

LGBTQIA+ cartographies in filmic Madrid: narrative traits of spatial characterization

Cartografías cinematográficas LGBTQIA+ en el Madrid fílmico:
rasgos narrativos de caracterización espacial

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Abstract

In this work, the spatial repertoire and its dominant features are analyzed as a source of indirect characterization of LGBTQIA+ characters, studying their representation in feature films set in Madrid and its province and exhibited on the commercial circuit. The methodology that serves as the basis for the study is fundamentally qualitative and was developed by the authors of this work inspired by Hamon's use of narrative frameworks, a concept redefined, in turn, by Chatman as a narrative trait. The fundamental objective is to specify, in short, which spaces make up the LGBTQIA+ narrative universe, that is, the filmic cartography that the cinema constructs and advances for characters representing sectors of the LGBTQIA+ community and, as is verified here, since not all of these sectors have not all been treated in the same way nor have they all been represented with the same level of detail and extent, we wish to define the distinguishing features of their associated spaces.

Keywords: filmic space; narrative space; filmic cartography; LGBTQIA+ character.

Resumen

En este trabajo se analiza el repertorio espacial y sus rasgos dominantes como fuente de caracterización indirecta de los personajes LGBTQI+,¹ estudiando su representación en largometrajes de ficción localizados en Madrid y su provincia y exhibidos en el circuito comercial. La metodología que sirve de base al estudio es de tipo cualitativo, fundamentalmente, y es un desarrollo propio de los autores inspirado en el análisis de *marcas narrativas* de Hamon, concepto redefinido, a su vez, por Chatman como *rasgo narrativo* y en el estudio de los *espacios diferenciales* y los modelos de Casetti y di Chio. El objetivo fundamental es el de precisar, en suma, qué espacios componen el universo narrativo LGBTQI+, es decir, la cartografía cinematográfica que el cine elabora y propone para cada grupo de personajes en la Comunidad de Madrid y, ya que se ha constatado que no todos ellos han recibido el mismo tratamiento ni han sido representados con el mismo detalle y extensión, cuáles son sus rasgos diferenciales.

Palabras clave: espacio fílmico; espacio narrativo; cartografía cinematográfica; personaje LGBTQIA+.

1 Introduction

The capacity for cinematographic narratives to construct our perceptions and even our judgements about the reality that surrounds us has been addressed in numerous works (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2015). This capacity for transference has added impact when cinematic representations refer to dimensions of reality that are alien or, above all, inaccessible to direct experience, particularly to the euro-centric, heteropatriarchal, and/or anglophone vision of the world (Shohat & Stam, 2002). As Robert Stam comments the most interesting thing about “official” film theory’s relation to race and multiculturalism (and we would add sexuality) “is that theory sustained for so long such a remarkable silence on the subject. European and North America film theory for most of this century seems to have had the illusion of being raceless” (Stam, 2000, p. 272). Stereotypes are a decisive factor in helping to rupture this silence.

1 The English acronym LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Agender and others) is not suitable for use in this investigation since we were unable to find any instances in our corpus of characters that might be considered, beyond doubt to be Q or '+'. In this way, we have chosen to use a shortened version of the acronym: LGBTI in the majority of this work.

Despite being conceptual simplifications, stereotypes are merely cognitive or communicative tools devised for a necessary purpose: to simplify the exchange of information and our understanding of the world by attaching diverse meanings to one single, complex whole that, in some sense, summarizes the essential characteristics of the reality with which we must interact. In this way, stereotypes or prejudice play a part in almost all our judgements (Rodrigo-Alsina, 1999, p. 83) and are at the heart of what Berger and Luckmann termed “tipificatory schemes” (1995, p. 45). However, while it is true that the use of stereotypes, as generalizing devices, genuinely simplifies our interactions with the world and makes us more competent and efficient in those interactions, it is also the case that the result of this generalizing simplification is to erase all the thousands of nuances that characterize and distinguish the individuals making up the stereotyped group. As Inmaculada Gordillo explains: “Although stereotypes help us to order and give meaning to the actions that impinge on our consciousness, they become a problem when we use them as the foundation for ideas and opinions that are supposedly serious” (Gordillo, 2007, p. 212).

The dysfunctional aspect of the stereotype is manifest when the generalizations or simplifications it makes are negative, when it is poorly constructed, or has been based on unfounded prejudice. Stereotypes become particularly harmful in those cases where our access to the reference reality on which they have been built, through which we could question the construction of a given stereotype, is difficult or indeed, impossible. These instances give the stereotype and *stereotyping* its bad press with good reason —and their manifestations in Spanish cinema have been analyzed by several authors (Gordillo, 2007; Tello Díaz, 2016).

1.1 *Mediated space versus lived space*

The inspiration behind this work is the idea that filmic space, in contrast to the geographic space that is frequently its reference point, is deliberately selected from a wide repertoire of possibilities or even, where necessary, conjured from nothing. Filmic space is by definition then, a *mediated space*, which, in the words of Agustín Gámir comprises:

That space from which we obtain knowledge and information via the communications media. It is the space we are shown by the TV, is described to us by newspapers and the radio or is presented to us in the cinema and our knowledge of this space, since it does not proceed from our own senses, is beyond our control (Gámir, 2012, p. 3).

This factor has particular relevance in the consideration of stereotypes, since, as we shall see, part of the characterization of film protagonists occurs indirectly through the use of spaces in or

actions occurring in a specific concrete city (in the present study, in Madrid). This process configures what has been termed the *filmic city*: “an entangled mass of image and language, of life and death” (Barber, 2002, p. 13). Unlike in documentary films, where the action tends to develop in the spaces addressed by the reality documented, in fictional films, space, is at the very least, selected or, where necessary, constructed. And yet, it is through this simple process of inclusion or omission, the choice of some spaces over others and, above all their characterization, that the cinematographer imposes on the film whatever vision they wish to present to their audience. Thus the filmmaker’s own unique view permeates the audience’s perceptions of the film’s protagonists and the actions that form part of the narrative. As Noël Burch comments, filmic representation speaks of two spaces: “the one included within the frame and the one outside the frame” (Burch, 1969, p. 26). The director must recreate these places through various tipificatory frameworks or schemes. Concerning these tipificatory schemes, Berger and Luckmann highlight something of particular relevance:

I apprehend the other by means of tipificatory schemes even in the “face-to-face” situation, although these schemes are more “vulnerable” to his interference than in “remoter” forms of interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1991[1966], p. 45).

That is, the ability of a stereotype tipificatory scheme—to impose a particular vision of reality is inversely proportional to the ability of an individual to access this reality for themselves in an unmediated way. In this way, the determining factor in the spatial codification that arises from filmic representation is the audience’s constructed consciousness itself a function of their ability to access for itself similar spaces or, in other words, as a function of the distance between the *mediated space* and the *lived space*. This last term being understood as “that which corresponds to their own surroundings at home or work, or to the spaces they frequently travel through on route between different places” (Gámir, 2012, p. 3).

For this reason, as we said, it is extremely interesting to analyze instances of the cinematic spatial representation of spaces that the audience cannot or is not usually able to access in real life and are therefore dependent on the codifications offered by the communications media, that is, mediated spaces, to construct their vision of a particular world. Filmic space and scenography, as Santiago Vila (1997) maintains, are more than a merely decorative element in filmmaking and are, in fact, a central part of the narrative.

2 Objectives

Firstly, to identify the spaces differentiated as LGBTQI+ in commercial films set in Madrid; secondly, to discuss the cinematic treatment of these spaces; and thirdly, to examine the way in which LGBTQI+ issues and the community are characterized through these spaces. Here we should mention that the films included in the present study did not have any characters clearly identifying as Q or + thus we will, henceforth, use the shortened acronym LGBTI.

