘un film de Almodóvar’, denotes an entire genre itself, simultaneously emulating and effacing the example of Amenábar above (Allinson 2001: 122). Pedro Almodóvar has become an unmistakable brand of sophisticated art cinema around the world (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 44), and the brand, ‘Almodóvar’, is even favoured over the director’s full name (*ibid*: 58). Remaining with Almodóvar as an example, then, how important is it for students to have an awareness of such a genre brand? What are they to gain from recognising Almodóvar’s (or any other Spanish director’s) works as constituting their own genre? Answers can be found in non-Spanish films where auteur directors come to be used as a genre category, looking again to Hollywood, such as, ‘a Steven Spielberg film’. Such a form of categorisation may at first appear to be primarily for marketing purposes, following previous successes by the same director, although seemingly also, as a means to (self-) promote artistic individuality. For example, Quentin Tarantino’s films tend to highlight in the opening credits the place of each work in the director’s oeuvre, for example in his 2015 film, *The Hateful Eight*, the opening credits state that it is ‘The eighth film by Quentin Tarantino’. Once again,
an apparently transnational practice and, seemingly, universally understood additional method of binding several works together, suggesting that auteurship and genre identity are (internationally) accepted as being interlinked. The cultural topic at A level reinforced this notion within ‘the work(s) of a director’, as discussed previously. In the same way that spectators are able to use prior experience of comedy or horror genres as a basis for expectation, identification, emotional response and engagement, knowledge of multiple works by the same Spanish director can only enhance students’ understanding of any recurrent and/or broader historical, social or cultural representations that the director attempts to convey. In addition, an understanding of a Spanish director’s filmmaking career is, in itself, as has been discussed in Chapter 4, an important aspect of Spanish cultural study. Unfortunately however, as has been pointed out, in the case of schools, limited space in GCSE and A level curricula often make it highly challenging to expose students to multiple films by the same director.

The US trailer for Almodóvar’s Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (1988) emphasises the inseparable contact zone between the comedic and the melodramatic the film cultivates (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 56): ‘It’s a romance but it’s not about love. It’s a comedy but not everyone is laughing. It’s a place where the one thing you can expect is the unexpected.’ The trailer highlights the heavily genre-based fabric of the film, presenting it as, ‘a deliriously deranged comedy that follows no rules, spares no victims and takes no prisoners’. The US trailer for Volver (which is longer and contains more dialogue than the previous three of Almodóvar’s US trailers) displays the meeting ground between the emphasis on the ‘sellability’ of an immediately recognisable auteur-as-a-genre-in-itself and the astounding beauty and acting skills of a well-known reputed (international) star: Penélope Cruz (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 59) (see Section 5.4), whilst the Spanish trailer deals more with the other actresses; much more recognisable in a Spanish market. Almodóvar continues to succeed internationally as his films constantly negotiate a multi-semantic mélange of a variety of cinematic genres (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 60).

The idea of genre not being one fixed entity is of course far from new or unique; ‘genre hybridity has been around for as long as genre itself’ (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: xi). It has already been discussed at length how ‘a Spanish film’ can be considered a genre within itself, but it is also highly common today (and indeed, in the past) to be dealing with a multi-genre film that is also of multiple nationalities. Recently, the idea of a transnational cinema (arguably, another genre/subgenre in its own right) has gained greater currency within film studies, resulting in the establishment of a ‘post-national imaginary’ (Acland 2003:42). The commercial motivation behind the growing trend is explicitly confirmed by the production company, Fantastic Factory (under the Filmx umbrella), which aspires to make products for ‘the international film and television markets’ (filmxentertainment.com, 2007). But what about artistic motivation, and more importantly here, the educational potential of multi-genre, including, transnational, films? Qualitative comments point to a number of advantages. Firstly, a mixing/blurring of genres: ‘make it unusual and increases the chance of [students] watching it’ (QJ-HM-12); ‘[is] better as it caters for more people’ (QJ-HM-14); ‘[makes the film] more exciting and
makes [students] want to watch it’ (QJ-HM-15); ‘[gives an audience] different feelings at different times in the film’ (QJ-HM-16); ‘attracts [students] to the film and gets [them] really involved in the film’ (QJ-HM-10); ‘[is] more entertaining’ (QJ-HM-11); ‘adds more depth to the experience’ (QJ-HM-2). As far as curriculum and specification designers are concerned, the transnationality of a film appears to be largely irrelevant in the case of schools. The lack of specific assessment success criteria, as discussed in Chapter 4, has been deemed insufficient, although it would be, arguably, unrealistic to expect GCSE or even A level groups to look in detail at the transnationality of Spanish films or details behind increasing numbers in international co-productions, along with the huge amount of other demands of the courses. There is however the potential to explore the enhanced depth in representation and socio-political reference that comes from the (evidently popular) study of international co-productions such as *El laberinto del fauno*, where ‘violence in [del Toro’s] native Mexico is key to his extraordinary vision’, realised through presenting the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War through a mixture of horror, drama and fantasy (Kermode 2006).

Accepting the current prevalence of Spanish film study categorised by director/filmmaker momentarily, what impact, then, does a blurring of ‘traditional’ genres by popular filmmakers, such as historical/horror/fantasy (*El laberinto*), or melodrama/comedy/horror (ghost-story) (*Volver*) have on (student) audiences? It is useful to note that the introduction of genre into film studies (in the 1960s) allowed the investigation of both ‘standardisation’ and ‘differentiation’ across groups of films by the same director (Cook 1985: 58), and that ‘the artist’s individuality […] manifests itself only in tension with the genre within which he works’ (McConnel 1977: 10). Moreover, a ‘resistance to generic definition is born out of an acute awareness of genre, how different genres can be mixed into a hybrid product, and most importantly, how it can be enlisted as a vehicle for the distinctive expression of an accepted ‘auteur’ (Allinson 2001: 45). Almodóvar, for example, not only exploits genre conventions by making explicit reference to them, in terms of both narrative and iconography, but he also undermines them. His films can be read as being in a constant dialectic with genres - comedy, melodrama, crime - often combining elements of different genres and making explicit references to other genre film texts (Allinson 2001: 125). Genres function as markers of Almodóvar’s distinctive cinematic oeuvre and the multiple layers of intertextuality through which he connects his work with a variety of artistic practices from around the globe (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2013: 45). But rather than just promoting a director’s individuality and providing a cross-reference for narrative, characters and stylistic identity, there is a much more profound signification for students in the blurring of genres in Almodóvar’s oeuvre. The distinction between typical generic traits, such as comedy (the surprising, the improper, the unlikely and the transgressive) and other genres, which play on deviations from socio-cultural norms (satire), and deviations from aesthetic norms (parody), is particularly relevant in Almodóvar because his films coincide with a new freedom in Spain, both to express socio-cultural deviation, and to use new and more transgressive modes of presentation (Allinson 2001: 126). In ¿Qué he hecho?, for example, much of the film’s humour derives from social observation, and the element of transgression inherent in the breaking of taboos in the exhibitionist’s monologue can also be seen as satire on the newly sexually liberated Spain (Allinson 2001: 146). Such examples therefore offer a
great deal in terms of exploring, contextualising and developing students’ knowledge of Spain pre-, during and post-Francoism, where iconic works can be critiqued as much for their own particular dealings of challenging subject matter as for their effective manipulation of genre codes, traditions and boundaries.

In summary, genre has the power to cross national boundaries as an international language and set of conventions, making it an indispensable tool in the context of teaching aspects of a foreign entity, whereby students may not recognise the setting, political references and so on, but they are as equipped to understand and interpret genre patterns as a native audience. Not only does this allow students to make better sense of the film and identify more readily with the plot and the characters, but it also allows them to experience a foreign cultural product, with a basis for individual interpretation that provides a defined point of reference for style, narrative and character development, but also, as has been discussed, the filmmakers’ industrial, creative and ideological motivations, thus bringing students closer to the true identity of the film itself and, through it, the country to which it belongs. Finally, it is vital to note that, like all methods of categorising, viewing and studying art works, such as films, genres do not work identically for all audiences, since all spectators are equipped with their own diverse cultural and social codes to approach genre categories and their encounter with films is invariably dependent on them.
5.4: Stars and student reactions

This section reviews established definitions of ‘stars’/‘stardom’ and theoretical frameworks from Dyer (1979), Hayward (2006), and Gledhill (1991) (and others) in order to contextualise key star theory in relation to contemporary, Spanish film studies, primarily at GCSE, for reasons which are clarified. The discussion considers the observations of Stone (2002), Perriam (2003), and Davies (2014) on individual Spanish actors who may be considered as ‘stars’; namely, Antonio Banderas, Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem. In doing so, it is intended to establish the extent to which these actors - their performances and identities on and off screen - may affect GCSE students’ (relatively early, in most cases) perceptions of ‘Spanish’, and indeed, ‘Spain’ itself. Some theories (Maltin 2002; Chatterjee and Ravid 2003; Elberse and Eliashberg 2003; Ainslie, Drèze and Zufryden 2005) have attempted to demonstrate that stars do not necessarily have a direct bearing on the commercial or critical success of a film. However, the findings of this area of the research - gathered from the literature, and from the questionnaire responses of twelve of the author’s own GCSE Spanish students (Questionnaire K - Appendix XV) - point towards a number of crucial considerations and arguments in favour of studying Spanish cinema through its star actors (particularly at GCSE, but also more generally). Quantitative data is referred to, but only to contextualise the particular group of respondents alongside their, much more valuable, qualitative comments. Scrutiny of the key themes gathered from both the literature and the questionnaires come to frame four major areas of potential educational benefit: ‘attraction’, ‘engagement and relatability’, ‘identification’ and ‘representation’. This section therefore aims to explore the extent to which these areas of star studies can be of educational benefit to GCSE Spanish teachers and students. In doing so, direct answers to Research Question 1, Research Question 3a, and Research Question 3b are provided, although as stated, the analysis bears relevance to all levels of Spanish cinema studies, and therefore addresses elements of all five research questions, as signified.

75% (9/12) of the participating students note that stars attract them to a film, at least, ‘a little’; for the majority of the respondents, stars have a basic practical benefit in motivating them to see a cinematic work. QK-HM-1 defines a star as ‘someone who plays an important role in a film’, and QK-HM-2 similarly links the star to the playing of the ‘main character’. This latter student also suggests that the basic nature of a star’s status is reliant on previous performances; as individuals who are ‘well-known from other films’. These rather simplistic definitions of stars open up the, arguably, most obvious impact of studying a film via its star actors, that is, a creation of expectation, based on popularity and reputation. This concept also feeds into the assumption of some students that a star usually plays a central character who has significant and (often) beneficial impact on the recognisability and quality of

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122 Referring to the 1980s onwards; the time frame of the most popular works at participating institutions and of particular relevance to recent Spanish film star studies, as is made clear.
123 Selected due to their prominence on school (Cruz) and university (Banderas, Cruz and Bardem) curricula.
the film. As discussed shortly, this may in turn enhance GCSE students' perceptions of a Spanish film’s unique identity, and indeed, how good it is.

Film stars have virtually always been used as a commodity to attract audiences (Dyer 1979); they possess ‘capital value’ (Hayward 2006: 375). Several other studies specific to establishing the extent of such value have found evidence that a film’s likely cumulative weekly or opening-week revenues increase with the rank of the star talent associated with it (Faulkner and Anderson 1987; Litman and Kohl 1989; Wallace, Seigerman and Holbrook 1993; Prag and Casavant 1994; Sochay 1994; Sawhney and Eliashberg 1996; Albert 1998). To help establish GCSE students’ perceptions of star presence in Spanish cinema and what it signifies in the films they are studying, participating students are asked, ‘Which Spanish actors do you know?’. 77% (8/12) note, ‘Penélope Cruz’, and 25% (3/12) specifically cite her performance in Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stanger Tides (Marshall 2011), 25% (3/12) cite Zoolander 2 (Stillter 2016) and 42% (5/12) cite The Brothers Grimsby (Leterrier 2016). One student (QK-HM-4) also mentions that they know of Cruz from her ‘modelling pictures’, and another (QK-HM-6), from ‘celebrity magazines’. The films mentioned point towards a Hollywood dominance in terms of recognisability, whereas the latter comments highlight the various platforms on which stardom is thought to exist; star images are multimedia and also intertextual, echoing the notion of stars ‘here, there and everywhere’ (Hayward 2006: 379). 42% (5/12) of the students mention, ‘Javier Bardem’, and 75% (9/12) and 42% (5/12) of the cohort specifically refer to his performances in Mar adentro and Skyfall (Mendes 2012), respectively. None mention Antonio Banderas, although subsequent discussion between students and the teacher about roles Banderas has played reveals that several students have in fact seen (or heard) Banderas in films, such as Puss in Boots (Miller 2011) and The Mask of Zorro (Campbell 1998). It is not possible to fully establish why none of the students are as familiar with Banderas in name at least. However, it may be that Banderas’ most famous performances are in adult-themed (and rated) films, such as La ley del deseo (Almodóvar 1987) and Philadelphia (Demme 1993), which, incidentally, were released long before the participating students were born. However, from the evidence gathered, it can be suggested that the students’ ability to associate Spanish actors with other roles, and indeed, other forms of media, combined with an understanding of concepts of commercial value, via professional success and cultural popularity, provide a significant, although easily underestimated, learning mechanism at GCSE. Firstly, the mapping of the most famous and/or celebrated Spanish actors has its own place in addressing the expectations of ‘Theme 1: Identity and culture’ (AQA 2016b). Secondly, as exemplified above, stars provide a vehicle for familiarity for students in a subject that is often criticised for its alienating sense of ‘otherness’, particularly at GCSE, as pointed out in Section 2.2. Thirdly, stars provide an intertextual point of reference, which may in turn help to enhance engagement with an individual film and with Spanish cinema more generally, and even, as argued later, students’ ability to identify with what they are watching/studying. Moreover, a closer consideration of the attractions associated with some of Spain’s best-known film stars - the roles they have played, their media appearances, aspects of their personal life, and what, collectively, they have come to represent -

125 See also Morin (1957) and Barthes (1966) for the founding stages of film stardom.
leads to more profound understandings of domestic and foreign perceptions of Spain’s image regarding gender and sexuality, as is now explored.