3 Methodology

3.1 The characterization of cinematographic protagonists

In the present work we have used a mixed, qualitative methodology to address how LGBTI topics and protagonists are portrayed in the films studied. The symbolic dimension of existing narratives such as character, space, and action converts these into an interesting avenue by which to access the collective imagination decanted into filmic storylines, thus, we can analyze a film via any of these three elements: character, space, or action (Casetti & di Chio, 2009). Character and action are key to the shape of the narrative and the script (McKee, 2017) and important to *thematological* studies (García Sahagún & Arquero Blanco, 2019) while space as we see, is a crucial element in filmic representation. Notwithstanding the fact that the protagonist is only a representation, access of this sort is perfectly credible.

This last point is fundamental since the protagonist's particular trait of being LGBTI that we propose to study is one that belongs to their psychological representation. Therefore, it would be very difficult to speak of the LGBTI community's filmic representation while neglecting the way in which protagonists' psychological dimensions are represented particularly when these dimensions are, according to Chatman (1990), perfectly identifiable as such, without any margin for doubt:

It is enough to distinguish the narrative form from the real-life case by adding "narrative" or "fictive" to remind us that we are not dealing with psychological realities but artistic constructs, yet that we understand these constructs through highly coded psychological information that we have picked up in ordinary living, including our experiences with art (Chatman, 1980[1978], p. 126).

That is, we should never confuse the person with their personality or character, but, in certain actions or the articulation of particular traits of a protagonist within a narrative we are connected with their benchmarks of their situation.

Furthermore, in his work *Pour un statut sémiologique du personnage* (1977), Philippe Hamon explores the articulation of the binomial signified/signifier of a narrative character where the signified would comprise the traits that are specific to the character so differentiating them from other characters while the signifier indicates their meaning within the discourse.

The departure point for the present research is, precisely, a protagonist's ability to transmit to an audience a particular reference point, either in terms of form or meaning. However, we will direct our attention primarily to studying characterization through a filmic "spatial profile" (Casetti & di Chio, 2009, p. 132).

While the analysis of the paradigm of differentiating narrative *markers* is inspired by the work of Hamon, we have opted to use the concept of a *trait* refined by Chatman, where a trait is understood in the following way:

For narrative purposes, then, a trait may be said to be a narrative adjective out of the vernacular labeling a personal quality of character, as it persists over part or whole of the story (its "domain") [...] The definition of narrative trait as an adjective, which in turn is defined as a personal quality [...] usefully emphasizes the transaction between narrative and audience. The audience relies upon its knowledge of the trait-code in the real world (Chatman, 1980[1978], pp. 125).

This foundation, as with that offered by Mieke Bal (1990), enables us to bypass certain objections proposed by other authors such as Hardison who reject the idea of conducting a psychological interpretation of character.

The protagonist is not a human being, although they may seem like one. They have no psyche, personality, ideology, competence to act, but they do possess traits that open the possibility for their psychological and ideological description (Bal, 1990, p. 88).

Thus, the present study uses a qualitative methodology with the object of examining the use of space as an indirect means of characterization for LGBTI protagonists. To delimit and make this work more manageable, we have selected to examine commercial feature films set entirely or partially in the city of Madrid. We decided to use only commercial (fiction) films because these have the widest reach in terms of audience: they are not intended exclusively or specifically for the LGBTI community and are distributed via several channels or "forms of viewing Spanish cinema" (Egeda, 2009, p. 19), such as projection in commercial cinemas, broadcasting on non-specialist TV channels, reproduction on high market penetration media such as DVD or Blue Ray, and recently via on-demand streaming services by cable networks or over the internet.

This decision was taken as we wish to understand the view that non-specialist audiences might reach concerning cinematic cartography and differential use of the spaces within which LGBTI protagonists move within the constraints of so-called *Spanish cinema* or the *Spanish cinema brand* (García Fernández, 2015). Furthermore, the films selected come from the three trends identified by Vicente J. Benet (2012): “eccentric lives”; “the establishment of modernity” and, most importantly, “the transformed now”.

We limited ourselves to films set in the Community of Madrid since, without doubt, this body of work presents a potentially complete universe offering a wide diversity of spaces for analysis, giving, in addition, a representative view of how these spaces are and how they function in a big city and its surrounding area of influence. As Susan Larson has shown, in Spanish cinema there are few urbanizations other than Madrid that better demonstrate the evolution of urban space and its narrative possibilities (Larson, 2021).

The complete corpus for analysis comprises twenty-four feature-length Spanish fiction films² premiered in commercial cinemas and which were distributed and exhibited to the general public. All of the films were produced between 1961 and 2018 and all contain the depiction of a protagonist that might be LGBTI or identified as such.³

It is important to note that the films included in our corpus were those where the film dialogue and official para-texts (posters or advertising material for the premiere and other showings of the film) explicitly mention the sexuality or sexual condition of the main protagonist. That is, we excluded films where it is necessary to deduce or intuit that the protagonist is LGBTI (or LGBTQI+), choosing instead only those cases where it is clear (via the means indicated) that the central character of the film is LGBTI.

In addition, this corpus contains commercial films, which while not necessarily hugely successful, had a premiere registered with the *Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales* (ICAA: Institute for Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts) at the Spanish Culture and Sports Ministry. Consequently, we excluded films that did not appear publicly, as they did not pass the censorship process and were not premiered during Spain’s post-dictatorship transition period (1975-1982) or the subsequent democratic era.

2 In this work, we have selected only fiction films or those that employ a dramatized plots that while credible are previously scripted. Thus, we have included the feature *El transexual* (‘The Transexual’) by José Jara because, despite containing a documentary section there is a screenplay that supports the invented plotlines (Deltell, 2011).

3 The complete list of films analysed here can be found in the annexe to this article.

Here it is relevant to mention the decision to include three films that do not contain any dialogue with clear references to the LGBTI status of the main character or which had significant issues with Francoist censorship: *Diferente* (Luis María Delgado, 1961); *Más bonita que ninguna* (Luis César Amador, 1965) and *Mi querida señorita* (Jaime de Armiñán, 1971). These three films were re-premiered, and had screen runs after the Francoist era at which point the para-texts accompanying the films did mention the LGBTI status of one or other of their main protagonists.

3.2 Characterization and typology of filmic space: differential space

According to the narratologist García Jiménez (1993, p. 291) space, alongside time and action constitute a means of indirect characterization, that is, the set of traits that are not directly incorporated into the protagonist's character: their physical appearance, age, sex, sexual orientation, attractiveness, psychological profile, socioeconomic status, body language, and so on,⁴ but which provide, by association, equally relevant information. In the international arena, referring once again to Casetti and di Chio (2009, pp. 122-134), these authors consider space to be a key element that can be used to sub-divide the study of film. In this way, we could make a stylistic examination of the entire production of a given national cinema (Bordwell et al., 1998) or, even, perform a textual analysis, layer by layer, of individual feature films (González Requena, 2007).

In the course of this research, we were especially interested in spaces that provide information about a particular protagonist, or the potential convergences and contrasts between protagonists, but most importantly, our focus was on the characterization of places implicated entirely or partially in the construction of a protagonist's LGBTI identity. When considering spatial characterization, it is essential, therefore, to narrow down the concept, since it would be unproductive to consider elements that might be irrelevant and pick any type of space to study without employing any criteria. The result of such an approach would simply provide an inventory of urban and suburban locations. In this way, the spaces that inspire interest in this work are those that we classify as "differential".

In the present work, a "differential space" is one that identifies the very essence of a character within the narrative or put another way, those places in which the actions of characters are antonomastic or specific, differentiating the character (hence the term) from the rest of the inhabitants of the filmic universe under examination. In this way, a differential space for a

4 Concerning direct characterisation of LGBTI+ protagonists, the reader should consult the work of Alfeo Álvarez (1997, 2001 and 2011), Pelayo, (2010), or González de Garay (2013 and 2017).

character who is a police officer or a criminal –would be a police station; for a croupier it might be a casino; for a priest, the church; for a medical professional, a hospital or other health related location; and so on. We could define the concept more precisely and say that differential spaces are those in which a character engages in differential actions where these, in turn, are actions that identify that character in a specific way, differentiating them from other characters: the police station is where the police officer works or where the criminal is detained; the casino is where the croupier plays; the church is where the priest says mass; the operating theatre is where the surgeon operates, and so on.

To categorize these narrative spaces, we have identified three major groupings depending on their level of differential specificity or their use by the character:⁵

- *Generic spaces*: these do not identify a character differentially, although, if they appear frequently, they can provide additional character information. For example, if we see a character leaving a library, this does not convey the same thing as seeing them leave a hospital, or a brothel. When the plot reveals these types of associations, it is generally done for a meaningful reason: to qualify the character in some way. This is especially so in cinema where a large number of locations implies increased production costs.
- *Differential spaces*: as we have said, are spaces that specifically identify a character, a group, or category of characters and where actions take place that are specific to these locations and by which we recognize them as differential spaces.
- *Generic spaces used differentially*: often, a space that might originally be considered generic can be used recurrently in such a way that the actions that take place there are differential. For example, an urban wasteland is, a priori, a generic space, however the frequency with which this space may appear associated with crime, as is the case in so-called *cine quinqué* (meaning delinquency cinema), can transform it into a differential space. In such instances we would call this an instance of the differential use of a generic space or, as we have said here, these are generic spaces used differentially.

4 Studies concerning LGBTQIA+ cinematographic spaces

Although numerous studies have considered the use of space within storylines, either in terms of its role as a purely narrative device or in terms of its symbolic dimension, there are, however, very few concerning urban space in relation to LGBTI identities. Where they do exist, these tend

⁵ We could also consider abstract spaces, these being those which have no physical manifestation such as symbolic spaces or those visited in dreams, hallucinations, or virtual environments.

to be outside the field of narrative studies and are formulated, instead, from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, or Queer studies. This body of work includes several treatises dedicated, at least partially, to cataloguing LGBTQIA+ spaces and exploring how they are configured and used in reality. In this section, we will look at some of the most relevant examples. In 1976 a somewhat unique text was published. This work was peculiar both in concept and approach and, with its evocative title (*Celtiberia gay*), it introduced readers to the dynamics of the first clubs dedicated to so-called 'impersonation shows' springing up in cities across Spain. These locations included the legendary 'Gay Club' in Madrid at the junction between Paseo de Recoletos and Atocha street and would be considered the antecedents of what we know today as Drag culture and were the first spaces for homo/heterosexual interaction. This essay, penned by Jesús Alcalde and Ricardo J. Barceló reveals a fascination for a new reality that questioned the macho stereotypes dominating the society of the time and asserts the novel identity claims of the emerging Spain from an almost anthropological viewpoint focused, as we said, on the blossoming of a vibrant new reality in cities like Madrid and Barcelona:

The gay show is above all an atmosphere, a tone that the gay scene manages to create instantly and in which the audience participates, with the half-smile of dignified but curious spectators, even before they enter the club, because they already have access to it via the secret caress of intimate taboos (Alcalde & Barceló, 1976, p. 47).

The international field of LGTBI (and LGBTQIA+) film studies began to appear in the last century, during the 1980's (Stam, 2000, p. 262-267), the work of Teresa de Lauretis being key to defining this area of study (Lauretis, 1989). In 1991, in his seminal essay *La sociedad rosa* (*The pink society*) concerning male homosexuality, the anthropologist, Óscar Guash, attempted the first in-depth analysis of not only gay typologies (Guash, 1991, pp. 74-108), but also of what he terms "instituciones y escenas" (institutions and scenes) (Guash, 1991, pp. 109-135). Today, while Guash's almost costumbrista approach has the undeniable worth of all pioneering work, the categorizations of his homosexual subjects seem somewhat anachronistic and are in some instances, almost parodic. However, in his consideration of space, it is interesting to note how Guash does not simply enumerate and describe gay spaces, rather his principal focus is on detailing the protocols established inside these spaces and even their symbolic dimensions. Slightly later, and taking a more methodologically structured approach, is Begoña Enguix's study examining male homosexuality in Valencia (1995). Her book contains a chapter detailing what the

author terms –taking the meaning from common usage– “sitios de ambiente”⁶ (Enguix, 1995, pp. 111-130). Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Enguix’s work is that while she too catalogues locations in a similar way to Guash she also addresses the way in which the judgements made by persons with particular LGBTQIA+ profiles affect the function, meaning, and necessity of such spaces. That is, the author gives an insight into the self-perception of individual members of the LGBTQIA+ community concerning the relevance and implications of the existence of these spaces in the construction of a given gay or queer identity.

More recently and of particular relevance, although with a slightly different focus, is the work of Cram, a teacher at the University of Iowa. It would be fair to summarize the topic of this author’s work as the analysis of the connections between space, territory, power, and identity, and highlighting new avenues of investigation in relation to *queer* space. In the author’s words:

Queer hetorics have readily mapped the liminalities of queer space: public parks turned cruising grounds, streets fashioned into the territory of protest, the closet, bathrooms, ‘zines, and more. The study of queer geographies may include memorial or commemorative spaces, geographies of citizenship, subjectivity, geographies of the rural, urban, or suburban, or mobilities betwixt and between (Cram, 2019, p. 100).

Lastly, studies addressing the relationship between geographic space and cinema are few and far between, however, while they take a different perspective from that of the present study, relevant work includes the previously mentioned Gámir (2012) and also Gámir and Valdés’s (2007).

⁶ Here, the term “ambiente” (ambience or atmosphere) identifies, in broad and general terms, those places, mostly used by the LGBTQIA+ community for leisure to distinguish such places from those which do not have a specific LGBTQIA+ association. Thus, the terms bar de ambiente, discoteca de ambiente, zonas de ambiente, and ir por el ambiente (ambience bar, ambience club, ambience zone and to go [somewhere] for the ambience) are common terms in Spanish gay argot. More recently, where a venue is not specifically aimed at but openly welcomes the LGBTI community, it will be identified as “friendly”, that is, “LGTBI friendly”, “LGBTQIA+ friendly” or “gay friendly”.

5 A cinematographic cartography of the gay and male bisexual⁷ universe

Homosexuality and male bisexuality are, without doubt, the dimensions of the LGBTI universe that are best represented and treated in greatest detail in Spanish cinema. Indeed, one of the most striking elements in this field of study is precisely this asymmetry in representation and it affects every level of analysis from the characters, their actions, to of course, the spaces they inhabit. It is not just a question of quantity—there are more films about this particular cohort of the LGBTI community than any other—but also a question of quality. Compared to other LGBTI characters, homosexual protagonists are, in general, portrayed in more detail and display a greater dynamic range within the narrative appearing in diverse roles from the most minor of incidental characters to the main protagonist capable of influencing and developing every level of the plot. Thus, in our corpus, we see homosexual characters in roles ranging from the villain to the hero and everything in between passing through a gallery of characters far richer than might at first be imagined. As a logical consequence of this abundance of characters, so there is an extensive and diverse array of spaces through which they move. Revisiting Guash's essay, this author exposed the existence of a series of locations that play a recurrent part in the activities of the gay community, for instance, the club, the disco-bar, and the sauna to which, as a brief note, Begoña Enguix adds train stations and certain parks (Enguix, 1995, p. 118).

Naturally, in cities as large as Madrid, the extent of urban space is significant and indeed remains important, but, nowadays we must also consider the digital spaces of specialist social media platforms such as Badoo, Tinder, Grindr, and Wapo, to name but a few. The immensity of these spaces has transformed the processes of human interaction, particularly with respect to various social protocols and indeed the establishment of initial social contact. The key question is, how many of these spaces appear on film?