Several studies of the film industry have identified a direct link between star appeal and sex appeal. Others have identified how the simple act of ‘watching’ faces and bodies on screen inherently permits, and often encourages, an intrinsic link between stars and sex, sexuality, desire, and voyeurism. The study of such an aspect of the (star) actor-spectator relationship in a Spanish, historical context creates an apt GCSE classroom opportunity to develop students’ awareness of Spain’s considerable, although varied, restrictions in matching much of the rest of the Western world’s cultural and social, more explicit dealings of sex and sexuality on screen in the second-half of the twentieth century. Franco’s death in 1975 enabled Spain’s artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers and performers to match, and for some, supersede, the modern Spanish and (Western) international hunger for a testing of gender of sexuality boundaries on screen. Studies in the relationship between star, sexual identity, and attraction provides a fitting GCSE classroom context for exposing students to the evolving social liberation of Spain as expressed through cultural phenomenon, most notably in relation to La Movida. This is in line with the 2016 (AQA 2016b) GCSE specification’s (11) requirement for students to, ‘deduce meaning from a variety of […] texts, involving […] authentic material addressing a wide range of contemporary and cultural themes’. A focus on such important movements in recent Spanish political, social and cultural history also prepares students well for the expectations of the A level. Section 4.3 includes a wide range of evidence to suggest that the GCSE has been failing to sufficiently prepare students for the demands of subsequent study (at A level), particularly with regards to the cultural content. In the reformed A level, students are assessed on their understanding of ‘artistic culture in the Hispanic world’ and ‘aspects of political life in Hispanic society’. Additionally, the A level study of a Spanish-speaking film demands a ‘critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered’, which, based on the lists of prescribed films, often requires students to be able to link the film they are studying to broader political, social and artistic movements in the Hispanic world occurring in the twentieth/twenty-first century. Often this is in relation to civil war and/or dictatorship (in Spain - El laberinto del fauno, Las 13 rosas - and in Mexico - Abel) and directors synonymous with the cultural revolution during/following the Transition years (Almodóvar) - many of whom have become at least as famous as the stars in the films.

Although not immediately recognised by the participating GCSE students, it is recommended for teachers approaching star-related studies to look initially at the career of Antonio Banderas as a prime example of contemporary understandings of what constitutes a ‘Spanish star’. Such groundwork enables teachers to relay aspects of Banderas’ well-documented stardom, as a means of standard-

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126 See DeCordova (1990: 141).
127 See Freud (1949) and Mulvey (1975).
128 Conversely, see Higginbotham’s (1988: x) description of Juan Antonio Bardem and Luis Berlanga’s ‘cinema of countermyth in the 1950s and 1960s which […] conveyed their ideas indirectly by subtle analogy, pastiche, illusion, and inference’.
setting for those that followed, as is outlined below. It is also worth noting that Banderas stars in several of the films studied at the participating universities, and so, again, the GCSE is in a position to lay the foundations for the more challenging studies of Hispanic cultural identity, including key ‘star’ figures possibly to come. Banderas rose to fame in Spain in the 1980s in the films of Almodóvar - such as Matador - studied on the University of Liverpool’s module, ‘Spanish and Latin America on screen’ - and Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios - studied on the University of Manchester's modules, ‘Spanish National Cinema’ and ‘Madrid on Screen’. Soon after these performances, Banderas became cemented as a ‘sex object’ and ‘Spain’s best-looking actor’ (Perriam 2003: 65). The significance of any GCSE level understanding of Banderas’ place in Spanish cinema at this time should go beyond voyeuristic admirations of his good looks and an appreciation of his talent as an actor. Banderas’ appearance, performances and rapidly increasing stardom (much helped by the press) were ‘stimuli to admiration, envy, excitement and to speculative fantasies about meeting, caressing, submitting to, or being the people Antonio Banderas represents’ (Perriam 2003: 50). And it is precisely here where GCSE students are able to learn the most from Banderas’ fertile star status, in that for many Spaniards (and some international audiences), the actor became a vehicle for idealised and idolised versions of Spaniards themselves.

To embark on a teacher-set/student-led historical overview of Banderas’ career - suitable for a series of homework tasks or a classroom research project - would firstly reveal that audiences (still largely Spanish) at the early stage of his career were in awe of the actor’s star quality and his ability to evoke all of the feelings and desires listed above. When the roles Banderas was playing and his behaviour off-screen are studied, they indicate both a playing-up to, and contradiction of, ideas of a specific personal and sexual identity (see Perriam 2003: 48), and one which aimed to confuse notions of (Spanish) masculinity and sexuality in a post-patriarchal Spanish society. In both La ley del deseo (1987) and ¡Átame! (1989), Banderas plays a character (called Antonio) with psychotic tendencies, who becomes fixated on making other characters (one male (La ley), one female (Átame)) fall in love with him, played out through eroticised images of Banderas’ body and exaggerated, yet confused, masculinity. Any class/seminar room overview of such roles, along with Banderas’ ‘performances’ in the media, reminds students of the rapidly changing perceptions of how ‘the Spanish male’ was artistically being defined, and of the significance of considering how such roles can be viewed on screen as reflective of an evolving (Spanish) national consciousness. Perriam (2003: 65) explains that, via the reinforcing of Banderas’ appeal as the ideal male, positioned just on the right side of narcissism, the masculine ideal was simultaneously threatened through the destabilising objectification that went with it. Perriam (2003: 47) continues: “‘Antonio’ [referring to both the actor and the characters he plays can therefore be interpreted as signifying both] ‘confusion and complexity’. Thus, the process of this objectification of an iconic, emerging Spanish male star, according to at least some perspectives, aims to reflect the real life shifts in accepted notions of.

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131 See also Pierce (2011: 120) and Inigo (2007).
132 Both works incorporated for reference purposes only and as an additional case-study within educators’ star-related research.
gender and sexuality identity going on in Spain. To this end, it adds the fruitful dimension to Spanish star studies of late twentieth century works in the form of engaging GCSE (including, ideally, the disengaged) students in political, social and cultural change, and in doing so, makes the content of such foreign products appear more ‘relatable’, as is now explored.

The writing above has suggested that a gaining of prior knowledge (from previous roles and off-screen star persona), a capacity for intertextual reference, and an awareness of cultural representations of shifts in society (and politics) is afforded to GCSE students through learning about Spanish film stars’ identities and the various modes of interpreting them. It is now necessary to establish the extent to which the study of such Spanish stars lends itself to enhancing engagement at GCSE - highlighted in previous sections as a significant cause for concern - via, as explored below, a sense of relatability, and within it, a sense of ‘believing’ what is on screen. 83% (10/12) of the participating students claim that stars help them to engage more with a film, and 50% (6/12) classify the extent of this increased engagement as, ‘quite a lot’. Stars are seen by Hayward (2006: 377) as, ‘illusionism’, or, ‘appearance’, where the star functions as a ‘mediator between the real and the imaginary’ (381). For Dyer (1979: 20) meanwhile, stars are like characters, in that they are ‘representing people’, although additionally they are also real people. It is precisely this dual identity, and juxtaposition between two separate, yet inevitably merging worlds that makes the potential of stars playing characters and the subsequent impact on a student audience such a useful teaching and learning tool at GCSE. Dyer (1979: 20) argues persuasively that knowledge of film stars as people in fact makes them ‘more believable than just characters in stories’, and therefore, the broader value embodied by a star is ‘harder to reject as “impossible” or “false”; spectators allow themselves to believe in the character and their action because they accept the person playing them as real. As an example of how this may work in practice, it is recommended for GCSE students to watch Almodóvar’s 2009 film, Los abrazos rotos, in which Penélope Cruz plays the character of Lena; the lead actor in filmmaker, Harvey Kaine’s (Lluís Homar) last directorial feature. By the time of the film’s release, Cruz had cemented her position as both a Spanish and Hollywood star (as discussed earlier), which provides a noble opportunity to evaluate Cruz’s stardom - including an awareness of her equally famous personal life - alongside her performance in this film. A direct linking here within the consciousness of the student spectator between actor and character, both semi-biographical (her playing an actress, for example) and otherwise, can be thought of as a natural and complex process in ‘believing’, and also relating to what it presented on screen. But, arguably, the greatest significance of studying Cruz’s performances as ‘a performer’ - an actress in Los abrazos rotos, a singer in Volver - lies in students’ appreciation of performances extending into the ‘character’s private life (Cruz). This is particularly significant if ‘performance is [pitched as] an integral part of [Spanish] female identity, and even the idea that (Spanish) women (still) survive in a patriarchal society by adopting a deliberate and possibly exaggerated [through the various “roles” that they play] femininity’ (Davies 2014: 96).

An additional, noteworthy component to carefully interpreting Spanish star status at GCSE concerns students’ recognition of how it may lead to a greater familiarity with debates surrounding Spanish
national representation. Gledhill (1991:214) highlights that, with stars, ‘the real person’ and ‘the reel person’ are followed by ‘the star’s persona’ (as referred to above). The star persona of Cruz - to return to her - can be firstly mapped out through her reputation as a desirable, talented and highly acclaimed actress, along with other professional and personal roles as model (as picked out by one student noted above), charity worker, wife and mother. Incidentally, subsequent teacher-led discussion with participating students of Cruz’ private life reveals that some GCSE students are aware of Cruz’ previous romantic relationship with Tom Cruise and her marriage to Javier Bardem. A second and equally useful dimension to interpreting Cruz’ star persona comes via the evolving variety of roles she has played, which mark her progression as an actress, as well as a maturing Spanish woman. These range from innocent, yet sexually-charged teenager, Silvia, in Bigas Luna’s Jamón Jamón, to single-mum, Magda, who is fighting breast cancer, in Medem’s Ma ma (2015). Via the accumulative repertoire of roles she plays, both on and off the big screen, as listed above, added to her countless interviews on television, in magazines, and of course, appearances in TV adverts (most famously for Loréal), Cruz provides an ideal case-study for mapping the identity of a global star persona. In doing so, interesting questions are raised about the extent to which true Spanish star status relates to transnational careers; yet one which remains authentically Spanish. Citing Stephen Frears, who directed Cruz in The Hi-Lo Country (1998), Davies (2014: 104) refers to the ‘very European quality of Cruz’. However, the actress’ much celebrated (and much publicised) performance as flamenco-singing Raimunda, from the unmistakably Spanish rural region of La Mancha in Volver leaves no doubt that Cruz (and Raimunda) can only be from Spain, thus, further enforcing Cruz’ various performances as believable, relatable, and also, identifiable.

Some students identify and place value on the human and/or off-screen identities of actors with ‘star’ status, such as QK-HM-8, who describes a star as, ‘a common person who is exceptional at acting’. The reference to ‘common’ implies that, for this student at least, a (Spanish) star is, to some degree, just like them; reminiscent of Dyer and McDonald’s observation (1998: 22) that ‘stars are identification figures, people like you and me - embodiments of typical ways of behaving’. If this perspective is shared by other student spectators, then their ability to relate to, or perceive difference between, themselves and the foreign (Spanish) individuals viewed on screen (as both actor and character) makes for interesting comparison and contrast in GCSE classwork focused on national, cultural and, more specifically, cinematic, representation. It may therefore be argued that the ability of the (English school) student to relate to the (Spanish) character is significantly enhanced via their extended knowledge of the actor playing that character, and that such a process results in enhanced engagement and empathy. 92% (11/12) of the participating students support this idea by expressing that stars allow them to identify more with the characters, at least, ‘a little’, with three quarters of the cohort noting, ‘quite a lot’. Hayward (2006: 382) describes how ‘the screen is analogous to the mirror into which the spectator peers, and has a momentary identification with that image (the star-just-like-us). Then the spectator perceives difference, and finally, the spectator recognises themself as a

134 Medem’s oeuvre is studied at Durham University on a module entitled, ‘Spanish National Cinema’. 
135 See also Barker (2005).
perceiving object, or voyeur. Equally enlightening is King's (1985:37) statement that, 'the star represents the "host culture" of which she or he is a part and with which the spectator identifies'. To relate this to Antonio Banderas' career - to return to him - the actor managed to reach out to a wide audience of both male and female spectators, evidently, in part, as a sex symbol (as discussed earlier) fetishised by heterosexual female and homosexual male audiences. It was additionally his 'rebel biker' persona and 'affinity with glamour' which may also have been attractive, or identifiable, as desired attributes in a (sexual) partner to young straight women and gay men' (Perriam 2003: 50).
Young men generally would have been able to identify with his ' burgeoning control as a personality over the narrative of his life', and the aspired 'cockiness and glamour' lived out through his film performances and life in the public eye (Perriam, ibid). But the study of Spanish stars in this regard also has the potential to allow GCSE students to identify beyond the star themselves, namely, with the various changing aspects of Spanish cultural or social identity of the Spanish nation(s) or regions. This is inferred by QK-HM-4, who notes that, 'stars in Spanish films can tell [students] a lot about what different Spanish people are, or were, like'. Here, there is an indication of a consciousness (also alluded to earlier) of the perception - shared by Perriam (2003) and Triana Toribio (2003) - that Spanish stars are often believed to represent the (stereotype) typical, or even, ideal, national (Spanish) citizen.136 The teacher-led encouragement of recognising, processing and evaluating the identification processes involved in Spanish (film) star studies is therefore highly recommended as a strategy for developing GCSE students' own opinions on the multitude of perspectives related to what Spain and Spaniards can, and even ought to, represent.

It has been pointed out that several of the participating GCSE students highlight an association between stars and acting quality. Reminiscent of studies, such as that carried out by Ravid (1999), who classifies stars based on, among other things, whether they have been nominated for, or won, an Academy Award, or have participated in a top-grossing film in the previous year, several students explicitly link stardom to commercial/critical fame and prizes. QK-HM-3, for example, describes a star as, 'a famous actor who appears in several good films'; QK-HM-4 defines a film star as someone who is 'famously known for quite a lot of good films'; QK-HM-5 points to individuals who have 'won awards'; QK-HM-6 quantifies, 'one or more awards', and QK-HM-7 equates a star to being 'an actor who has won numerous awards'. Almost all of the participating students - 92% (11/12) - describe the role of stars in defining the identity of a film as, at least, 'quite important', and half of the students (6/12) quantify it as, 'very important'. Turning to theoretical proposals for how the representative quality of stars may link to revelations about genre, character and plot, Hayward (2006: 376) describes how 'films are vehicles for stars just as stars are vehicles for film genres'. In reference to the classification of 'traditional' genres, one student (QK-HM-6) summarises that, 'stars can indicate whether a film is likely to be a comedy, a drama or a romantic film...'. However, as discussed at length in the previous section, definitions of 'genre' go far beyond such categories. For example, a film starring Penélope Cruz may become known as, 'a Penélope Cruz film', or, 'a Penélope Cruz Spanish film', or, 'a Penélope Cruz Spanish comedy', as in some ways indicative of a form of

expectation regarding the film viewing experience; perceptions which of course differ between each spectator. But what might the benefit be of such categorisation and linking between (Spanish) stars and genre for GCSE students? Firstly, it may be used as part of interpreting some of the key film studies processes already discussed with regards to attraction (from the physical to the broader areas of fan-base and, of course, admiration of acting talent and praised performances). Secondly, it can add a further element to the teaching and learning tools employed to maximise engagement and/or enhance the relatability/believability of the story (in part based on an acceptance of the star as a real person). This combination of enhanced familiarity through star persona, and their connection to different genres, may therefore provide a vehicle for further enhanced identification and raised understanding of intended representation; an element which has historically been lacking, as highlighted by the A level examiners cited in Section 4.3.