Apart from *Diferente* (Luis M. Delgado, 1961), the first films in which both character and space both acquire their full being are two by the filmmaker Eloy de la Iglesia, specifically *Los placeres*

⁷ In Spanish cinematography no taxonomic distinction is made between homosexuality and bisexuality (male or female), the two terms being treated as synonymous without any distinction. Thus, Roberto Orbea (El diputado), who through his actions appears to be clearly bisexual, self-identifies on film as homosexual. For this reason, we believe that it would make little sense for us to treat the categories as independent although at the same time we acknowledge that in reality such imprecision causes a lack of methodological discrimination. We would say that this cinematic approach comes under the umbrella of what might be called "poetic licence".

ocultos (1977) and *El diputado* (1978). In *Diferente* —a film from the “modalidad occulta”⁸ (hidden mode) tradition— the question of homosexuality is however treated quasi-elliptically, not going beyond (and this is particularly important) unilateral visual contact, that is, a gaze not returned by the protagonist, and its spatial associations are mostly abstract, as in they feature in terms of literature, psychology and are only occasionally given more concrete being: some unidentifiable slum where people dance to tribal rhythms. Turning to Eloy de la Iglesia, in contrast, here we find a director who attaches huge importance to defining a homosexual cartography —more than any other director—, has reclaimed it, even, as can be seen in Figure 1 showing Eloy de la Iglesia at a location used in one of his other features, *Colegas* (1982).

Figure 1. Eloy de la Iglesia photographed in the public urinals which appear as a meeting place in his film *Colegas* (1982)



Source: unknown author. Origin: losreplicantes.com

In Eloy de la Iglesia’s work the spaces of the collective homosexual imagination are sometimes shown visually and at other times referred to verbally. Among those spaces that do appear on film, we find the so-called cruising⁹ zones such as public urinals; or areas well-known for prostitution like the obelisk in Madrid; the gay pubs (pubs de “ambiente”); the country homes of

8 Concerning the different modes of representation in LGBTI material, we would direct the reader to the work of Alfeo (1997 and 2001) and Pelayo, (2010), with respect to cinema and González de Garay (2012) concerning television fiction.

9 An item of homosexual argot for the process of establishing contact, for sexual purposes, with strangers in certain outside spaces such as parks, gardens, parking lots, etc, or indoors such as in public toilets in stations, clubs, shopping centres, and so on. It would be considered analogous to certain terms meaning something similar among heterosexuals, for example “going on the pull” or the more dated, “going out on the town”.

the upper/middle classes, used as the setting for orgiastic encounters; continuous session cinemas; saunas; and also, with the highest level of drama, prisons. However, in *El diputado*, during one of his internal monologues, Roberto Orbea, the main protagonist around whom the whole plot revolves, also refers to several other spaces, like his barracks:

At first, I only had a few fleeting, sordid encounters in subway carriages, or at the matinee sessions in the Carreteras cinema, and in those filthy, stinking urinals at Tirso Molina plaza. [...] Until I did my military service, I didn't have any kind of authentic homosexual experience [...] I did my "mili" at a barracks in Alcalá de Henares. That was where I met that young man. We had a full and long-lasting relationship that went on throughout my time in the military (part of the dialogue from the feature film *El diputado*)

As we see in the monologue reproduced above, despite its self-vindicating tone, Eloy de la Iglesia casts the majority of gay meeting places in a distinctly negative light, sometimes directly as dark, gloomy or poorly lit spaces, that are somehow sleazy, sometimes by association with the characters that inhabit them, like the sauna in *Colegas*, sometimes because they are the scene of self-destructive actions on the part of the main protagonist such drug consumption or promiscuity as in *Los placeres ocultos*. In this last example, after the death of his mother and his betrayal by Miguel, the film's co-star, the main protagonist Eduardo starts on a downward spiral of nihilistic alienation, losing himself in anonymous sexual encounters in almost all of the locations mentioned above. The public urinal –this time in a bar– also features among the chosen locations in Jaime Chávarri's *Las cosas del querer* (1989). In this film it functions explicitly as a meeting place but without the weight of neorealist squalor of its appearances in de la Iglesia's work.

Prison reappears, or is at least referred to, as the "origin" location of the relationship between the characters of Mario and Antonio in *Las cosas del querer* despite the fact that its reach, presence, and symbolic dimension are much less pronounced than in the relationship between Roberto Orbea and the Young Nes in *El diputado*.

Similar spaces appear in the film in *Cachorro* (Miguel Albaladejo, 2004) albeit more up to date and with a very different symbolism; one that is far less black and white and also far more positive. In this work, we revisit the standard institutions of gay cartography such as the disco-bar, in this case with its very own *dark room*, and the environs of the old Legazpi market next to Madrid's M-30 motorway, Chueca plaza, or certain public parks of the Casa de Campo. As we said, however, this film qualifies these spaces in an entirely different way to de la Iglesia: places

that de la Iglesia depicts as depraved, Albaladejo portrays as affirmative elements of identity that are conflict with a world all too ready to condemn or judge, in a discursive exercise where it is prejudice that is denounced not the space. This evolution in how differential gay space in Madrid is portrayed, from the work of de la Iglesia to that of Albaladejo, follows the general development of Spanish cinema over the same period moving from the portrayal of “eccentric lives” to “the transformed now” (Benet, 2012).

Furthermore, it must be noted that the *dark room*, a place for anonymous sexual encounters found in some gay venues, has an almost residual presence in commercial cinema that tends to be used to conceal those aspects that might shock the non-LGBTI audience. Hopewell highlights this fact when he states the following in relation to early representations of homosexuality in commercial cinema during the first years of Spain’s democratic transition:

The constraints imposed on the way in which homosexuality is depicted during the transition were not a question of state but rather public censorship. Given that Spanish gay venues could not provide sufficiently large numbers of spectators, films dealing with this issue had to attract a wider audience, whose sympathy with the homosexual cause had to be nurtured (Hopewell, 1989, p. 177).

Clubs and other social venues on the gay scene (“de ambiente” in Spanish) are also well represented in feature films, particularly those of the 1970’s and 1980’s. These kinds of meeting place transmit the idea of freedom through the comfortable way in which they allow characters to simply talk, argue, or get together. Such places appear in *Los placeres ocultos* and *Él y él* (Eduardo Manzanos, 1980) and while they are, possibly, spaces with low dramatic charge they are represented faithfully as the sort of place that would later evolve toward the disco-pub model Guash refers to in his essay *Celtiberia* (Guash, 1991, p. 109). In Madrid, several such venues existed, including Griffin’s, Dumbarton, and Black & White, oriented toward a more mature clientele and some of which are still in business today. Another key gay location, the massage salon, with its overtones of male prostitution appears in the plotline of *AzulOscuroCasiNegro* (Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, 2006).

A further space that, despite not appearing frequently, is still important due to its significance in terms of identity construction, is the courtroom. Courtrooms feature specifically in *El diputado* and also in a film premiered in 1981 directed by Ramón Fernández: *Gay Club*, set in between Ocaña (Toledo) and Alcalá de Henares (Madrid). Narratively speaking, this space is used to metaphorically foreground the issue of how homosexuality is judged, the arguments of its

detractors, and above all, the principal foundation of historical gay activism in the pursuit of respect and integration.

We will talk about performance spaces in more detail later in this article, but if we were to look for relevant examples of their presence in relation to the gay community, then we need look no further than *Diferente*. This film is best described as a melodrama and is presented as a musical in which several dance numbers are used to accentuate particular themes in the script and in which performance, with an element of the circus thrown in, serve as the backdrop to the elliptical central plot theme: the question of homosexuality. In addition, we should not forget José (played by Héctor Alterio) star of the acclaimed *A un dios desconocido* (Jaime Chávarri, 1978), who earns his living as a stage magician working in nightclubs, although we must point out, the expression of his personal identity takes place only in private. However, the most relevant appearance of performance spaces occurs in *Las cosas del querer* (Jaime Chávarri, 1989), another melodrama climaxes with Mario (played by Manuel Bandera) declaring his love to Juan (brought to life by Ángel de Andrés López) during a stage rehearsal. This said, as we shall explore in due course, this kind of space is most widely used in relation to transwomen characters.