The association of stars (as actor and character) as part of mise-en-scène has been a vital element of the legacy A level assessment, where many students wrote and/or spoke about ‘the cinematic techniques’ of the filmmaker. The reformed specifications move away from a purely filmmaker-centric perspective (as discussed earlier), although specimen essay titles still demonstrate an importance given to an evaluation of casting, characterisation, acting style and individual performances (in conjunction with direction). But it is essential to emphasise that any pre-established identity of the star - subjective to each individual, from the student to the filmmaker - is in direct correlation with what a film (or filmmaker) may be trying to say; that is, it is an artistic representation, and it can never be anything more.\textsuperscript{137} If GCSE students are to be fully capable of forming their own views on such philosophical ideas - arguably, more relevant now than ever in an increasingly technology- and celebrity-obsessed society - it is recommended for teachers to ensure that their students are sufficiently equipped with the appropriate skills to do so. These skills include the ability to understand critical arguments and articulate their own critical opinions surrounding the place of a star in a given Spanish film, and their impact on the work as an artistic, national and authentic product, but also as material they are studying to somehow enhance their learning of ‘Spanish’, and all that the term may involve.

For Dyer (1979: 8), ‘stars have a privileged position in the definition of social roles and types’ [which] must have real consequences in terms of how people believe they can and should behave’. Following Dyer’s theory, it could be argued that GCSE students are more likely to develop or adapt their perceptions of a (Spanish) nation, based on aspects of their knowledge and experiences of that nation’s most famous individuals on screen\textsuperscript{138} through both their portrayals of certain characters and, as discussed earlier, details of their personal life. However, there is a significant risk of

\textsuperscript{137} See Bazin (1958): the ‘myth of total cinema’.
\textsuperscript{138} See Lippi Green (1997: 81).
stereotyping,\textsuperscript{139} should Dyer’s theory be followed without caution and, crucially, the appropriate skills to ‘teach’ film, as outlined below. It is also explored below how overt stereotyping may not necessarily be entirely negative,\textsuperscript{140} in part because, as demonstrated below, Spanish cinema has a long and fruitful history of using overt stereotyping as a means to explore and subvert both Spain’s view of itself and foreign perceptions of it as an often much too over-simplified nation.\textsuperscript{141}

To help understand any potential, specific, nationally representative value of paying special attention to stars in foreign cinema studies, it is useful to consider Hayward’s (2006: 380) remarks, that stars are ‘endowed with national iconicity and as such have cultural value’. She goes on to say that they are ‘signs of indigenous cultural codes: gestures, words, intonations, attitudes, postures [and that] all of these separate one nation’s stars from another’s’ (376). For Hayward, a generalised sense of appearance, physicality, movement, personality, and possibly, relationships, is afforded to spectators via on screen stars. Although this theory is problematic, as outlined below, several years of professional experience suggest that the seeking of answers to questions about what Spanish (and Latin American) people are ‘really like’ is a top priority for the majority of students. It is also vital to capitalise on the increasing fan-base for Spanish/Latino popular culture among teenagers in the UK (and in the United States), which is largely centred on performing artists (and, arguably, sports stars, particularly footballers) who manage to cement their identity as truly, transnational, or, ‘global’ stars.\textsuperscript{142} Much of the data considered in Chapter 4 and in this chapter supports the claim that Spanish cinema provides a most accessible and effective platform for an authentic exposure to portrayals of what Spain and Spaniards can be ‘really like’. However, an orthodox following of such claims and any tendency to be categoric is likely to lead to over-simplistic (stereotyped) generalisations - precisely what the most responsible MFL studies ought to avoid - and as a possible consequence, a sense of increased alienation between the character/star and the student spectator.

It is also important to note that the most operative teaching and learning of national identity involves a steering away from absolutions based on one-off, or even collective, examples of star performances; a significant problem highlighted by A level examiners (Section 4.3). Aside from ensuring enhanced attainment, this is needed to emphasise the effects of, and in doing so, discourage, stereotyping as a vehicle for ‘comparative judgements that people experience as absolute’ (Triandis 1994: 138).\textsuperscript{143} The same can be said for a direct following of Klapp’s (1954: 56) problematic theory of stars as being accurately representative of social types; ‘the good Joe, the tough guy, the pin-up, the rebel, the independent woman’, in other words, the promotion of (a) shared, recognisable and easily grasped image(s) of how people in society can be identified. There are a number of critics of Klapp’s claims;

\textsuperscript{139} For succinct definitions of stereotyping, see: Allport (1954: 191); Labov (1972: 314). For an in-depth theoretical study highlighting the dangers of national assumptions and generalisations based on cultural products, see: Shusterman (2002); Hewstone and Giles (1997: 271).
\textsuperscript{140} See Allport (1954: 191).
\textsuperscript{141} For details, see Inigo (2006: 1).
\textsuperscript{142} See, for example, Wright (2014). \url{https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/09/spanish-more-students-learn-gcse-languages-latino-culture}
\textsuperscript{143} See also Dyer (2002).
notably, Evans and Hesmonhalgh (2005: 70), who highlight that the theorist ‘does not explore the sources of social types’, and that he appears to see these types as exclusively ‘positive and useful’. Rather than wholly dismiss Klapp’s and others’ claims (made above) however, an alternative perspective is to regard the social types played out in Spanish films as a means of (artistic) self-reflection and, dependent on the film, regional and/or national (artistic) representation relevant to the time and circumstances in which the film is set and made. GCSE students’ ability (facilitated by the teacher) to scrutinise both the casting and performances of individual starring actors can only enhance Spanish teaching and learning pursuits. These include the stances of the filmmaker - historically crucial at A level, although still seen as critical, as previously discussed - but also, the native audience, on where such types fit in, or indeed, do not fit in, to the non-cinetamatically constructed identity/identities of the home nation at one time or another.

‘Stars function as reflectors of the time and as signs to be reflected into society’ (Hayward 2006: 380). Looking at many of the Spanish works on the various modules at the participating universities, it could be claimed that analysis of the cinema emerging from La Movida from the early 1980s, for example, allows students to experience the sexuality-infused cultural overhaul played out through a new generation of Spanish stars and sex symbols. For many, as discussed, such figures aimed to reflect a similarly overhauled Spanish society. Returning the discussion to the highest profile filmmaker of the Movida and, once again, to the original male star of Almodóvar’s oeuvre, Kinder (1997: 3) describes how Almodóvar’s deployment of Antonio Banderas’ energy and magnetism was so successful that it ‘established a mobile sexuality as the new cultural stereotype for a hyper-liberated Socialist Spain’. Perriam (2003: 49) echoes Kinder’s somewhat privileged positioning of Banderas, describing the actor as a ‘key part of the bricolage and radical camp aesthetic of the Movida […] soon to become an icon of a moment of social and cultural change’. Looking again at Banderas’ portrayal of Ángel in Matador, as an example of actors taking on characters (usually male) of unstable identity (Perriam: 2003: 47), it can be read as highly reflective of the nation’s redefinition of gender and sexuality during the Transition years, as also alluded to earlier. Ángel struggles to accept his homosexuality, partly, at least, due to the suffocating control of his mother - a member of Opus Dei - to the point where he (unsuccessfully) attempts to rape the girlfriend of his idol (and subject of erotic fantasy) to try to prove his (heterosexual) masculinity. Further demonstration of Almodóvar’s bitter twist on gender roles in Spain during these years can be studied in Banderas’ portrayal of Ricky in ¡Atame!. Ricky kidnaps, ties up, punches and convinces his victim, Marina (Victoria Abril), to fall in love with him. In doing so, he expresses his madness in terms of a sincere adhesion to patriarchy and heterosexuality that is ‘wholly correlative with the supposedly sane dictum of the Catholic Church’ (Stone 2002: 4). The careful study of the character(s), performance(s) and growing star persona of Banderas - associated with a very obvious, and very Spanish sense of, masculinity (as discussed earlier) - reveals a cultural critique of the perversions and dangers of a Fascist patriarch and almighty powerful religious order insanely paranoid about a sexually free and gender-balanced modern society. To this end, it is highly recommended to create GCSE classroom activities aimed at mapping Spanish social, political and cultural evolution in parallel with Spanish star studies relevant to this pivotal time. In many cases, such work at this level
is urgently needed to increase the cohort’s exposure to ideas and debates of a similar level of complexity and depth of meaning to those covered in other GCSE subjects; a major factor in deterring students from studying Spanish at A level, as alluded to earlier. For those students who do choose Spanish at A level, which now involves topics such as, ‘Traditional and modern values’, which includes, ‘The influence of the Catholic Church’, and, ‘Machoism and Feminism’ (AQA), the laying of such foundations at GCSE would surely better prepare students for the more stimulating and more challenging demands to come.

It was the ‘sexual content of the cinema (played out by stars), both real and, worse, imagined, that had alarmed Franco’s doomy clergy into setting up their board of film censors’[...] actors that an audience liked looking at became objects of dangerous desire [until] the freedom that followed brought an amnesty on taboos’ (Stone 2002: 4). A discourse of changing attitudes to sex and sexuality emerged via the films of directors who worked repeatedly with new stars such as Banderas and Abril, and then Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz; sex symbols whose signification is, as discussed earlier, specific to Spain’s dramatic evolution since Franco. Jamón Jamón is a film that ‘return[s] to traditional sexual stereotyping’, but one which ought to be viewed as ‘satirical’ (Stone 2002: 13). In such case, teachers are encouraged to explore interpretations of the extreme machismo of Bardem (and, arguably, others), as non-negative stereotyping, whereby it exaggerates clichés of Spanishness in order to vindicate them.144

It is recommended to spend class time observing Bardem’s status seven years after Jamón Jamón. At that point, as a firmly established actor with a variety of performances (and awards) under his belt, and in roles often concerned with portrayals of changing perceptions of masculinity, Bardem’s private life was increasingly in the public eye. Reinforcing once again the interconnected real and ‘reel’ life, and the intertextual (drawing on previous roles and performances)145 star identity of Bardem, Perriam (2003: 104-105) looks at how the actor’s performance as David in Carne Trémula - taught on the University of Manchester’s module, ‘Madrid on Screen - ‘draws with considerable autonomy on his own performance of masculinity under stress for facets of his character’s motivations and behaviour’. Here, Perriam draws on the comments of Smith (2000: 183-186), who observes that, along with the performances of José Sancho (who plays Sancho) and Liberto Rabal (who plays Víctor) in Carne trémula, Almodóvar makes a ‘surprising [...] rediscovery of masculinity [...] which links to a new concern with character, psychological, social and historical depth’. Although not suitable for a full screening at GCSE, a thorough understanding of this film is recommended for teachers and students aiming to gain a wider perspective on pre-twenty-first century cinematic representations of gender shifts in Spain, particularly regarding masculinity. This film is also in a strong position to provide fresh ideas for class/seminar room discussion about such issues in a comparative sense almost ten years after Jamón Jamón, and the Almodóvar melodramas of the 1980s discussed previously.

145 See also Perriam (2003: 108).
It is clear that the process of defining what is meant by, ‘a Spanish film star’, for the GCSE student is simultaneously as complex and enlightening as any attempt to define ‘Spanish identity’. Pursuits in both definitions share the inevitable movement away from a simple ‘one nation’ concept, but rather, evoke crossings into regional and international perceptions of ‘Spanish’ stardom, from clichéd representations of rural Spanish life, to the Spaniard who becomes the latest go-to ‘Latin star’, to the Spanish star who only truly emerges following transnationalism. The importance of GCSE students recognising that Spanish film stars share a globally assumed involvement in other industries and forms of media has been highlighted, and particularly in relation to their own (and others’ own) star-persona creation. It has been explained how a mapping of this process encourages GCSE students to gain a fundamental appreciation of both individual acting stars’ and filmmakers’ motives in star persona constructions, but also the national and/or regional industrial, social and cultural objectives behind the formation of Spanish film stars in particular. Most useful to the GCSE classroom in this case is how the analysis of Spanish stars - the characters they play, the films they perform in, their media appearances and revelations in their personal life - can inform GCSE students about changes in how certain Spaniards, or others, seem to want to project ideas of what it means to be Spanish. Finally, the period of Transition - a key component of the teaching and learning of recent Spanish history, and more generally, the shaping of Spain as it is today - has repeatedly been highlighted as particularly poignant, whereby revolutionised portrayals of stardom on and off screen lead to various enlightening interpretations of a newly liberated, exploratory and constantly re-self-establishing social and cultural identity.
Conclusion

It is judged that all five research questions have been adequately addressed. Ideally, even more schools, universities and respondents could have been included in order to further validate the claims made. However, the conclusions drawn within each section - especially those in direct response to the data analyses - are deemed to have achieved the much needed collation of core existing research, theories and methodologies, and a previously, relatively unheard student/educator voice, as put forward in the Introduction and Methodology chapter. Dealing with three such broad and varying stages of Spanish education (GCSE, A level and undergraduate) proved to be decidedly challenging, both in terms of confining the material and analyses to principal components (which were themselves tricky to determine), and in moving between each in the analyses as seamlessly and informatively as possible. Similarly, narrowing the most pertinent themes within school and university-led Spanish cinema studies proved to be difficult due to the wide variety of films involved, particularly at undergraduate level. And indeed, it is the combination of the educational elements, the film studies elements and the Spanish studies elements that has posed the greatest challenge of all. It is felt that this research project has been highly ambitious to incorporate and attempt to (equally) unify such vast and varying academic disciplines – key to the research project’s unique contribution to the research field. Due to the ambitious intentions of the thesis and the scope of each individual research field incorporated, it is perhaps the case that entirely sufficient depth is not given to one angle or the other. However, in large part, under the word and time constraints, and due to the ambitious nature noted, the outcomes are believed to be both illuminating and useful for future educators and students of Spanish, as confirmed below. Following a summary conclusion to the research, the five principal research are answered directly within this Conclusion. Responses to Research Question 1 are provided throughout the remainder of the Conclusion, although Research Questions 2-5 require their own sections, as is made clear. It is pointed out where the outcomes of the research aim directly to lead to enhanced practice via necessary contact with the DfE, Ofqual and exam boards. It is also identified where and how the sharing of research-led investigation and practice in the developing field, such as that provided by the research outcomes of this PhD project, is able to provide educators with the confidence, professional support and necessary theoretical and practical frameworks to make a total success of Spanish film education, and indeed, for educators to make their own, subsequent, related contributions to wider field of Spanish pedagogy.

The Methodology chapter set out the details of the various research methods selected, and precisely, from where and for what purpose each method has been employed. As outlined above, the somewhat complex methodology is considered to have been largely successful, although it may be concluded that a smaller selection of questionnaires with larger, proportional cohorts of respondents would have allowed for more to be made of quantitative data analysis. Chapter 2 opens by establishing the existing core thinking on Spanish film pedagogy. Section 2.1 provides a curriculum-based framework from which educators are able to build. The chapter uncovers the core and recurring perspectives on Spanish as an academic subject – its popularity, its precise value, its rolling battles - the evolution
of Spanish film pedagogy in recent decades – that related to a national cinema of deepening fertility and associated scholarly activity, the resulting impact of technological advancement and dependency, a growing recognition of (Spanish) film’s role in developing intercultural awareness - and then, the shape of where and how teaching and learning related to Spanish cinema is facilitated by schemes of work, specifications and module aims. Patterns emerge early in the charting of recurring works, filmmakers and themes. Almodóvar and del Toro stand out particularly, although sometimes for different reasons, as does Erice, as is then explored further in the chapters that follow, where evolving perspectives on national identities remain at the heart of various studies related to the Civil War, Francoism, the Transition, and then, specifics of gender and sexual representation, locational (spatial) comparisons and social issues. A vast array of evidence-supported benefits are outlined, from the familiarity to students afforded by film (or video), through to the development of intercultural competence and skills in critical thinking and analysis (details noted below). The third section of the chapter captures the essences of teaching Spanish sociocultural identity via the works of particular filmmaker; namely, Almodóvar and del Toro, as two of the most prominent cineastes on the curricula. This is achieved in a literature review and extended, cinematic analysis of three works; a process which (re)emphasises the recurring traits noted above, but opens new depths for educators to explore regarding national cinematic production, the exploitation of particular filmmakers, stars and works as national brands, the maturing of characterisation, filmic techniques and genre conventions, and again, social preoccupations within poignantly defined settings and locations. An examination of literacies related to images, cinema and the multimodal processes involved in foreign film analysis opens the third chapter, and frames the associated theory and practice as essential foundations in any profound, informed and truly responsible approach to the meaning-making and interpretation sides of film pedagogy; pitched in direct conflict with unclear statutory GCSE subject content (established via a public record, documentary analysis) , largely void of sufficient related training for A level and beyond. The author aims to use the information and evidence gathered during this PhD project to put forward proposals for change and improvement regarding the curriculum design of Spanish. It is intended to build further on research-led evidence that can be transmitted to exam boards, Ofqual and the DfE, via professional forums, such as the Independent Schools’ Modern Languages Association, of which the author is a Committee member. Section 3.2 focuses on the much cited, Matador and Jamón Jamón, as case-studies to put forward pedagogical approaches to aesthetic, thematic and intertextual deconstruction, and where such ventures lead to discoveries about Spanish cineastes’ motivations regarding the redefinition of gender roles, the exaggeration of national stereotypes, and the creation of a self-composed self-conformity. These case-studies provide solid examples for educators seeking to extract and execute a maximum amount of sociocultural learning potential, particularly from a representative, symbolic and aesthetic point of view, from the cinematic works used as part of the enhancement of students’ Spanish studies. Chapter 3 closes with an informative study into commonalities associated with child-centred Spanish cinema and the specific implications for the child/adolescent student spectator; an additional, thematic-based framework that educators may elect to rely on. From the generic – identification, empathy, enhanced understanding - to the Spanish studies-specific – the psycho-complexities of the Civil War (during and after), socio-political discourse
surrounding (conscious) memory loss and the grieving of ‘lost children’, Spanish film’s role in baring acute present-day social ills and related socio-political response, how (and why) the child is framed against representations of ‘reality’, fantasy and horror – a wide variety of illuminating directions, led by students’ (questionnaire) responses and indispensable literature (particularly, Wright (2013)) are assembled for educators and students embarking on any profound study of such works, or/alongside the study of cultural theory related to Spanish children. The majority of the data analysis occurs in Chapter 4, where the spread of questionnaires and variety of respondent groups provide direct answers to Research Questions 1-5. At GCSE, direct calls are initiated (and will be made to educators and exam boards via teachers’ forums and exam board training events) to explicitly incorporate Spanish cinema studies alongside topical, largely, language-based, work. The lack of direct reference to cinema (or cultural products generally, with the exception of literature) in DfE subject content guidance and course specifications conflicts with student interest and demand; a weakness that the author also intends to address in his role at ISMLA, and more generally. Missed opportunity arises as the core message, particularly when the views of trainee teachers are engaged. The cultural topic is found to have been a positive step forward at A level in terms of engagement, comprehension development and exposure to central sociocultural themes pertinent to (a) certain Spanish-speaking director(s). However, examiners’ commentary and a range of students’ qualitative responses paint the picture of a deeply flawed, highly restrictive and long overdue attempt to amply expose Spanish students to artistic portrayals of historical, social and/or cultural identity. This analysis is expected to be of particular interest to exam boards and the author intends to write to both AQA and Edexcel with his findings and observations, as well as continue to present such research-led arguments at conferences and teacher training events. Scholars of Spanish are successfully created via the most informed literature- and theory-led approach to film analysis, and one which is in the position to move far beyond the linguistic, according to the analysis of qualitative data and prominent works carried out in the chapter’s final section. Participating undergraduate students commend the modules they are studying for successfully achieving learning outcomes related to communicative and cultural competence, and historical understandings of cinematic works’ particular place and relevance in national socio-political development. Outcomes related to specific works also affirm the timely and highly constructive benefits for post-university life and employment. It is argued at several points in the thesis that universities are in an ideal position to support schools in the development of film- and all artistically-led Spanish learning programmes, and it is felt that this partnership could and should be much more rigorous, consistent and robustly managed. As a first step, the author aims to contact a number of local universities to encourage closer collaboration in the development and provision of film-related MFL studies via ‘teach-meet’ forums and an extended outreach programme, where both universities and schools set the agenda and collectively plan events. Manchester Metropolitan University currently offers a variety of outreach support to secondary school languages departments, often organised through Routes into Languages. The author intends to make use of the outcomes of this PhD project to build further on such provision, and indeed, to encourage other universities, such as the University of Manchester, to widen their role in helping to create pre-university, enthusiastic and skills-equipped students of Spanish cinema. The fifth chapter categorises the four most
prominent, yet problematic, aspects of Spanish film studies to come from the data analysed in the previous chapter, and from the literature, theory and existing research findings most relevant to the field discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The opening section questions the nature and implications of approaches via the model of auteurism, both when exercised explicitly, such as in the case of the cultural topic at A level, or within thematically-led studies, such as in the various undergraduate modules considered. The terms of, ‘real’, ‘reality’, and ‘realism’ occur frequently throughout the thesis; all of which are most explicitly put to the test in the section dedicated to exposing core realism theory and the very many (mis)conceptions surrounding the various definitions, as put forward by students, educators and filmmakers. It is hoped that this thesis, and the Realism section in particular, helps to alleviate some of the confusion and inaccuracy surrounding concepts of realism related to Spanish identity and cultural studies (across the various stages of Spanish education); another unique contribution to the research field. In the third section of the chapter, genre is captured and probed as a vast and wholly versatile concept within film studies, particularly in the case of Spanish cinema, and it is framed as a useful component of cinema studies on which educators embarking on Spanish sociocultural studies are aptly able to build. A manipulation of genres and their traditional offerings is highlighted as recurring in the works of Almodóvar and del Toro particularly. This includes the branding of cineastes’ identities and their body of works, including those falling under the transnational umbrella. The chapter ends with a scrutiny of what constitutes and what is signified by Spanish stars in a variety of the works studied. A significant mixture of literature (and theory) is incorporated alongside the perceptions of the participating students, which collectively assemble and unravel perceptions of attraction and relatability, but also, understandings of post-transitional social redefinition and/or reinvention; all of which, teachers and lecturers are encouraged to recognise and exploit when devising their own, Spanish film-centred schemes of work, in line with the broader contributions of this PhD project for immediate, practical purposes.

RQ 2: What does the current provision of Spanish film pedagogy at GCSE look like and how is its effectiveness perceived at present?

Spanish film pedagogy at GCSE is largely absent from statutory requirements and exam specifications. However, a wide variety of evidence gained from participating students’ quantitative and qualitative responses, and from previous research initiatives and scholarly activity related to the field, captures a desire for, and convincing arguments in favour of, film pedagogy having a stronger and more defined presence at GCSE. A correlation is presented between how much GCSE students are exposed to Spanish cinema and how much they rate its educational value. The participating students emphasise the visual attributes of film and they are conscious of the necessity to be visually literate (although expressed differently). Their responses underline the importance of being equipped with the technical skills required to deconstruct and evaluate moving image media, especially that of another country, and in another language. For many GCSE students, the resulting impact of seeing aspects of Spain on screen – locations, actors (playing characters), events based on factual reality (such as the Civil War) – equate somewhat literally to experiencing ‘real’ Spain; a troublesome and
regularly misconceived pursuit, and one which requires a most carefully devised approach by the educator. That said, an appreciation of cinema’s ability to bring certain aspects of foreign identity to life in the MFL classroom, and an enthusiasm for the multitude of possible readings via critical analysis and further reading, are to be fully exploited in further contemposing, diversifying and ripening students’ experiences and perspectives of Spain, Spaniards and Spanish, from within the classroom. The effectiveness for those (participating) GCSE students who do experience Spanish cinema during the course is measured, in large part, as extensive, particularly in the fields of language improvement, making learning more enjoyable and engaging, and as a platform for differentiation needs; both in terms of catering well for the less able (mainly because of the visual supporting the audio) and stretching and challenging the top end (mainly because of the, arguably, limitless layers of meaning-making and decipherment). The participating trainee teachers contribute a clear message via vast discrepancies between their views on the importance of film in the MFL classroom, the extent to which film is embedded (in schemes of work and/or sequences of lessons) within their placement schools, and the level of related training they have received. In such case, it is very much hoped that the findings displayed above, and below, will be of direct interest and use to both experienced teachers interested in developing their knowledge and skills related to Spanish film pedagogy, and new teachers entering the profession; as those with the power to shape the quality and impact of Spanish education for the next generation.

RQ 3: a) What sort of impact is Spanish film currently having at GCSE within the teaching and learning of Spanish language, history, society and culture, and b) to what extent can it help tackle underachievement?

The majority of the participating GCSE students observe a noteworthy improvement to their language skills by studying Spanish film. Vocabulary development and learning is identified as having particularly progressed, although enhanced understanding of tenses is not far behind. This is a worthy example however of where the types of activities organised by the teacher/lecturer have a direct impact on where students experience (or at least, perceive) progress. Critical competence arises as an essential skill within language-, history-, society-, or culture-focused work. Missed opportunities in this regard at GCSE are failing to sufficiently prepare students for A level, where critical competence and analysis are regular features of statutory requirements and exam administration. Language-specific activities related to individual films are, for now, entirely up to the (GCSE) teacher to identify and organise; presented in this thesis as a weakness and one which the author aims to encourage Ofqual to address when designing the next outlines for specifications, expected to be in approximately four years time. Films identified as popular at this level are noted along with illustrations of content and form, as are examples of topic areas within prominent GCSE resources. Much of this work may be based on describing the visual qualities or techniques of the films, but verbal and written film reviews, devising a new scene, or coming up with alternative subtitles are all examples of tried and tested, (relatively) easy to organise language-based work at GCSE. The students who have not encountered Spanish film during the GCSE course come up with good ideas for language-based
studies, demonstrating that the drive and creativity among cohorts is most certainly there. Activities related to translation and interpreting are featured and are likely to be of interest to GCSE teachers, now more than ever, as they attempt to prepare students for the translation demands of the reformed GCSE. Again, it is hoped that educators able to access this thesis may take both inspiration and confidence from such findings as a means to develop their own practice. The author will also continue to share such research-led arguments with colleagues in schools, universities, at training events and at language teaching conferences. Students also affirm the idea of film in the Spanish classroom making listening easier and/or more meaningful. It is strongly suggested that Spanish film helps to modernise the subject and bring many aspects of learning Spanish to life. Additionally, the audio/visual combination provides a difference to the norm and a real sense of purpose to listening. Improved listening ties directly into improved speaking for many of the students, and again, particular films and scenes fit best within core topic areas, and also preparation for exams. The author has been able to make use of such evidence-based information at conferences and languages teachers’ training events during the course of the PhD studies, where it is judged that school teachers are very keen to receive clear and manageable models that they themselves may take on. This underscores once again the primary objective of this PhD project; to set out a variety of research- and evidence-based sources, models and frameworks related to Spanish cinema studies, from which educators may inform and build upon their own skills, experiences and ideas.

GCSE specifications underline the significance of enhancing social, historical and cultural knowledge, but they do not provide sufficient detail about how to do so. The author aims to apply the necessary pressure for change and improvement by contacting the exam boards and Ofqual through all available professional forums and networks. The value of an appreciation of Spanish literature has been (re)emphasised by the government, and in turn, the exam boards and resources publishers, although it is questionable how much of a difference these changes are making/will make to GCSE students’ cultural knowledge; a future research project, similar to the current research, but focused instead on literature, would be in the position to evaluate such changes. Alongside the comprehension of literary extracts, there are evidently missed opportunities to incorporate Spanish film in, at least, a comparative sense; again, something that is afforded to A level students (who study one literary work and one film). However, with regards to the study of cinematic works exclusively, it is firstly highlighted that ‘one off’ or insufficiently prepared film usage leads to inaccurate information. Historically- and/or factually-based works pose a danger to students’ readings of truth or perception of reality related to Spain when the various core stages of the film analysis processes are not appropriately carried out, such as in the examples related to El laberinto del fauno. The examination of certain student responses (and A level examiners’ comments) suggest that there is a tendency to view films as merely stories - either representative of some form of reality or not - rather than being seen, first and foremost, as artistic and/or cultural products, and from the unique perspective of the filmmakers involved. This is highlighted later as a trend at A level, and so it is unsurprising that it is first identified as a problem at the previous key stage. GCSE is underscored as the most appropriate time to be getting such basics in order so that the more detailed and nuanced critical analysis can
occur most comfortably and productively at A level and undergraduate level. This stage of the process falls back on the key skills required for visual, film and multimodal literacy, which are so fundamental to successful foreign cinema studies. It is clarified that this is particularly the case when multiple time-frames or a conscientious manipulation of reality are employed, such as in El laberinto del fauno. It is hoped that the section dealing with these various forms of literacy provides a comprehensive summary of, and one which unites the most pertinent of, exiting literature and research in the field. However, it is also understood that the unique value of the section and its particular contribution to the research field lies in its combination of theory-, research- and practice-led recommendations directly alongside the relevant requirements of the Spanish GCSE and A level courses and assessment criteria. The section is a further example of where this PhD project, once again, somewhat uniquely, aims to consistently balance the three research strands of ‘Spanish’, ‘film’ and ‘education’, and specifically, where it seeks to collate the most pertinent, pedagogically-related considerations as means to support, inform and inspire educators at different stages of education who seek to fully exploit Spanish film as a learning tool. El bota is celebrated as a particularly constructive, although possibly underused, work at GCSE. It ties in well to many of the core language topics, but it also provides a somewhat graphic insight into Spanish social tribulations and notable changes in legislation. Students also refer to the ordinary nature of the characters and many of their actions, making it, in many ways, a highly relatable film for adolescents, and one which provokes tangible and intuitive reactions. El bota is presented as an example of a work that offers an alternative vision of Spain and Spanish, and profound issues that GCSE MFL students are so regularly starved of. The qualitative data features enlightening comments that point to the pleasure gained from experiencing Spain through the child/adolescent’s perspective. Other comments highlight the potential of such works for educators to facilitate comparative analysis between national identities and to explore the depths of, and varying perspectives within, national (Spanish and British) values; a chief component of the English National Curriculum since 2014. Several Spanish works have been rendered as the core subject matter of ideal platforms for work on regional identities and the profound depths of associated issues in a historical or contemporary setting. Todo sobre mi madre is submitted as a prominent example, particularly for the cinematic techniques used to capture space and the characters who inhabit it. Within all such work, it is emphasised to educators that a collection of films/segments/scenes are required in the most insightful exploration of, and balanced perspective gained from, the themes presented by the works and their creators.