6 A cinematographic cartography of the lesbian and female bisexual universe

After a detailed analysis of dozens of films set in Madrid and other Spanish cities of similar importance, it is striking to note the almost total absence of the representation of public spaces associated with the lesbian community (Pelayo, 2010). This fact has significant implications from both the ideological and the symbolic perspectives and serves to highlight one of the greatest shortcomings of our society and culture: the lack of visibility and diversity of representation of lesbians (González, 2011). In Spanish cinema, lesbianism is, fundamentally a private activity that takes place almost exclusively in private spaces. The wide array of outdoors locations found with respect to the representation of gay male characters is reduced to less than a handful in the case of gay female characters and nowhere is this asymmetry more evident than in the arena of commercial cinema. Lesbian characters make love in their homes, in hotel rooms, in country houses, but never in public. Lesbianism is, at least in Spanish cinema, a behind closed doors affair and has no dimension in wider society. We would have to look at the sorts of films shown at specialist festivals in order to see a wider range of representation but in commercial cinema for the consumption of the general public, there are no public lesbian spaces anywhere other than anecdotally.

Indeed, if it were not for the exception of *A mi madre le gustan las mujeres* (Inés París y Daniel Fejerman, 2001), the existence of gay venues where women get together and drink in the same way as do their male counterparts, would be absolutely unknown on screen.

Furthermore, while the web-series *Chica busca chica* (*Girl seeking girl* by Sonia Sebastián, 2008) contains scenes in a series of spaces analogous to those on the male gay scene, such as public conveniences or toilets in bars, they are all absent from its film version *De chica en chica* (Sonia Sebastián, 2015), apart from the toilets at the funeral parlor where the action of the film begins. This is particularly noteworthy as Sonia Sebastián directed both versions. As we mentioned before, cinema imposes a certain economy of narrative and indeed, of cost which partly justifies keeping the number of locations used to a minimum. This, of course, necessitates leaving aside many nuances and forces scriptwriters to focus more on the action and the characters rather than the spaces they move through.

It is certainly true that the representation of lesbianism on film has given us more positive images of homosexuality –without ignoring the conflicts—and thus also probably realistic insights. This view is backed up by the work of several authors who have studied this theme in more detail, such as Irene Pelayo and Clarissa González:

While it has long been the case that the image of lesbianism constructed on screen, rather than offering a reference point for lesbian women is more of a common space within the erotic imagination of heterosexual males, today, however, films dealing with the topic of lesbianism are increasingly aimed more at a lesbian audience. This and the wider public are now their principal target. Earlier representations of lesbian characters in Spanish cinema as well as the almost total absence of lesbian role models is only now beginning to be rectified (González, 2011, p. 252).

However, the difference in lesbian visibility in comparison to that of male homosexuality continues to be a topic of debate and the near complete absence of spaces exclusively for or friendly to lesbians in Spanish cinema demands attention. Madrid does of course have lesbian venues such as bars and disco-bars in neighborhoods like Chueca and Lavapiés, but these have never made it onto the screen and are not even referred to verbally by characters, as was the case with several locations discussed in the previous section. As a result, the lesbian universe remains grossly underrepresented and indeed hidden from view in terms of Spanish cinema.

According to research by Irene Pelayo, differential spaces are almost non-existent in commercial cinema and non-differential (generic) spaces are, at least in the corpus used for her work, largely

private (93 %), indoors (93 %), and urban (79 %) and also tend to be the place where the character lives (39,6 %) (Pelayo, 2010, pp. 205-215).

This being said, there is one generic space that appears here and also in representations of male homosexuality. This location is prison, as for example in *Carne apaleada* (Javier Aguirre, 1978), which was filmed partly in Madrid and partly in Alcalá de Henares, and here as in representations of male homosexuality, it's significance is linked to ideas about repression, squalor, and hostility.

On a completely different note, Pedro Almodóvar centers the action of *Entre tinieblas* within the walls of a convent. As Camarero Gómez comments of the director: "he has filmed the majority of his work in Madrid or perhaps I should say, in the many Madrids within Madrid" (Camarero Gómez, 2019, p. 13). *Entre tinieblas* uses a space that, like a prison, limits character's movements as a setting for credible lesbian relationships to develop –credible that is within the frequently caricature-like peculiarities of Almodóvar's cinema. We should also mention here the film *Sauna* (Andreu Martín, 1990), which while not set in Madrid is relevant because of its use of location: a sauna. However, both in terms of how this space is used and characterized, other than its name, the sauna of this film has very little in common with its counterpart in the on-screen representation of gay men.

A particular phenomenon in Spanish cinema is how the spatial representations associated with lesbianism ultimately become commonplace and insignificant. As Melero comments:

In addition, the settings used to represent lesbianism have become repetitive. Some places seem to be more conducive to sex between women, for instance, prisons, [...] and above all, women's prisons, the preferred location for the genre. [...] Convents are also fair game. [...] In general any space where women congregate can be the scene for lesbian sex, from the harem [...] to the concentration camp, a particular favorite of Jesús Franco. One of the most frequently used spaces, as we shall see later, is the women's gym, which has become associated with lesbianism in the popular culture of our times (Melero, 2010, p. 92).

Particular attention needs to be given to one recent film, *Carmen y Lola* (Arantxa Echevarría, 2018), an intense racial drama set on the outskirts of Madrid in which we see several spaces that are rarely, if ever, seen in this type of story: suburban wastelands, the UVA housing projects,¹⁰

10 In Madrid, the Unidades Vecinales de Absorción or UVAs were built during Franco's era to clear the city's slums.

abandoned and semi-abandoned areas and buildings, some of which would be classified as among Augé's (2002, p. 84) "no lugares" or "non-places". These are the grim, hostile places that were fundamental spaces in *cine quinquí*:

A space that crosses the urban-rural divide, the wasteland is an un-rooted, unhappy, unhopeful, unpleasant, uninhabited, unfeeling place. It is a space almost exclusively populated by "un-", devoid of a past and, undoubtedly, of a future. Here, characters may pass through, but they do not stay because the wasteland is hostile, it doesn't shelter anything, and as in the lives of the characters found here, there is no reference point. It becomes, therefore, a metaphor for the vulnerability of the actors themselves (Alfeo & González de Garay, 2011, p. 10).

These semi-abandoned places are the passive witnesses to Carmen and Lola's love and Arantxa Echevarría uses them to underline the fragility of their relationship and the lack of comfort it seems to provide for the characters. Furthermore, these spaces are set in contrast to the vastness of the sea—with which the film ends—symbolizing their opposite: freedom and a future in spite of uncertainty.

Despite not being set in Madrid, it isn't possible to talk about lesbian representation in Spanish cinema without mentioning the films of Jesús Franco. His work is filled with singular spaces like castles, old mansions, dungeons, and crypts, among others, that form the backdrop to his lesbian vampire tales —itself a fully-fledged subgenre with relevance in terms of a certain voyeuristic tendency in the depiction of lesbianism. Clearly conceived and exhibited for the heterosexual male gaze, these films ignore any form of discourse on identity or activism and are instead centered on recreating a fantasy about a species of mythical being that is presented as both fascinating and insatiable. As Irene Pelayo discusses: "[...] female vampires pervert the established order and place their victims outside the orthodoxy, something symbolized by the space of the night, vampires being confined to the parallel, marginal world of nocturnal creatures" (Pelayo, 2010, p. 329).

Finally, we should point out that *Carmen y Lola* also contains one of those spaces that we would call abstract: the internet chat room. Lola uses this antecedent of the modern social network to make contact with other lesbian girls thus it becomes a tentative escape route and a place where she expresses her sexuality.