RQ 4: To what extent do the assessment structures of the legacy and reformed Spanish A level (film element) benefit students?

Section 4.3 confirms that the cultural topic provided a solid platform for the identification of changes needed to the A level model. The inclusion of film went from being one of five major topic areas (legacy A level) to being one of two (reformed A level). It is regrettable that many students will complete the A level without studying any cinema at all if following the, ‘two books’ route. This is particularly concerning in light of students’ growing reliance on moving image media, and principally,
video, whereby schools continue to miss golden opportunities to guide students’ skills in moving image literacy and their ability to critically deconstruct, analyse and interpret the moving images they are exposed to; in such case, they remain as passive viewers. It is felt that Ofqual and the exam boards (as a means to reach the DfE) ought to continue receiving such important feedback in order for future specifications to better reflect the more general needs and expectations of learners today. The overall proportional marks of the film component has also decreased at A level, from approximately 45% if used in both the speaking exam and for the assessed essay, to just 10% as a maximum of one of two essays in Paper 2. The mark scheme is found to have improved however, whereby there is a more sensible balance between the different areas of assessment and ‘content’ has been replaced by, ‘critical analysis’. There is increased pressure regarding the quality of written language, which is now worth twenty marks (formally fifteen), although unlike before, students are not capped for language marks according their score for content/analysis, or vice versa. The incorporation of a prescribed list is welcome, particularly as it was the case that examiners were previously marking essays about films they had never seen. This is afforded by the change from, ‘the work of a Spanish-speaking director’, to, ‘a Spanish-speaking film’. The prescribed lists display an attempt to include a range based on Spanish-speaking countries’ (particularly Edexcel) historical contexts, thematic contexts, or, types of protagonist. It is the responsibility of the teacher to select the most appropriate work for their cohort. There are however commonalities among the selections, including child protagonists, the trauma of war and dictatorship. In an ideal world, A level students will be able to watch all of the films on the prescribed lists (or a similar amount), as all are educationally valuable works, and collectively, would undoubtedly provide a vast perspective on which to build a huge amount of illuminating cinematic analysis. The cultural topic was enjoyed by the majority of the participating students, although it is not possible to confirm if this is simply because they were studying Spanish cinema. The collation and scrutiny of examiners’ comments – once again, a previously underused research strategy, according to the literature and related, previous research that was accessed - confirm a keenness from students to study and write about Spanish film, but also a whole host of inaccuracies and generalisations. They confirm virtually year on year that the students fail to achieve profound critical analysis due to language constraints. It is hard to see how this will change with the reformed A level, unless teachers are afforded more time and a broader variety of research, and/or practice-led platforms on which to build. Adequate training and the sharing of ideas is fundamental. If the trainee teachers’ comments are reflective of the broader picture, then recent years do not suggest a sufficient improvement in this area, and a lack of presence and guidance provided by the DfE, the exam boards and resources publishers in this regard are largely responsible. There also needs to be a continued cultural shift in schools, whereby analysis of the moving image is held in higher academic esteem. It is imperative that students witness this themselves and no longer associate film-related activities as a break from learning, but rather, as a key part of it. Studying Spanish films/directors increases many students’ interest in the subject, and is undoubtedly a logical link to undergraduate, where Spanish film courses are booming. Poor essay structure is a repeated feature of students’ failure to achieve top marks. This is assumed to be largely unchanged from the cultural topic to the reformed A level (as there is so far no evidence of the revised assessment
scheme significantly affecting teaching and learning methodologies), and in such case, the value of repeated practice and feedback in the classroom cannot be underestimated. However, professional experience suggests that attendance at relevant workshops and training events at local universities and other cultural centres is of great benefit for aspects such as essay structure, vocabulary extension and the incorporation of specific examples of scenes and quotes. Students also profit enormously from the fresh perspectives of other educators and the views of other Spanish students from different schools.\footnote{For example, see the various events coordinated by Routes into Languages (in collaboration with universities and cultural centres, such as Manchester Metropolitan University and the Instituto Cervantes, Manchester: \url{https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/activities/national}} The author therefore intends to continue spreading the word via social media and in professional forums regarding the training possibilities on offer, but also to approach local universities to instigate the creation of additional outreach work and school-university cross collaboration in curriculum development and cohesion. There was a temptation to use pre-learned phrases in the cultural topic, and again, this is likely to remain. But the more detailed wording in the language section of the reformed A level’s mark scheme at least provides additional guidance for how to maximise marks. It is a shame that students can no longer speak about their film study in the speaking exam (unless a feature of the independent research project (IRP)). However, the IRP is a welcome addition, particularly for its valuable facilitation of research and presentational skills, which are so advantageous in university studies, and indeed, many areas of working life. Formally, Almodóvar provided a popular context for essays, largely about genre and mise-en-scène-related techniques, and gender representation. Although there is only one of his works on both of the prescribed lists of the reformed A level (AQA and Edexcel). \textit{Volver} is expected to remain highly popular, particularly for its ability to deliberate on location and setting, reflections of gender archetypes and metaphorical ghosts, and also, Almodóvar’s most recognisable characteristics, including the fetishised use of actors, such as Penélope Cruz (and Carmen Maura). Del Toro is also expected to remain a popular choice, or rather, his work, \textit{El laberinto del fauno}. With a growing body of international commercial and critical successes, including the 2018 Best Picture Oscar winner, \textit{The Shape of Water}, A level teachers can be confident of many spectators’ awareness of del Toro’s broader oeuvre and international acclaim, and of the opportunities his work(s) offer(s) to studies in transnationalism and auteurism. Both \textit{Volver} and \textit{El laberinto del fauno} tender their own challenges for the teacher in terms of embarking on social representation via the use of archetype/stereotype and teasing genre conventions. Culture features somewhat surprisingly low down in terms of the participating students’ assessment of educational value afforded by their Spanish cinema studies. This does perhaps indicate some misinformation, such as failing to recognise cinema itself as a cultural product, and indeed, the film industry as being a key player in the projection (literally, and figuratively) of (representations of) national and/or regional cultural identity. The works referred to highlight Spanish film’s ideal position to allow for revealing comparisons of and sharp contrasts in cultural identity at different time points, and also according to different perspectives; both strong identifiers of culture as a highly fluid and subjective concept.
RQ 5: a) To what extent do studies in Spanish cinema at undergraduate level prepare students to become scholars of Spanish and b) how do they prepare them for modern day life and employment?

Undergraduate Spanish film modules are set up well to enable students to become scholars of Spanish, and, to some extent, to be better prepared for modern day life and employment. University courses are largely designed around primary cinematic themes, and there is not the same explicit focus on language. The vast majority of the participating undergraduates however highlight listening as a key area of improvement, particularly in relation to their study of Erice’s *El espíritu de la colmena*, possibly due to its slower pace, monotone settings and the close interaction of the characters. Lecturers of Spanish film understandably possess a higher level of expertise (in most cases) surrounding the process of film study and analysis, but also the themes and general make-up of the films. In this sense, the value of lecturers passing on and translating their knowledge to school teachers is immense, as also highlighted above. Undergraduate seminars are set up well to conduct wider discussions and debates about films’ contents, meaning and purpose, although time constraints aside, there is not anything necessarily preventing this from happening at A level or GCSE. There are several ambitious attempts in undergraduate studies to capture Spain’s ‘national cinema’, where evolving transition, including, but not exclusive to, the Transition to democracy, is a key feature. Lecturers and students place a high value on the role of Spanish film studies to educate about Spanish history, including as a means to map censorship. The modules analysed display an awareness of how each one contains a relatively small selection of films, but that the teaching of the selected works sets out to facilitate and encourage broader and subsequent studies that encompass additional works; a key message for all those concerned with film-inspired/led/supported MFL studies. Students express the desire to see different periods of film history that cover different topics and for different purposes. Lecturers and the majority of the participating undergraduate students agree that the film modules offered are motivating and engaging, although the lecturers also highlight the subjective nature inherent to film watching or film studying, and how, in a certain sense, it is not possible to accurately quantify a work’s true worth based on subjective popularity. At university level, it is more broadly assumed that students possess a solid grasp of film, or at least, moving image, literacy. The analyses of the GCSE and A level courses however strongly suggests that these levels do not sufficiently prepare students for such demands, and so it is expected that students gain these skills from elsewhere. Attention is however drawn to several scholars’ perceptions that undergraduate students lack basic film analysis skills. In possible response, participating students complain about not having had more opportunities to study Spanish film earlier in their degree. A significant proportion of the students are impressed by the learning opportunities afforded by Buñuel’s *Viridiana*, and Berlanga’s *Bienvenido Mr Marshall*, seemingly related to internal exile/repression and censorship, respectively. Lecturers confirm that there are a variety of approaches to organising the teaching of Spanish cinema, from historical to thematic. One lecturer highlights the value of analytical comparison between literary and cinematic texts (films). Scholars looking specifically at undergraduate study
reiterate the multimodal nature facilitating a key advantage over other listening-based exercises, and their views on language and content sitting equally side by side in the film watching/learning context echo the revised assessment structure at A level. Undergraduate students share with GCSE students the desire to see more use of film clips to support topical language units, and certain university resource platforms feature as a suggested source of access. Several scholars underline that intercultural competence is now considered the best method for advancing communicative competence. One lecturer highlights how studying key works highlights different angles of culture, from popular culture to high culture. Attention is drawn to the increasing necessity for students to understand and appreciate different cultures, and how studies in foreign culture, language and identity (such as via cinema) equips students with invaluable knowledge for their futures. An increased awareness of inter-political relations is on offer, as is an enhanced understanding of national and international ideologies and relations, allowing educators to tie in current social affairs, either in Spain or in related countries, such as the southern European migrant crisis (see reference to Biutiful in Section 2.2). The essay-writing component required by foreign film analysis sets students up well for academic engagement and critical response in the future. This of course includes the background reading that is required for any essay work and/or any research-based enquiry. Cinematic works afford students the possibility of considering their contribution in the world, particularly when presented against the conflicts, social struggles and national self-branding associated with Spanish cinema. Key legislation changes are reflected in several works, highlighted particularly in the Realism section. Many Spanish films provide glimpses, at least, of everyday life, including working life, and indeed, cinema as a national industry in itself. Los lunes al sol features as a prominent example, further highlighted by resources dedicated to teaching Spanish children about issues of work, unemployment and the economy (see Paz con dignidad 2009).

A subsequent research project should involve additional qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate, or alternatively, a focus exclusive to KS3 and/or primary to secondary transition. It is clear from various training, networking and resource-sharing events attended over several years that school teachers are enthusiastic to establish which Spanish films are the most appropriate and advised works to use with their students, including at KS3. They face challenges with many of the highest acclaimed Spanish films – and those deemed to be the ideal balance between educational and entertaining - carrying a ‘15’ certificate, at least. The author would also like to carry out a similar investigation for French studies, and there is scope (and arguably an even higher demand) for a similar study to be conducted in relation to German. The most recent publications of greatest relevance, and those considered most pertinent to follow-up research and/or wider reading by interested parties include two diverse post-conference journals edited by leading scholars in the field of foreign film pedagogy: Herrero and Vanderschelden (2019), Using Film and Media in the Language Classroom: Reflections on Research-led Teaching, and Herrero and Suarez (forthcoming), New Approaches to Transmedia and Languages Pedagogy. Spanish film studies in English schools and universities is most certainly here to stay, but its growing success, both in terms of its ability to enhance and improve the appeal, interest and value of the subject, and as an academic discipline in
itself, depends entirely on the support provided by research-led literature and practice, such as that presented in this thesis. Greater collaboration between the different key stages, and crucially, between schools and universities, is key. At, arguably, the most poignant period of redefinitions of (English/British) nationhood and (English/British) international relations in a generation - in our society, in our places of work, and in our schools - the time to successfully enhance/overhaul (delete as appropriate) how our young people view, interpret and assess the rest of the world, starting with Spain, is most certainly now.
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Filmography

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Abel, film, directed by Diego Luna, Canana Films, 2010.

Abre los ojos, film, directed by Alejandro Amenábar, Canal+ España, 1997.


Ander, film, directed by Roberto Castón, Berdindu, 2009.


¡Átame!, film, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, El Deseo, 1989.


Belle Epoque, film, directed by Fernando Trueba, Animatógrafo, 1992.

Bienvenido Mr Marshall, film, directed by Luis García Berlanga, Unión Industrial Cinematográfica, 1952.


Bwana, film, directed by Imanol Uribe, Aurum, 1996.


Cat People, film, directed by Paul Schrader, RKO Pictures, 1982.


Crimson Peak, film, directed by Guillermo del Toro, Double Dare You, 2015.

Cronos, film, directed by Guillermo del Toro, CNCAIMC, 1993.


Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, film, directed by Troy Nixey, Miramax, 2011.

Duel in the Sun, film, directed by King Vidor, Selznick International Pictures, 1946.


El espinaço do diabo, film, directed by Guillermo del Toro, El Deseo, 2001


El píñito, film, directed by Marco Ferreri, Documento Films, 1959.


La flor de mi secreto, film, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, El Deseo, 1995.

La lengua de las mariposas, film, directed by José Luis Cuerda, Canal+ España, 1999.
La máquina de pintar nubes, film, directed by Aitor Maxo and Patxo Telleria, Abra Producciones, 2009.
La pelota vasca, film, directed by Julio Medem, Alicia Produce, 2000.
La Puerta del Sol, film, directed by Alexandre Promio, Société Antoine Lumière et ses Fils, 1896.
Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan, film, directed by Luis Buñuel, Ramón Acín, 1932.
La vergüenza, film, directed by David Planell, Avalon, 2009.
Los abrazos rotos, film, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, El Deseo, 2009.
Los lunes al sol, film, directed by Fernando León de Aranoa, Sogepaq, 2002.
Los santos inocentes, film, directed by Mario Camus, Ganesh Producciones Cinematográficas, 1984.
Ma ma, film, directed by Julio Medem, Ad hoc studios, 2015.
Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios, film, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, El Deseo, 1984.
Nobleza baturra, film, directed by Florián Rey, Compañía Industrial Film Español S.A., 1935.
Ocaña, retrat intermitent, film, directed by Ventua Pons, Prozes, 1976.
Pandora and the Flying Dutchman, film, directed by Albert Lewin, Dorkay Productions, 1951.
Pepí, Lucí, Bom y otras chicas del montón, film, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, Figaro Films, 1980.
Puss in Boots, film, directed by Chris Miller, DreamWorks Animation, 2011.
[REC], film, directed by Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza, Castelao Producciones, 2007.
*Skyfall*, film, directed by Sam Mendes, Eon Productions, 2012.
*Valentín*, film, directed by Alejandro Agresti, First Floor Features, 2003.
*Vertigo*, film, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, Alfred J. Hitchcock Productions, 1958
*Zoolander 2*, film, directed by Ben Stiller, Panorama Films, 2016.
Appendix I: Ethics declaration form

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
SECTION A – Administrative information

1. Title of the research: ‘Spanish Cinema Studies at GCSE, A level and Undergraduate Level: An Analysis of Practices, Policies and Priorities’

2. Investigator(s) (nb. In the case of postgraduate student applications the supervisor is always the joint investigator):

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3. Subject area contact (if applicable):

   Name: As above (Supervisor)
   Post:
   Email address:
4. Is this study, or any part of this study a student project? No

5. Please provide the names and email addresses of any academic staff or students involved, other than those named at 2 above:
Dr Alex Baratta (Co-supervisor) Alex.Baratta@manchester.ac.uk
Dr David Jimenez Torres (Independent Reviewer 2013-2014) david.jimeneztorres@manchester.ac.uk
Dr Darren Waldron (Independent Reviewer 2016-2019) Darren.Waldron@manchester.ac.uk

SECTION B – Details of Project
6. When will the data collection take place?
   30 June 2014 (upon ethical approval) - 15 December 2016

7. Where will the data collection take place?

   Intention to contact approximately 50 schools and 5 universities (target of 300-500 respondents), to include: GCSE students, GCSE teachers, A level students, A level teachers, undergraduate students, undergraduate lecturers and trainee teachers.

   A copy of the email to be sent to Heads of Spanish/MFL is attached to this document.

8. What are the principal research questions?
RQ1: What are the key issues, concepts, and themes that arise from an analysis of recent and current Spanish film studies provision, and how should they be approached, henceforth?

RQ 2: What does current, Spanish film pedagogy at GCSE look like, and how is its effectiveness perceived at present?

RQ 3: a) What sort of impact is Spanish film currently having at GCSE within the teaching and learning of Spanish language, history, society and culture, and b) how can it help tackle under-achievement?

RQ 4: To what extent do the outgoing and reformed assessment structures of A level Spanish (film elements) benefit students?

RQ 5: a) To what extent do studies in Spanish cinema at undergraduate level prepare students to become scholars of Spanish, and b) how do they prepare undergraduates for modern day life and employment?
9. What is the academic justification for the research?
[See Methodology Draft]

10. Summary of the design and methodology of the planned research (Tick all that apply).
[See Methodology Draft]

11. How has the scientific quality of the research been assessed? (Tick all that apply)
   Internal review (e.g. involving colleagues, academic supervisor)

   Meeting with researcher, supervisor, co-supervisor and independent reviewer after an abstract including research objectives and methodology outline sent to independent reviewer. Independent reviewer was happy with the proposed research questions and methodology, which was discussed at length at meeting.

12.1 Does the research involve the administration of any physically invasive procedures, or physical or psychological testing? (Please tick all that apply)
   The research does not involve the administration of any physically invasive procedures, or physical or psychological testing.

12.2 Does the research involve interviewing participants or focus groups?
   No

12.3 Does the research involve the administration of questionnaires?
   Yes
   The research involves the administration of questionnaires with adults and children (in an accredited institutional setting and in the presence of carers or professionals with a duty of care) who have given informed consent to take part in the research (this may include postal or online questionnaires as well as those that require face to face contact).

   A copy of all questionnaires are appended to this application.

   Questionnaires will be posted to institutions and posted back to researcher. Questionnaires will only be completed after a consent form has been read and signed by each participant, which will be administered by teachers/lecturers. The questionnaires have a simple design and include a number of likert scales to encourage completion and for ease of analysis, in addition to more open ended responses for qualitative analysis.

12.4 Is statistical sampling relevant to this research?
   No
12.5.1 Has the protocol submitted with this application been the subject of review by a statistician independent of the research team? Select one of the following:

No. Not seen as necessary for this research.

12.4.2 If relevant, specify the statistical experimental design and why it was chosen.

12.5 If you are not using statistical sampling how was the number of participants decided upon?

It is felt that 300-500 respondents should provide a suitably varied and meaningful range of responses from which arguments may be drawn. The number also aims to cover a variety of schools, including state schools, independent schools, comprehensive schools and grammar schools to reduce the possibility of bias. It is felt that 5 different undergraduate departments would provide a sufficient range of responses to compare and contrast.

12.6 Has the research methodology and/or the statistical basis been the subject of a review independent of the research team?

Yes

The research project, including the research methodology, has been independently reviewed by Dr David Jimenez Torres who has read an abstract of the research design and attended a mid-year review meeting with the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor. The research methodology also draws on other academics’ practices through the applied and targeted use of an extensive bibliography.

12.7 Describe the methods of analysis (statistical or other appropriate methods, e.g. for qualitative research) by which the data will be evaluated to meet the study objectives.

[See Methodology Draft]

13.1 What do you consider to be the main ethical issues which may arise with the proposed study? *Tick all that apply.*

Issues of informed consent - research participants’ awareness of the reasons why the research is taking place and what will happen to information they provide.

The research does not explore topics that are likely to cause distress, because they are delving into traumatic personal histories or experiences for example. However, some topics may be explored - for example, explorations of religious beliefs and practices, the representation of specific communities in art and literature, questions of cultural difference, the production and reception of provocative exhibitions or performances - may provoke strong feelings in respondents.

The research will not carry risk of criminal or other disclosures requiring action (for example, involving safeguarding of children or vulnerable/dependent adults).
13.2 What steps will be taken to address the issues raised in question 13.1?

A participant information sheet, following the University of Manchester proforma for participant information sheets, has been developed for the research project and is attached here. This will be given to all research participants, be written succinctly and in layperson’s terms and will include:

- The name and contact details of the researcher (University email, address and phone numbers only)
- An explanation of the research aims and what the research will achieve
- The reasons why the research participant has been approached
- The activities that the research participant will engage in, where these will take place and how long it will take, including brief details of the kinds of questions that might be asked (especially those questions that may provoke strong responses)
- A description of what happens to the data collected
- The likely outputs of the research
- A statement clarifying the limits of anonymity and confidentiality offered
- A statement emphasising that the participant is free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason
- The name and contact details of the supervisor and the University of Manchester Research Governance office

Participants will give written or verbal consent to participate in the study after they have reviewed the participant information sheet. A consent form is attached here.

The researcher will attend a research ethics training session hosted by artsmethods@manchester (covering research ethics principles, risk assessments, good practice when carrying out fieldwork and working alone) and attend subject area research training sessions as relevant to their research. A CRB check has been undertaken via one of the the host institutions, the researcher’s employer.

14. Has this or a similar application been previously considered by a Research Ethics Committee in the UK, the European Union or the European Economic Area?

No

SECTION C – Details of participants

15. How many participants will be recruited?

[See above]
16. Age range of participants:

School students 16-18. Participants in the study are children and young people, accompanied by a professional with a duty of care i.e. their teacher. Undergraduate students, teachers and lecturers are adults (18+).

17. What are the principal inclusion criteria for participants? *(Please justify)*

Healthy adults or children and young people who have experiences relevant to the research topic.

18. What are the principal exclusion criteria for participants? *(Please justify)*

Participants unable to give informed consent, who are vulnerable or dependent (as defined by the list below), or who do not have cultural experiences relevant to the research topic, which will be assessed by the teacher. Teachers will be advised to contact the researcher to adapt the questionnaire where appropriate e.g. into a different language for those students who may not have a good understanding of English.

19.1 Will the participants be from any of the following groups? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Adult healthy volunteers (i.e. not under medical care for a condition which is directly relevant to the application)
- Healthy children over 16.
- Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher, e.g. students taught or examined by the researcher.

19.2 If you will be using participants other than healthy volunteers please justify their inclusion:

Not applicable.

20.1 How will the potential participants be identified? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Public sources of information such as the websites of cultural institutions, online social media or professional networks.
- Visitors or participants identified by the institution hosting the research.
- University networks.
- Heads of Spanish/MFL will be emailed to request their students’ participation.

20.2 How will they be approached and by whom? *(Tick all that apply)*

Research participants will be approached by the researcher or research supervisor via their teacher/lecturer via email.
20.3 How will they be recruited? *(Where research participants will be recruited via advertisement, please append a copy to this application)*

Direct email from the researcher (a draft is attached to this application). Where there is no reply to initial contact, the researcher will send a single reminder only to invite participation.

21. Will any research participants be recruited who are involved in existing research or have recently been involved in any research prior to recruitment?

Not known

22. Will individual research participants receive reimbursement of expenses or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in this research?

No

23. What is the expected total duration of participation in the study for each participant?

Questionnaires that will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete

24. What is the potential benefit to research participants? *Tick all that apply*

- Increased awareness of the topic explored by the research may be experienced as of value.
- Enjoyment and increased well-being are commonly reported effects of taking part in creative practice as research.

25. Will any benefit or assistance, which the participant would normally have access to, be withheld as part of the research? *Please tick:*

No benefit or assistance, which the participant would normally have access to, will be withheld as part of the research.

SECTION D – Consent

26.1 Will informed consent be obtained from the research participants? *Please tick all that apply*

Informed consent will be obtained from the research participants by reading and signing a participation consent form (attached).

26.2 Will a signed record of consent be obtained?

Yes

27. How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research? *(If less than 24 hours please justify)*
Participants will be asked to participate in the study immediately following consent (where the research engages participants in brief one-off questionnaires and interviews, and does not collect personal information).

In the researcher’s email to Heads of Spanish/MFL, completed responses will be requested within one week of the email (and following consent).

28. What arrangements have been made for participants who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information given in English, or who have special communication needs? (e.g. translation, use of interpreters etc.)

Where this is not possible, lack of competence in written and spoken English will be specified under ‘exclusion criteria’ (question 18 above), and clearly indicated on adverts and information sheets.

As mentioned, it is to be included in the email to Heads of Spanish/MFL that should anything need to be re-explained, translated etc., researcher should be contacted. Regarding certain other specific learning difficulties, researcher will request that teachers apply their usual support strategies.

SECTION E – RISKS AND SAFEGUARDS

29. Activities to be undertaken (Please tick all that apply)

Questionnaires with adults and/or children (in the presence of a carer or professional with a duty of care and carried out in an institutional setting). This may include postal or online questionnaires as well as those involving face to face contact. Methodology and organisation/analysis of data explained above.

30.1 What are the potential adverse effects, risks or hazards for research participants, including potential for pain, discomfort, distress, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle for research participants? Are they any greater than those that would arise from normal social interaction?

There are minimal potential adverse effect, risks or hazards for research participants but these are not greater than would arise from normal social interaction.

30.2 Could individual or group interviews/questionnaires raise any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. in the application of screening tests for drugs)? Please tick

Questionnaires will not raise any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or risk criminal or other disclosures requiring action.
30.3 What precautions have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above? 
Not applicable

31.1 What is the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience to the researchers themselves? (If any) 
Not applicable, as all data to be collected via email or post.

31.2 Where will the research take place? 
In schools and universities, as outlined above.

31.3 What precautions have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above? 
Not applicable

32. The University will automatically provide indemnity and/or compensation for most approved studies, but you should complete the appended Ethics Insurance Assessment form and consult the University Procurement Office if necessary. If another body or institution is providing insurance or indemnity please provide details below. 
A completed Ethics Insurance Assessment form has been completed.

33. Please confirm that any adverse event requiring a radical change of method or design, or even abandonment of the research, will be reported to the Committee. 
I confirm that any adverse event requiring a radical change of method or design, or even abandonment of the research, will be reported to the committee

SECTION F – Data protection and confidentiality
39. Will the research involve any of the following activities at any stage (including identification of potential research participants)? 
The research will involve the storage of personal data on laptops or other personal computers and publication of direct quotations from respondents, but will be saved to the university P Drive via VPN connection.

Data will be: 
Fairly and lawfully processed. 
Processed for the purposes detailed in the information sheet only, which clearly states the limits of anonymity and confidentiality afforded to research participants. 
Not be shared with any researcher or organisation other than in ways detailed on the information sheet.
40. What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? Give details of what encryption or other anonymisation procedures will be used and at what stage?

Management of personal data – researcher notes, audio and audio-visual material and any other data generated as part of the research will be securely stored for the duration of the study. All computers used for storing data will be encrypted – following University of Manchester IT security and data protection guidelines. Anonymity will be preserved with respect to stored data by the use of ID numbers and/or pseudonyms for research participants, which will only be known and available to the custodians of the data (researcher and supervisor). Details of research participants’ identities will be kept securely (in a locked drawer in an office or on an encrypted computer).

41. Where will the analysis of the data from the study take place and by whom will it be undertaken?

By the researcher and supervisor, in a private study or workspace at the researcher’s home or at the University.

42.1 Who will control and act as the custodian for the data? Note: for a student project this must be a supervisor or a permanent member of staff

Where the research is undertaken by a postgraduate student, the supervisor named above will act as the custodian for the data.

42.2 Who will have access to the data?

The researchers named on this application.

42.3 Will the data be stored for use in future studies? If yes, has this been addressed in the consent process?

The data may be used in future studies, and the ways in which it will be used have been clearly described on the participant information sheet and addressed in the consent process.

43. For how long will the data from the study be stored?

The data will be stored for five years.

44. What arrangements are in place to ensure participants receive any information that becomes available during the course of the research that may be relevant to their continued participation?

If any information pertinent to the study becomes available as the study progresses that may be relevant to continued participation, research participants will be informed immediately and reminded that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any time.
45. What arrangements are in place for monitoring the conduct of the research by parties other than the researcher?
Supervisory team and independent reviewer will monitor as necessary.