7 A cinematic cartography of the transexual universe

When considering the representation of transsexuality in Spanish cinema, the first thing that any researcher will encounter is the vagueness with which the subject is addressed. Commercial cinema generally presents transsexuality as some form of male homosexuality, and thus only ever shows us transwomen characters, that is men who have, to whatever extent, transitioned toward the feminine (Sánchez Ramírez, 2016). Also, in the same way that commercial cinema does not distinguish between lesbianism or homosexuality and bisexuality,¹¹ no practical distinctions are ever made between the phenomena of transformism, transvestism, transsexuality, and homosexuality.¹² This dilemma continues to be relevant and is, perhaps, even more important now, as David Asenjo explains: “Together with the semantic discussion, the word transgender, poses a second question concerning the difference between trans and intersexuality. In considering the diagnosis of a trans person, it is the psychological dimension rather than the existence of any congenital, physiological ambiguity which is marked; that is, their intimate belief that they belong to the opposite gender and their active desire for redefinition bodily, socially, and emotionally” (Asenjo, 2017, p. 61). Fiction films can by no means be considered treatises on sexology, thus it is not appropriate to require them to be completely conceptually rigorous. If it is anything, then cinema is a means for reflection that examines, errs, and redefines itself so evolving with society. As a representational medium, then, cinema is society’s mirror and thus constitutes an excellent resource to investigate our collective imagination. In what follows, while we have considered intersexuality separately, we will not establish any distinction between transformism, transvestism, and transsexuality, since it would not be methodologically practical to do so.

Within the cinematic cartographies studied here, it is possible that that of the transexual is both the most limited as well as the most stereotyped. The spaces differentially associated with transsexuality tend to be, fundamentally, the stage, the street (as a place for prostitution), prisons,

11 Referring back to the essay, *Celtiberia Gay*, this text is, in fact, a good example of the kind of imprecision with which this topic was treated in the cultural flourishing that directly followed the end of Franco’s dictatorship.

12 Here transformism refers to the performance genre involving men dressing up as female singers of which the most sophisticated form would be drag. Transvestism consists very simply in dressing and accessorising as a person of the opposite sex for pleasure or for show and might be considered a form of fetishism. Transsexuality, in contrast, concerns a mismatch between the biological sex of an individual and their gender identity which compromises their sense of self at a fundamental level requiring a process of transformation which may involve — according to the needs of the individual—a range of treatments from hormones only to complete sex reassignment surgery.

police stations, and, particularly in the cinema of the 1970's and early 1980's, the operating theatre.

For the transsexual character, the stage is the space for expression par excellence. The world of show business nurtures the transsexual character's desire to show off and their duality, their ambiguity, fascinates the audience. In the libertarian fever in the first years of Spain's transition to democracy, the transsexual, the travesti (transvestite), and the transformist, achieved a mythic status, and some performers became hugely popular, for instance, Paco España, Fama, and the much feted, Bibi Andersen. The confusion with respect to labels and concepts highlights how the focus of the moment was precisely the divergence of these personalities, their potential to fascinate, not their identities nor the details of their personal circumstances. That is, the focus was on their wardrobes, their presentation, and their stage sets rather than on any story that they might attempt to portray.

This spectacular universe appears, in one way or another, in all films that tackle this topic. Furthermore, on introducing this theme, all of these films –at least the first ones covering this topic—adopt a documentary air, although they are not strictly speaking documentaries. As these films progress, however, they tend to collapse under the weight of their own narrative potential. Thus, for example in the film *El transexual* (José Jara, 1977):

The work contains three clearly distinct structures. On one hand, there is the documentary (in-depth reportage) in which Yeda Brown voices a first-person narrative of their experiences. None of this is in the original screenplay and, of course is all entirely spontaneous thus, at times, uses colloquial language that can come across as clumsy or dirty. The film's second structure is in the musical numbers. Almost all of these contain choreography based on numbers conceived by Paco España and planned by Jara; these performances are also absent from the screenplay. Finally, we have the story itself, that is, the written screenplay, the element of least interest to Jara (Deltell, 2011, p. 11).

Considering the stages at, for instance, the previously mentioned 'Gay Club' on Recoletos street, or at the 'Micheleta Club' on Santo Domingo plaza, both now long gone but with counterparts in almost all the big cities in Spain, we could say that these spaces held a paradox in that although they were spaces for exhibition, behind their lights they hid the shadows of a complex reality. It is interesting to note that the same year saw the release of two titles that dealt with the same question treated in a similar way: the film we have been discussing, José Jara's *El transexual* and

Cambio de sexo (Vicente Aranda, 1977) set in Barcelona. Both these films have the same kind of crossover between documentary and fiction in which emotional aspects are fictionalized while other elements are treated as documentary, specifically the clinical dimension including the essential sex reassignment surgery, and the professional dimension which centers exclusively on show business and tangentially, on prostitution. From the perspective of spatial characterization, these films bring together all the settings discussed previously.

To the two titles above, we feel compelled to add a film that while decidedly documentary in nature has elements of the docudrama: *Vestida de azul* (Antonio Giménez-Rico, 1983). In this film a group of transsexual women give first person accounts of their lives, their dreams, their life plans, their family relationships, how they earn a living, and in general, their experiences as transsexual individuals and the difficulties of fitting into a society that barely gives them space to live a dignified existence. This is a genuinely impactful film that gives an honest portrayal of its subjects although, while there are no rose-tinted spectacles here, there is a certain sense of heroic survival. What is most striking about this film are the contrasts between its protagonists—most of whom are involved in show business or prostitution—as they open the doors to their day to day, far from the spotlights or the streets, enabling the audience to become witness to their humanity: their everyday lives, their family relationships, and the difficulty of living as women in a cis-normative society while still having a male name on their identity documents. *Vestida de azul* shows us, albeit in a merely alluded to representational form, a territory dominated, as we have said, by nightclubs, the so-called “Costa Fleming” district in Madrid: the bars where people meet to gossip and argue, as well as other non-differential spaces like their homes, local bars, or the homes of family members. From the analytical point of view, one of the interesting aspects of this film are the contrasts between the various differential spaces like the nightclubs where they perform, the streets where they prostitute themselves, the wine bars where they relax and are defined as part of a community and the generic spaces like their neighborhood bars, the homes of relatives, or their own homes where they become unique individuals, in general, rootless, each one with their own dreams and anxieties. These generic spaces are places where they have to manage a new identity that doesn’t fit and is even a source of conflict.

Not even Almodóvar is able to escape the attraction of the spectacular nor the dramatic charge it seems to contain. He is perhaps the director who has most travelled the landscapes and explored the personalities of the transsexual or transvestite/drag universe, for example with the recurring presence of Bibiana Fernández and with characters such as Tina in *La ley del deseo* (1987),

Femme Letal, in *Tacones lejanos* (1991), Lola and Agrado in *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999), and Paquito and Zahaa in *La mala educación* (2004), to name the most relevant. In all of these films, with functions ranging from drama to comedy, from the tragic to the comic, the stage is a privileged space where characters can deploy all their resources with a liberating zeal and, without doubt, a hint of fetishism.

The difference between the stages used by Almodóvar and those of Jara or Giménez Rico, is in essence the mysterious pop filter through which we see Almodóvarian spaces giving them a fundamental glamour, even where the space in question is a simple village hall, as in *La mala educación*. In this way, the characters and spaces in *El transexual* and *Vestida de azul* are the antithesis of the glamorous Tina, Letal, Agrado and company, and instead are closer in conception to neorealism and Fellini's grotesquery. Almodóvar presents us instead with spaces and characters that, from their very sleaziness; birth —not without pain—a sort of dark verse with an epic, mysterious quality that reminds us in a way of the poetry of Baudelaire or Jean Genet. As Seguin maintains, in Almodóvar's films, "the city of Madrid always remains to be conquered. With his meticulous, filigree-like work, Pedro always returns to the city, as if, however much he says otherwise, he can never fully grasp it" (Seguin, 2019, p. 11).

8 A cinematic cartography of the intersexual universe

Of all the sectors of the LGBTI community that we have studied so far, this is the one with the lowest levels of on-screen representation. Indeed, here it is not really appropriate to put forward a spatial analysis or, for that matter, talk of a "cartography" in the same way when, in fact there is only one example to draw on. However, if only for the sake of the structural homogeneity of this work we shall claim the license to do so.

Without doubt, the relevant title to consider here is *Mi querida señorita* (Jaime de Armiñán, 1971) which, looked at in a contemporary light, could be understood as containing a depiction of an intersex person. We would underline that this is a wholly modern reading of the film and as has been pointed out in other research, the interpretation of the film's plot has undergone many revisions as society's understanding of the issues surrounding sex and gender have advanced:

The polyphony detected in the description of the character is, similarly, a factor in the evolution of the film's reception [...] and has depended on the state of the gender-sex debate of the time. At the beginning of the 1970's, major emphasis was given to the intersexual interpretation. In the following decades there was discussion about the

repression of identity, transvestism, and transsexuality without returning to any consideration of intersexuality. More recently, descriptions of the character have centered on sexual identity, and its new *queer* reading has been based once again entirely or partly on intersexuality (Asenjo, 2019, p. 386).

Released in the 1970's, *Mi querida señorita* was a film ahead of its time in the sense that it presented the complex themes of sexual/gender identity and the problems of having an intimate identity in opposition to civil identity far in advance of the films discussed earlier in this article that considered similar issues, such as, for instance, *Vestida de azul*. The screenplay, written by Armiñán himself in collaboration with José Luis Borau, remained silent about a great deal more than we see expressed on-screen in order to subvert the film censorship that was in full force at the time of its production. It is because of this that the audience must fill in the works many ellipses, like, for example, the origin of the main character's maladjustment: why was Juan brought up and educated as Adela and how this process was made invisible to their neighbors, to himself, and to herself.

From the spatial perspective, as we said, it isn't really possible to talk of a cartography in this case as there are no instances of differential spaces, nevertheless, there are some very interesting observations regarding space. Of these, the most important is the fact that Juan finds it immensely difficult to move within the masculine universe, despite having been a strong personality and respected member of the community in their incarnation as Adele.

Despite the paucity of representation, we can find some communalities with other films discussed in this work in terms of themes. On one hand, there is the presence of Madrid, the great capital, placed in contrast to the provincial capital, as a space of freedom where a new life can begin; an implicit promise that undoubtedly inspired many Spaniards and encouraged the exodus from rural areas in the 1940's, 50's, and 60's. On the other hand we have a depiction of a peripheral city and the promise of *Desarollismo* (Franco's development programs), which was so masterfully captured by Marco Ferreri and Isodoro M. Ferry in their celebrated work, *El pisito* (1959). This film is set in a tiny suburban flat, "with gas, hot water, and central heating", codified by the protagonists as their hope for a future that not only allows them to leave their old identities behind and start new lives but also figures as the indisputable point of departure for a promising future. A further point of convergence with other films in our corpus concerns the environments associated with intersexuality. Although the association here is subtle, it cannot go without comment that the only person who displays friendship toward the protagonist, the only person

who extends a helping hand in what is a difficult, if very elliptically defined, process of change, is Patricia (Mónica Randall), a prostitute who works out of the local bar cum brothel and lives in same lodging house as the protagonist. Patricia lends Juan money, and does not judge him, and it is she who tries —tenderly but unsuccessfully—to initiate him onto the path of a sexuality still governed by doubt and fear.

9 Global qualitative analysis

Looking at this theme qualitatively from the global perspective, that is, taking all the spaces analyzed here as a group, we can conclude that the majority of them are generic rather than differential. The actions of characters that do or do not take place in virtue of their LGBTI status do so, principally, in private spaces or public spaces put to private use. These spaces may be indoors (such as homes, vehicles, hotels, among others) or outdoors (such as wastelands, uninhabited areas, abandoned buildings, isolated areas in parks). This is particularly the case with shows of affection between LGBTI characters which, according to the mores of cinema, rarely happen in public view. This has an important impact on the construction of the public view of the LGBTI community suggesting in effect that their activities are somehow a completely private concern, out of the ordinary, and to be hidden from public sight.

In terms of socioeconomics, here cinema shows great diversity: there are spaces associated with the upper classes, frequented or owned by characters that wield some sort of power —at least economically—and identify characters as autonomous, the masters of their own destinies: mansions, chalets, second homes, and banks, among others; and there are also more humble spaces that serve to underline characters' vulnerabilities as persons in the power of others: suburban flats, wastelands, shacks, abandoned lots in suburban areas, and so on.

Integrated or marginal: the condition of being LGBTI is associated most frequently with marginalized or stigmatized spaces, for example, places linked to prostitution or those dedicated to anonymous sex, prisons, police stations, courtrooms —with the protagonist as the condemned—and far less frequently with professional spaces such as banks, convents, museums, offices, and hairdressers although special mention must be given to showbusiness spaces, particularly the stage. With regards to this last space, there is a certain ambiguity in its treatment ranging from caricature to admiration depending on the film and the era, with films from Spain's transition period tending toward caricature, bordering on the grotesque in some cases, moving to more glamorous depictions and increasingly positive readings in more recent times, particularly in the work of Pedro Almodóvar.

Concerning the evaluation that cinema makes of the spaces it represents, judgements vary depending on whether spaces would be regarded as differential or generic. Generic spaces, in general, are characterized quite neutrally and are presented no differently to how they would be presented in a non-LGBTI context. However, differential spaces or generic spaces used differentially almost always have negative connotations, even in films of the most empowering cut. This negativity is conveyed in the way these places are constructed as separate, grim, ruined, uncared for, or sleazy; and how they are presented as dark –literally being poorly lit—with direct associations to night life and dissipation: brothels, LGBTI bars, redlight districts, continuous session cinemas, saunas (specifically for the LGBTI community), or remote areas in big cities.

Turning to location, specifically urban versus rural, as expected, LGBTI spaces in cinema are almost exclusively urban, particularly, big urbanizations such as Madrid, the focus of this work. Rural spaces do appear, but fleetingly, sometimes presented as a refuge, as in *El pájaro de la felicidad* (Pilar Miró, 1993) or *La ley del deseo* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1987); sometimes as spaces of contrast to underline the differences manifest in the LGBTI protagonist with respect to their origins as in *Vestida de azul* (Antonio Giménez Rico, 1983) and *Dolor y gloria* (Pedro Almodóvar, 2019); and sometimes as an overtly hostile space, a paradigmatic example in this respect appears in a film produced in the early years of Spain's transition period: *Me siento extraña* (Enrique Martí Maqueda, 1977); or as a suffocating environment where relationships between characters cannot thrive, as we see in the use of the wastelands of the Vallecas and Hortaleza neighborhoods –bridges between the rural and the urban—that form the backdrop for *Carmen y Lola*.

10 Conclusion

Perhaps the most striking finding from the analysis of the twenty four Spanish feature films selected for this work, is the great variety of Madrileño spaces that cinema associates with the various identities grouped under the LGBTQI+ umbrella and how definitively they are differentiated. Although we must also point out the huge disparity, particularly in the diversity of locations as a function of the specific group represented such that we find homosexuals and male bisexuals moving through a highly detailed cartography compared to an almost complete lack of space reserved for lesbians and female bisexuals. Transwomen have an intermediate level of representation although this group occupy a spatial locus that is very limited and highly stereotyped in which the stage features prominently. Trans men are not represented in our corpus although female-to-male transvestism does occasionally appear as a plot device, for instance,

when Rocío Dúrcal crossdresses in order to pass for her supposed brother in *Más bonita que ninguna* (Luis César Amador, 1965) as a way of resolving a particular knot in the central narrative. However, this instance does not offer any particular insight into the analysis of space, which is the subject of the present work, although it has been considered in a *pre-queer* reading of this film (Lomas, 2017). To date, certain identities such as asexuality have not been represented at all in Spanish commercial cinema and intersexuality appears only with a particular reading. In this regard, and as we said, with certain reservations considering the excessively elliptical nature of the narrative with respect to this theme, we consider that the main protagonist of *Mi querida señorita* responds to this identity. Here, however, the film's greatest relevance does not lie in the expression of a particular LGBTI identity but rather in the construction of space as a means to convey a connection between, on one hand, masculinity and the public/interior and on the other, femininity and the private/interior.