SECTION G – Conflict of Interest
46.1 Will individual researchers receive any personal payment over and above normal salary and reimbursement of expenses for undertaking this research?
No

46.2 Does the principal researcher or any other investigator/collaborator have any direct personal involvement (e.g. financial, share-holding, personal relationship etc.) in the organisation sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest?
No

47. Will the host organisation or the researcher’s department(s) or institution(s) receive any payment of benefits in excess of the costs of undertaking the research?
No

SECTION H - Reporting Arrangements
48. How is it intended the results of the study will be reported and disseminated?
Thesis/dissertation

49. How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn?
Written feedback to research participants

50.1 Will dissemination allow identification of individual participants?
No

50.2 Will dissemination involve publication of extended direct quotations from identified participants and/or distribution of audiovisual media in which identified participants play leading roles?
No
50.3 Are special arrangements needed to provide indemnity and/or compensation in the event of a claim by, or on behalf of, participants on grounds such as libel, breach of confidence and infringement of Intellectual Property or Performance Rights?

No special arrangements to provide indemnity and/or compensation in the event of a claim by, or on behalf of, participants on grounds such as libel, breach of confidence and infringement of Intellectual Property or Performance Rights are needed.

SECTION K – Confirmation of Application

Signature(s) of applicant(s):

____________________________________  ________________
SIGNATURE  DATE

____________________________________
NAME AND POST OF APPLICANT (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature(s) of supervisor(s) (postdoctoral researchers only):

____________________________________  ________________
SIGNATURE  DATE

____________________________________
NAME AND POST OF SUPERVISOR (PLEASE PRINT)
Appendix II: Letter to Heads of Spanish/MFL/Languages

Dear Colleague,

Many thanks for taking the time to read this email. I am Teacher in charge of Spanish at Oldham Hulme Grammar Schools. To develop my own practice and with the intention of enhancing the fantastic work already carried out by Spanish teachers across the North West, I have embarked on a Ph D at the University of Manchester where I am researching the current practice of using Spanish film in Spanish teaching.

I would be extremely grateful if you could assist with my research by completing a short questionnaire. An essential part of the research is based on students’ own views and therefore I would also request that your GCSE and/or A level Spanish groups also complete a short questionnaire before the end of the academic year. I will arrange for the questionnaires to be posted to you with along with a prepaid envelope to return them. These responses may then be followed up by an additional email.

Please note that all responses will be kept anonymous, including the names of the school, students and teachers. Please also note that you or any of your students would be free to withdraw from participating at any time.

The findings of this research will be documented in a Ph D thesis and will be available for you to read on completion if you so wish. It is hoped that the findings from this research will allow for a greater understanding of the possible benefits and potential obstacles of using Spanish film in Spanish teaching and provide insight into the most appropriate and effective films and directors to expose students to at GCSE and A level, as well as provide ideas for the future exploitation of using film to further enhance Spanish teaching.

Please let me know if you are able to assist with this research by simply replying, ‘Yes’, to this email so that I can arrange for the questionnaires to be sent to you as soon as possible, or if you do not wish to participate by replying, ‘No’.

Many thanks in anticipation of your kind assistance with this research. If you have any questions about any aspect of the research, please do not hesitate to ask.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mark Goodwin
Teacher in charge of Spanish
Oldham Hulme Grammar Schools
Mark.Goodwin@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Appendix III: Information sheet for participants

‘Spanish Cinema Studies at GCSE, A level and Undergraduate Level: An Analysis of Practices, Policies and Priorities’

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a Ph D project at the University of Manchester. It is hoped that the findings of this research will help shed light on the potential benefits and obstacles associated with using Spanish film in the Spanish classroom and help support teachers to further enhance this practice for the benefit of future Spanish students. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Mr Mark Goodwin
Ph D candidate
School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
The University of Manchester
A21, Samuel Alexander Building
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part after an email was sent to a variety of schools/universities in the North West of England asking for your school/university’s participation. Your teacher/lecturer then chose you as part of a random selection of Spanish students.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You would be asked to complete a questionnaire about your own experience of Spanish film(s) in your Spanish lessons. Many of the answers are on a simple scale e.g. ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, although some questions require a more detailed answer. It is not expected for any of the questions to cause you any form of discomfort, although if they do you are welcome to withdraw at any time.

What happens to the data collected?

The data will be analysed for trends but some individual comments may also be discussed, if seen as necessary. Where possible, results will be displayed in charts for ease of analysis but where this is not possible other responses will be discussed within a Ph D thesis.
How is confidentiality maintained?
All of the questionnaires will be completely anonymous. To store responses, codes will be used e.g. School 1 Student 1 will be stored as S1S1 and only the researcher will know the names of individual schools. Data will be stored and password protected on the University of Manchester servers and all data will be destroyed within 5 years.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

What is the duration of the research?
The research involves you completing a single questionnaire, which should take no longer than 10 minutes.

Where will the research be conducted?
The research will be conducted in your own school/university.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?
The outcomes of the research will be published in a Ph D thesis within 5 years.

Who has reviewed the research project?
The project has been reviewed by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information
Researcher: Mark Goodwin (Mark.Goodwin@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)
Supervisor: Prof. Christopher Perriam (Christopher.Perriam@manchester.ac.uk)
Co-supervisor: Dr Alex Baratta (Alex.Baratta@manchester.ac.uk)

What if something goes wrong?
If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Governance and Integrity Team by either writing to 'The Research Governance and Integrity Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research.Complaints@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.

or

If a participant wants to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research they should contact the Research Governance and Integrity Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: Research.Complaints@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Appendix IV: Consent form

‘Spanish Cinema Studies at GCSE, A level and Undergraduate Level: An Analysis of Practices, Policies and Priorities’

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I agree to the use of anonymous quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I agree that any data collected may be passed as anonymous data to other researchers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I agree to take part in the above project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<td>____________________</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>__________</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person taking consent</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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Appendix V: Questionnaire A (Children in Spanish film)

Questionnaire: Children/Adolescents in Spanish Film

1. What Spanish films have you watched during your Spanish studies that contain child and/or adolescent protagonists or important characters?

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2. Describe the significance of these films containing child protagonists for:

The story …………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Representation
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Emotional engagement
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. In general, what do you perceive children/adolescents in Spanish cinema to represent?

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. What is the impact for you as a spectator of a Spanish film having a child/adolescent central character? Please give details:

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
5. How important is it for you to watch a Spanish film that contains a central character around your own age? *Please underline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Please give details:

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- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................

6. How much would you agree with the statement, 'I can identify more easily with Spanish film characters around my own age'? *Please underline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Mostly don't agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</table>

7. Please give details of what you have learnt about Spain/how your knowledge of Spain has increased through the perspective of child protagonists in Spanish films?

**Spanish language**

- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................

**Spanish history**

- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................

**Spanish society**

- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................
- ........................................................................................................................................

**Spanish culture**

- ........................................................................................................................................
Thank you for your participation
Appendix VI: Questionnaire B (GCSE students - general)

Questionnaire for GCSE pupils

Please underline the most appropriate answer.

1. Have you watched any Spanish films at school during the GCSE Spanish course?
   Yes     No

If you answered ‘Yes’, please list the names of the Spanish films below, with the year the film was released and/or director’s name, if possible. If you answered ‘No’, please go to Question 11.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. How much would you say your understanding of Spanish language has improved by watching this/these film(s)?
   A lot     Quite a lot     A little     Not much     Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please tick from the following options the areas of language where you feel you have improved:
Range of vocabulary
Range of expression
Understanding of tenses
Recognition of accents e.g. a Southern Spanish accent
Knowledge of other Spanish languages or dialects e.g. Catalan
Knowledge of slang
General listening skills
Other

Please specify

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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3. Did the film(s) you watched have a historical context?
   Yes     No

If you answered ‘No’, please go on to question 5.

4. How much would you say your understanding of Spanish history has improved by watching this/these film(s)?
   A lot     Quite a lot     A little     Not much     Not at all
If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of the aspects of Spanish history that you have learnt about by watching this/these film(s):

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5. How much would you say your knowledge of **Spanish society** has increased by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot           Quite a lot           A little           Not much           Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of aspects of Spanish society that you feel you have learnt about:

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6. How much would you say your knowledge of **Spanish culture** has increased by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot           Quite a lot           A little           Not much           Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of aspects of Spanish culture that you feel you have learnt about:

............................................................................................................................................................
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............................................................................................................................................................

7. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has improved your understanding of Spanish and Spain **in general**?

   A lot           Quite a lot           A little           Not much           Not at all

8. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has increased your interest in Spanish as a subject?

   A lot           Quite a lot           A little           Not much           Not at all

9. How much would you say watching this/these film(s) has motivated you to watch other Spanish films?

   A lot           Quite a lot           A little           Not much           Not at all
10. How important would you say watching (a) Spanish film(s) is as part of studying GCSE Spanish?

Only answer Question 11 if you answered ‘No’ to Question 1)

11. Would you like to have watched a Spanish film as part of the GCSE Spanish course?

Yes  No

Please give a reason for your answer:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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12. Finally, do you have any suggestions for how Spanish films could be used to enhance Spanish teaching and learning in schools?

No

Yes (Please specify)

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Appendix VII: Questionnaire C (GCSE - teachers)

Questionnaire for teachers of GCSE Spanish

Where necessary, please underline the most appropriate answer

1. Which exam board are you using to teach GCSE Spanish?

   AQA       EDEXCEL       WJEC       OCR       Other

2. Do you currently play whole Spanish films during the GCSE course?

   Yes  No

   If you answered ‘Yes’, please list the name(s) of this/these film(s) (up to 5), along with the year and director’s name, if possible. Please also add the main reason this/these film(s) has/have been chosen:

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3. Do you currently make use of Spanish film clips, trailers or teasers in Spanish lessons?

   Yes  No

   If you answered ‘Yes’, please list the name(s) of this/these film(s) (up to 5), along with the year and director’s name, if possible. Please also add the main reason this/these film(s) has/have been chosen:

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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4. Is/are this/these film(s) currently in your department’s Scheme of Work for GCSE?

Yes  No

5. Do your pupils write/speak or have your pupils written/spoken about (a) Spanish film(s) as part of a GCSE controlled assessment?

Yes  No

   If you answered ‘Yes’, please provide details:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What other classroom activities do you carry out/have you carried out in relation to watching Spanish film?

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7. What resources are you using?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
8. How are these activities assessed?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. How much would you say your pupils have enjoyed watching each of these films?

*Please rate 1-5, with one being ‘Thoroughly enjoyed’ and 5 being ‘Not enjoyed at all’ next to the names of the films (up to 5):*

……………………………………………………………………….. 1 2 3 4 5
……………………………………………………………………….. 1 2 3 4 5
……………………………………………………………………….. 1 2 3 4 5
……………………………………………………………………….. 1 2 3 4 5
……………………………………………………………………….. 1 2 3 4 5

10. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of **Spanish language** at GCSE?

Extremely useful    Very useful    Quite useful    Not very useful    Not useful at all

11. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of **Spanish history** at GCSE?

Extremely useful    Very useful    Quite useful    Not very useful    Not useful at all
12. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of aspects of Spanish society at GCSE?

Extremely useful   Very useful   Quite useful   Not very useful   Not useful at all

13. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of Spanish culture at GCSE?

Extremely useful   Very useful   Quite useful   Not very useful   Not useful at all

14. What would you say is the main advantage of using Spanish film in GCSE Spanish lessons?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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15. What would you say is the main disadvantage/obstacle in using Spanish film in GCSE Spanish lessons?

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16. Overall, how useful would you say Spanish film is supporting the teaching of GCSE Spanish?

Extremely useful   Very useful   Quite useful   Not very useful   Not useful at all

17. How strongly would you agree with the statement- ‘Spanish film at GCSE level can encourage more pupils to take Spanish for A level’?

Strongly agree   Agree   Don’t agree   Strongly disagree
18. How strongly would you agree with the statement- ‘Spanish film at GCSE level can help tackle under-achievement’?

Strongly agree  Agree  Don’t agree  Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer:
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

19. Finally, do you have any further suggestions for how Spanish film could be used to enhance Spanish teaching and learning in schools?

No
Yes (Please specify)
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix VIII: Questionnaire D (Trainee teachers)

**Questionnaire for trainee MFL teachers**

*Please underline the most appropriate answer*

1. Did you go to school in the UK?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Did you do your undergraduate degree at a UK university?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Did you study any films and/or directors within A level (or equivalent) MFL studies? If so, please provide details:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Did you study foreign cinema during your undergraduate degree? If so, please provide details:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Have you studied foreign cinema at postgraduate level? If so, please provide details:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. How would you describe your level of interest in foreign cinema?
   - Very interested
   - Quite interested
   - Not very interested
   - Not at all interested

7. Have you made any use at all of film in your lessons? If so, please provide details:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
8. How important do you think it is to teach national cinema in MFL secondary education?

Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not at all important

9. How much would you say students enjoy or would enjoy learning with the help of film, including clips?

Very much  Quite a lot  Not very much  Not at all

10. How would you describe the provision of teaching MFL through film within Initial Teacher Training at your university?

Excellent  Good  Adequate  Inadequate

11. How important would you say it is for trainee MFL teachers to be taught how to effectively use film in MFL lessons?

Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not at all important

12. Based on your experience in schools to date, to what extent is foreign film study embedded within schemes of work?

Very much  Quite a lot  Not very much  Not at all

13. Based on your experience in schools to date, how 'visually literate' would you say MFL students are?

Highly visually literate  Quite visually literate  Not very visually literate

Not at all visually literate

14. How much do you think the current Key Stage curriculum, GCSE and A level specifications encourage the teaching of film within MFL studies?

Very much  Quite a lot  Not very much  Not at all
Appendix IX: Questionnaire E (A level students - general)

Questionnaire for A level Spanish pupils

Please underline the most appropriate answers

1. Are you studying or have you studied (a) Spanish film(s)/director(s) as part of your studies in A level Spanish?

   Yes          No

   If you answered 'No' please go to question 14

   If you answered 'Yes' please specify the names of the films, along with directors’ names and years, if possible, below:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Are you studying or have you studied (a) Spanish film(s)/director(s) as part of the assessed ‘Cultural Topic’ or similar unit?

   Yes          No

3. How much would you say your understanding of Spanish language has improved by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot         Quite a lot      A little      Not much      Not at all

   If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please tick from the following options the areas of language where you feel you have improved:
   Range of vocabulary
   Range of expression
   Understanding of tenses
   Recognition of accents e.g. a Southern Spanish accent
Knowledge of other Spanish languages or dialects e.g. Catalan
Knowledge of slang
General listening skills
Other
Please specify:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Did the film(s) you watched have a historical context?
   Yes               No
If you answered 'No', please go on to question 6.