An additional conclusion is that, in the majority of cases, expressions of LGBTI identity are associated with differential spaces that have fundamentally negative connotations. This is especially the case in respect to activities aimed at meeting other LGBTI people and having sex, both of which, according to the films studied here, take place in parks, public toilets, LGBTI saunas, and other spaces where prostitution is acceptable. Long-term relationships and shows of affection are presented somewhat more positively but these activities are restricted to private spaces. Whatever the case, the LGBTI universe is essentially banished from public spaces, and is only accessible to or is reserved for members of this community or those with close relationships to persons within it. That is to say, cinema sends the message that LGBTI identities can only be expressed at the margins of society, in marginal spaces, that, without wishing to exaggerate, effectively silences and limits the social and political dimension of LGBTI issues imposing a distorted view of reality through negative spatial stereotypes.

Furthermore, beyond the conclusions gleaned from the global analysis of our corpus, it is clear that from the perspective of spatial localization, Spanish cinema, especially that produced in the 1970's and the early 1980's within the Community of Madrid –undoubtedly due to its documentary zeal—takes particular care in the identification of certain spaces, especially exteriors, such that they are easily recognizable. In the case of Madrid, several specific locations are readily identifiable, such as the Casa de Campo, the Legazpi market, Chueca plaza, Lealtad plaza, the urinals at Tirso Molina, and the area around Doctor Fleming street. Numerous other spaces are less well specified and simply representative of a type: continuous session cinemas, saunas, subway carriages, and numerous clubs, pubs, and disco bars.

Special mention needs to be given to spaces of confinement such as Carabanchel prison, military barracks, and convents. Such spaces of detention or isolation have always formed part of the collective imagination in relation to LGBTI questions and we find many examples of their representation in Spanish cinema, although they are, in general, very starkly portrayed as a way of characterization or of locating some of the action. On the other hand, spaces related to the exercise or application of the Law have a very interesting presence in several films: the Carabanchel prison, of course, but also numerous courtrooms, police stations, interview rooms, among others, all of which serve to accentuate the punitive dimension of the social control inflicted on the LGBTQI+ community and which emphasizes their marginal status. This is especially the case in feature films where the central message is particularly radical such as in *El diputado*, *Vestida de azul*, *Carne apaleada*, *Las cosas del querer*, *Cachorro*, to name but a few.

It is also true that almost all the characters in the films analyzed in the present work move in urban or suburban spaces while rural locations barely feature in any of the various representations seen here.

In summary, Spanish cinema offers an extensive LGBTI cinematographic cartography in which specific locations in Madrid are clearly identifiable and, in many cases, still exist today. However, there are notable differences with respect to diversity of spaces and the detail included in their depiction dependent on the section of the LGBTI community in question. The differential spaces presented in the films studied here also show how Spanish cinema's presentation of LGBTI characters in Madrid has moved from the mold of "eccentric lives" to "the transformed now".

11 Proposals for subsequent investigation

Here we analyzed commercial cinema, which as we explained includes films premiered in a commercial venue and registered with the ICAA, that is, films not specifically intended for an LGBTQI+ audience. We are of course aware that there are many short films, video-essays, and feature films produced for national and international LGBTQI+ film festivals (so not necessarily registered with the ICAA), and thus we feel it would be interesting to repeat this study using a corpus comprising alternative cinema (non-ICAA registered films that have not been shown in commercial cinemas). In addition, it would also be worthwhile to complete a comparative study of the two corpuses (commercial and alternative cinema) to determine whether either of these types of cinema are making any efforts to renegotiate the stereotypes related to differential spaces and their associated LGBTQI+ identities.

A particular and notable lacuna in the corpus of Spanish films used here is that Madrid is not portrayed in relation to the vast virtual spaces of the internet frequented by members of the LGBTQI+ community. Such spaces are fundamentally represented by dating apps and, until now, these spaces scarcely appear these spaces scarcely appear even in the most recent of the films studied here.

A further avenue of investigation might involve a comparison of the cinematic LGBTQI+ cartography to that offered by projects such as *Queering the map* (Kirby et al., 2021), with the object of revealing possible disagreements in the process of *stereotyping*. Aware of negative biases in spatial characterizations, several researchers have begun initiatives to locate spaces that have relevance to the LGBTQI+ community, for example, *Queering the map*,¹³ where, by means of a collaborative platform, anonymous citizens can take part in creating a map of memorable personal moments in their LGBTQI+ lived experience. This process puts locations on a global map and thus presents a closer to life view of the LGBTQI+ universe than that offered by the conventional communications media.

Figure 2. Screenshot of *Queering the map* covering Madrid's metropolitan zone



Source: Kirby et al. (2021)

13 This project has become hugely successful, and more information can be found at: <https://www.queeringthemap.com/>

Acknowledgements: This article arises from the project “La ficción audiovisual en la Comunidad de Madrid: lugares de rodaje y desarrollo del turismo cinematográfico” (Audiovisual fiction in the Madrid Region: filming locations and development of screen tourism) (Ficmatur-50) funded by the Department of Education and Research of the Madrid Region and the European Social Fund, from January 1, 2020 to April 30, 2023, PI: Carlos Manuel.

Authorship statement: The authors declare no conflict of interest. Research tasks have been distributed in the following manner: the paper has been coordinated by the first author, Juan Carlos Alfeo. Juan Carlos Alfeo has been in charge of the bibliographical review on gender topics, the context of the filmic analysis and the initial writing of the paper. Luis Deltell has been in charge of the bibliographical review on cinema, the development of the filmic analysis and the second writing and review of the paper, as well as several inquiries in archives. Juan Carlos Alfeo has gathered the corpus of films until 1995 and Luis Deltell from 1995 to nowadays.

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Movies

- Diferente* (*Different*, Luis María Delgado, 1961)
- Más bonita que ninguna* (*Prettier than any other girl*, Luis César Amador, 1965)
- Mi querida señorita* (*My dearest señorita*, Jaime de Armiñán, 1971)
- A un dios desconocido* (*To an unknown god*, Jaime Chávarri, 1977)
- El transexual* (*The transexual*, José Jara, 1977)
- Cambio de sexo* (*Sex change*, Vicente Aranda, 1977)
- Los placeres ocultos* (*Hidden pleasures*, Eloy de la Iglesia, 1977)
- Me siento extraña* (*I feel strange*, Enrique Martí Maqueda, 1977)
- El diputado* (*The deputy*, Eloy de la Iglesia, 1978)
- Carne apaleada* (*Battered flesh*, Javier Aguirre, 1978)
- Él y él* (*Him and him*, Eduardo manzanos, 1980)
- Gay Club* (*Gay Club*, Ramón Fernández, 1981)
- Colegas* (*Pals*, Eloy de la Iglesia, 1982)
- Vestida de azul* (*Dressed in blue*, Antonio Giménez-Rico, 1983)

Entre tinieblas (*Dark Habits*, Pedro Almodóvar, 1983),
La ley del deseo (*Law of desire*, Pedro Almodóvar, 1987)
Las cosas del querer (*The things of love*, Jaime Chávarri, 1989)
El pájaro de la felicidad (*The bird of happiness*, Pilar Miró, 1993)
Amor de hombre (*The love of a man*, Yolanda García Serrano & Juan Luis Iborra, 1997)
A mi madre le gustan las mujeres (*My mother likes women*, Inés París & Daniela Fejerman, 2001)
La mala educación (*Bad education*, Pedro Almodóvar, 2004)
Cachorro (*Bear cub*, Miguel Albaladejo, 2004)
AzulOscuroCasiNegro (*Dark blue almost black*, Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, 2006)
Carmen y Lola (*Carmen and Lola*, Arantxa Echevarría, 2018)