5. How much would you say your understanding of Spanish history has improved by watching this/these film(s)?
   A lot               Quite a lot                  A little              Not much              Not at all
If you answered 'A lot', 'Quite a lot' or 'A little', please provide details of the aspects of Spanish history that you have learnt about by watching this/these film(s):

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6. How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish society has increased by watching this/these film(s)?
   A lot               Quite a lot                  A little              Not much              Not at all
If you answered 'A lot', 'Quite a lot' or 'A little', please provide details of aspects of Spanish society that you feel you have learnt about:

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7. How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish culture has increased by watching this/these film(s)?
   A lot               Quite a lot                  A little              Not much              Not at all
If you answered 'A lot', 'Quite a lot' or 'A little', please provide details of aspects of Spanish culture that you feel you have learnt about:
8. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has improved your understanding of Spanish and Spain in general?
   A lot       Quite a lot       A little       Not much       Not at all

9. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has increased your interest in Spanish as a subject?
   A lot       Quite a lot       A little       Not much       Not at all

10. How much would you say watching this/these film(s) has motivated you to watch other Spanish films?
    A lot       Quite a lot       A little       Not much       Not at all

11. How important would you say watching (a) Spanish film(s) is as part of studying A level Spanish?
    Essential   Very important   Quite important   Not important

12. How would you rate the resources you have used in lessons with your teacher to support the study of Spanish cinema/directors?
    Excellent   Good       Adequate       Unhelpful

   Please provide specific comments if possible:
   ...........................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................
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13. How much would you say studying Spanish cinema has encouraged you to continue studying Spanish at university?
Only answer Question 14 if you answered ‘No’ to Question 1

14. Would you like to have watched a Spanish film as part of the A level Spanish course?

Yes    No

Please give a reason for your answer:

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15. Finally, do you have any suggestions for how Spanish films could be used to enhance Spanish teaching and learning in schools?

No

Yes (Please specify)

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Appendix X: Questionnaire F (A level teachers)

Questionnaire for A level teachers

Where necessary, please underline the most appropriate answer. Where the question is not relevant to you, please write ‘N/A’.

1. Which exam board are you using to teach A level Spanish?

   AQA   EDEXCEL   WJEC   OCR   Other

2. Are your A level students studying a Spanish film (not Latin American) within ‘the work of a Spanish/Hispanic director’ as part of the ‘Cultural Topic’ or a similar unit?

   Yes    No

   If you answered ‘No’ please say why:

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Overall, how would you rate the Cultural Topic in terms of educational and motivational value?

   Excellent   Very good   Good   Adequate   Poor   N/A

4. Which film(s)/director(s) are your A level pupils studying? Please also provide year and director’s name, if possible

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
5. Why has/have this/these film(s)/director(s) been chosen?

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6. What aspects of Spanish language, if any, did you intend for your pupils to improve by studying this/these film(s)?

None

Range of vocabulary

Range of expression

Understanding of tenses

Recognition of accents e.g. a Southern Spanish accent

Knowledge of other Spanish languages or dialects e.g. Catalan

Knowledge of slang

General listening skills

Other

*Please specify:*

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7. How successful would you say studying this/these film(s) has been in improving these aspects of language?

Very successful Quite successful Not very successful Not at all successful
8. What aspects of **Spanish history** did you intend for your pupils to learn about by watching this/these film(s)?

9. How successful would you say studying this/these films has been in teaching pupils about this/these historical aspects?

   - Very successful
   - Quite successful
   - Not very successful
   - Not at all successful

10. What aspects of **Spanish society** did you intend for your pupils to learn about by studying this/these film(s)?

11. How successful would you say studying this/these film(s) has been in teaching pupils about this/these social aspects?
12. What aspects of **Spanish culture** did you intend for your pupils to learn about by studying this/these film(s)

13. How successful would you say studying this/these film(s) has been in teaching pupils about this/these cultural aspects?

14. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has improved your pupils’ understanding of Spanish and Spain **in general**?

15. How much would you say watching this/these Spanish film(s) has increased your pupils’ interest in Spanish as a subject?
16. How much would you say watching this/these film(s) has motivated your pupils to watch other Spanish films?

A lot       Quite a lot       A little       Not much       Not at all

17. What resources have you been using?

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18. How have you been formatively assessing the study of Spanish films?

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19. How have you been summatively assessing the study of Spanish films?

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20. What do you see as being the main advantages of A level pupils studying (a) Spanish/Hispanic film?

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21. What do you see as being the main obstacles in teaching through film?
22. Finally, do you have any suggestions for how Spanish films could be used to enhance Spanish teaching and learning in schools?

No
Yes (Please specify)

Any further comments:
Appendix XI: Questionnaire G (Undergraduate students - general)

Questionnaire for undergraduate Spanish students

Where necessary, please underline the most appropriate answer.

1. Which Spanish cinema modules have you studied as part of your undergraduate degree in Spanish (or any undergraduate degree that includes Spanish)?

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2. How much would you say your understanding of Spanish language has improved by studying the films in these modules?

   A lot   Quite a lot   A little   Not much   Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please tick from the following options the areas of language where you feel you have improved, and if possible note the relevant name(s) of the film(s):

Range of vocabulary NAME OF FILM(S):
Range of expression NAME OF FILM(S):
Understanding of tenses NAME OF FILM(S):
Recognition of accents e.g. a Southern Spanish accent NAME OF FILM(S):
Knowledge of other Spanish languages or dialects e.g. Catalan NAME OF FILM(S):
Knowledge of slang NAME OF FILM(S):
General listening skills NAME OF FILM(S):
Other

Please specify (if possible in relation to specific films)

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
3. How much would you say your understanding of **Spanish history** has improved by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot  Quite a lot  A little  Not much  Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of the aspects of Spanish history that you have learnt about by watching this/these film(s) (if possible, in relation to specific films):

4. How much would you say your knowledge of **Spanish society** has increased by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot  Quite a lot  A little  Not much  Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of aspects of Spanish society that you feel you have learnt about (if possible, in relation to specific films):

5. How much would you say your knowledge of **Spanish culture** has increased by watching this/these film(s)?

   A lot  Quite a lot  A little  Not much  Not at all

If you answered ‘A lot’, ‘Quite a lot’ or ‘A little’, please provide details of aspects of Spanish culture that you feel you have learnt about (if possible, in relation to specific films):
6. Which film(s) would you say has/have been most helpful overall in the context of your studies in Spanish? *Please say why:*

                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
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7. Which film(s) would you say has/have been least helpful overall in the context of your studies in Spanish? *Please say why:*

                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
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8. Which film(s) would you say has/have been most enjoyable to study? *Please say why:*

                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
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9. Which film(s) would you say has/have been least enjoyable to study? *Please say why:*

                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
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10. Which film(s) would you say has/have been the most memorable? *Please say why:*

                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
                                                                                           
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11. Are there any other Spanish films that you would like to see on the course? Please specify:

12. Did you study any Spanish films at A level? If so, please specify:

13. How much would you say studying Spanish films at A level helped prepare you for studying Spanish at undergraduate level?

   Very much       Quite a lot       Not much       Not at all

14. How much would you say studying Spanish films at undergraduate level has increased your interest in Spanish?

   Very much       Quite a lot       Not much       Not at all

15. How much would you say studying Spanish films at undergraduate level has motivated you to watch other Spanish films?

   Very much       Quite a lot       Not much       Not at all
16. Do you have any further suggestions for how Spanish films could be used to enhance Spanish teaching at undergraduate level?
Appendix XII: Questionnaire H (Undergraduate lecturers)

Questionnaire for undergraduate Spanish lecturers

Where necessary, please underline the most appropriate answer

1. Please complete the table below to confirm the modules in Spanish cinema and relevant Spanish films to study for undergraduate students of Spanish at your university:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF MODULE</th>
<th>TITLE(S) OF FILM(S)</th>
<th>DIRECTOR’S NAME</th>
<th>YEAR OF FILM</th>
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Please continue on another page if necessary

2. How important do you think it is to study Spanish cinema as part of Spanish studies at undergraduate level?

Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not important

3. How much would you say students enjoy studying Spanish films as part of their Spanish studies?

Very much  Quite a lot  Not much  Not at all

4. Which aspects of studying Spanish films would you say students most enjoy?

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5. How much would you say studying Spanish films at undergraduate level encourages students to watch other Spanish films?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. How much would you say studying Spanish films at undergraduate level increases students’ interest in Spanish as a subject?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</thead>
</table>

7. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of **Spanish language** at undergraduate level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Quite useful</th>
<th>Not very useful</th>
<th>Not useful at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you answered ‘Extremely useful’, ‘Very useful’ or ‘Quite useful’, please tick from the following options the areas of language where you feel your students most improve:

- Range of vocabulary
- Range of expression
- Understanding of tenses
- Recognition of accents e.g. a Southern Spanish accent
- Knowledge of other Spanish languages or dialects e.g. Catalan
- Knowledge of slang
- General listening skills
- Other

*Please specify (if possible in relation to specific films)*
8. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of Spanish history at undergraduate level?

   Extremely useful  Very useful  Quite useful  Not very useful  Not useful at all

If you answered ‘Extremely useful’, ‘Very useful’ or ‘Quite useful’, please provide details of the aspects of Spanish history that you feel your students have learnt about by studying Spanish cinema (if possible, in relation to specific films):

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9. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of aspects of Spanish society at undergraduate level?

   Extremely useful  Very useful  Quite useful  Not very useful  Not useful at all

If you answered ‘Extremely useful’, ‘Very useful’ or ‘Quite useful’, please provide details of aspects of Spanish society that you feel your students have learnt about (if possible, in relation to specific films):

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10. How useful would you say Spanish film is in terms of enhancing the teaching of Spanish culture at undergraduate level?

    Extremely useful  Very useful  Quite useful  Not very useful  Not useful at all

If you answered ‘Extremely useful’, ‘Very useful or ‘Quite useful, please provide details of aspects of Spanish culture that you feel your students have learnt about (if possible, in relation to specific films):

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   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
11. Which Spanish films currently taught at your university do you consider to be most useful for teaching Spanish students? Please say why:

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12. Are there any other Spanish films you would like to see on the Spanish course at your university? Please give reasons why:

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13. What do you feel are the best teaching strategies for teaching students about Spanish cinema?

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14. What methods of assessment would you say are most effective for assessing students’ understanding of Spanish films?

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15. Do you have any further comments regarding the teaching of Spanish language, history, society and culture through film?
Appendix XIII: Questionnaire I (Realism)

‘Spanish Cinema: Is it for real?’

1. Define ‘realism’ in the context of film in your own words:

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2. What Spanish films have you watched?

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3. Please comment on how ‘realist’ you’d say each of this films are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very realist (VR)</th>
<th>Quite realist (QR)</th>
<th>Not realist at all (NR)</th>
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</table>

4. Please specify the elements of each film you consider to be realist:

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5. How realist would you say Spanish cinema is in general? Please underline.
6. How important is it for you to watch a film that could be considered 'realist' in some way? Please underline.

Very important  Quite important  Not important

7. What impact does a film with realist qualities have on you as a spectator? Please be as detailed as you can.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is very much appreciated.
Appendix XIV: Questionnaire J (Genre)

Genre

1. What Spanish films have you seen as part of your Spanish studies?

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2. How would you describe the genre of each of those Spanish films?

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3. How would you define the term ‘genre’ in the context of film?

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4. What are your earliest memories of recognising or understanding genre (not necessarily to do with cinema)?
5. How important is the genre of a film for you in terms of being attracted to watch it? Please underline
   Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not very important  Not at all important

6. How much would you say the current specification and assessment structure in Spanish encourages you to consider Spanish films as belonging to (a) particular genre(s)? Please underline
   Very much  Quite a lot  Not very much  Not at all

7. How important do you think it is to consider a Spanish film as belonging to (a) particular genre(s)? Please underline
   Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not very important  Not at all important

8. From the Spanish films you have seen, would you be able to summarise what typically constitutes ‘a Spanish film’?

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9. To what extent would you agree that ‘a Spanish film’ constitutes a genre in itself? *Please underline*

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<tr>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree to some extent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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</table>

10. How much would you agree with the idea that genre conventions help you to better understand a Spanish film? *Please underline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree to some extent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. How much would you agree with the idea that genre conventions have the ability to alter your emotions when watching a film? *Please underline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree to some extent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Would you consider a film from the Basque Country (in Basque) or a film from Catalonia (in Catalan), or a film from any other region in Spain not made in Castilian Spanish, to be ‘a Spanish film’? *Please underline*

Yes No

Please give details:

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13. Can you think of any directors, Spanish or otherwise, that may constitute a genre in themselves?

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14. How does a multi-genre film impact on you as a spectator? Please give details:

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Many thanks for your participation.
Appendix XV: Questionnaire K (Stars)

Stars questionnaire

1. What Spanish films have you watched during the GCSE Spanish course?
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   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Had you previously heard of any of the actors? Please give details.
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
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   Very much  Quite a lot  A little  Not very much  Not at all

4. How important would you say a film star is to the identity of a film? Please underline.

   Essential  Very important  Quite important  Not very important
   Not at all important

5. What sort of expectations, if any, do you have of a film because of its ‘stars’?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Very much           Quite a lot           A little           Not very much           Not at all

7. To what extent do film stars enable you to identify with the characters? Please underline.

Very much           Quite a lot           A little           Not very much           Not at all

8. In your own words, define the term, ‘film star’.

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Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is very much appreciated.
Appendix XVI: Questionnaire L: *El laberinto del fauno*

*El laberinto del fauno* (Guillermo del Toro, 2006)

*Please underline the most appropriate answer*

1. How much would you say you have enjoyed studying the film, *El laberinto del fauno*?

Very much    Quite a lot    Not much    Not at all

2. What aspects of studying this film have you not enjoyed? Please specify:

3. How would you rate the resources and university study session used to support the study of this film?

The DVD itself, including extras such

as Director's Commentary    Excellent    Good    Adequate    Unhelpful
Cinepack booklet    Excellent    Good    Adequate    Unhelpful
Cornerhouse booklet    Excellent    Good    Adequate    Unhelpful
Teacher's additional worksheets    Excellent    Good    Adequate    Unhelpful
MMU essay session and booklet    Excellent    Good    Adequate    Unhelpful

4. Would you recommend the film to other Spanish students?

Yes    No

5. How much would you say studying the film has increased your interest in Spanish cinema as a whole?

Very much    Quite a lot    Not much    Not at all

6. How much do you feel your understanding of and use of Spanish language have improved from studying the film?

Very much    Quite a lot    Not much    Not at all

Please provide examples:

7. How much would you say that your knowledge of Spanish history has increased from studying the film?
8. How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish society has increased by studying the film?
   Very much   Quite a lot   Not much   Not at all

Please provide examples: ........................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

9. How much would you say your knowledge of Spanish culture has increased by studying the film?
   Very much   Quite a lot   Not much   Not at all

Please provide examples: ........................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

10. Do you have any further suggestions for how this film could be used to teach Spanish students? Please provide details below:
    .............................................................................................................................
    .............................................................................................................................
    .............................................................................................................................
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