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Pedro Almodóvar
b. September 25, 1949, Calzada de Calatrava, Spain

by Steven Marsh

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Filmography Select Bibliography Articles in Senses Web Resources

Pedro Almodóvar is the cultural symbol par excellence of the restoration of democracy in Spain after nearly 40 years of the right-wing military dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Since Almodóvar's emergence as a transgressive underground cineaste in the late 1970s and early 1980s, she has gone on to establish himself as the country's most important filmmaker and a major figure on the stage of world cinema.

However, it is Almodóvar's ambivalent relationship with the country of his birth (and where he has made all of his 16 feature films to date) that has proved symptomatic of the complexities surrounding the filmmaker. While subversion of identity is the key subject matter of his cinema, Almodóvar has consistently flirted with his own sense of "Spanish-ness" (most frequently in his recourse to – and resignifying of – the symbolism of the Catholic Church). This has led often to a mixed domestic reception, which takes the form of unconditional acclaim by certain sections of the Spanish media but that has also seen him vilified by conservative critics. Whatever reaction he provokes, there is little doubt that Almodóvar rarely – if ever – inspires indifference.

Like Don Quixote before him, Almodóvar was born in the region of central-southern Spain known as La Mancha. His humble origins, as a member of a large and impoverished family of peasant stock, have left their indelible mark on his work. He often cast his own mother (Francisca Caballero) – possessed of the archetypal wisdom of peasant womanhood – in cameo roles in his movies prior to her death in 1999. Many of his films see their urban-dwelling protagonists return to their ancestral family homes in the country, variously, for refuge or redemption. The rural home town, while at the heart of the Spanish national imaginary – this is a country in which most of the urban population is only one generation away from the feudal pueblo – is an ambiguous Arcadia. His most recent movie Volver (2006) deals directly with the ghosts of the nation's past in its portrayal of the typical Spanish village. Later, when Almodóvar was eight years-old the family moved to Extremadura in the west of the country where he would receive the brutish education at the hands of the Catholic Church that is reflected in the richly baroque tale of priests and child abuse of La mala educación (2004).

At the end of the 1960s Almodóvar arrived in Madrid. After completing the compulsory military service and spending periods as a hippy in Ibiza and London, he secured a day job as a clerk for the national telephone company Telefónica. It was a position he would maintain for more than a decade, with occasional unpaid leaves of absence to work on his various projects. Indeed, in several of his films we see homages to this period of his life, such as the Madrid skyline in Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (1988), marked by the emblematic red light of the Telefónica clock tower and the pervasive, almost obsessive presence of telephones in almost all his films of the 1980s. Almodóvar has often spoken of how much he learned from listening to the women who surrounded him in the office where he worked. For a filmmaker who had no formal training, he has
drawn on his experiences to develop what is almost universally acknowledged as one of his greatest strengths: his ear for the sounds, the rhythms and the dialects of the street, and thus his capacity to direct actors.

Meanwhile by night, and following the death of Franco in November 1975, Almodóvar was steadily becoming the leading figure in Madrid's flourishing alternative cultural scene that would become known as La Movida. Commencing as a stage hand for the theatre troupe, Los Goliardos – where he met Carmen Maura, the actress who would become his leading lady for the first half of his filmic career – he also performed in a punk rock group, wrote pornographic photo-novels and, significantly, purchased a super-8 camera with which he shot a series of outlandish shorts which guaranteed his burgeoning notoriety. Finally, in 1980 he shot his first feature Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón, a bizarrely ribald chronicle of life on the wilder fringes of the Madrid night-time experience. Pepi, Luci, Bom... was a film, plagued by financial and technical problems. It took 18 months to shoot and required its director to return to his post at the telephone exchange before it was finally completed. In many ways, it was an inauspicious commencement to Almodóvar's professional career – the technical limitations and blatant amateurism of the cinematography are evident for all to see – but it also captured the spirit of the times – above all the sense of cultural and sexual freedom – and established Almodóvar as a force with which to be reckoned.

Almodóvar's career has been plagued by accusations of frivolity. His apparent lack of political commitment contrasted with that of his contemporaries. The end of the dictatorship opened up a dizzying array of political, social and cultural opportunities and the possibility of substantive changes in society seemed real. Just across the border in Portugal – a few hours drive from Madrid – the 1974 revolution had provided what for some was an exemplary means of transforming society. By the same token, the dominant oppositional school of Spanish filmmaking – drawn, with very few exceptions, from the privileged elites – looked towards France and the auteurist tradition and which, in spite of its claims to committed film often seemed devoted to the cinematic essay. Almodóvar's disavowal of this kind of solemnity would initiate a conflict with the Spanish film establishment that endures to this day, in spite of his international reputation.
Despite the hostility to which he has often been subject at home, Almodóvar has clearly emerged from a particularly Spanish cultural tradition. Much of the criticism that has been levelled at him stems from the alleged influence of Hollywood cinema on his films. Such critics often adopt the discourse of progressive politics – the accusation against Almodóvar is that he has capitulated to cultural imperialism – to defend what is essentially a fairly tiresome and well-worn brand of Spanish nationalism. The reality is that Almodóvar is indeed influenced by North American cinema (which international filmmaker isn't?) and particularly so in his early work. This influence, however, is scarcely that of “dominant” Hollywood films but rather the underground, transgressive cinema of the early John Waters and Andy Warhol. That said, his numerous stylistic appropriations of Alfred Hitchcock (particularly in *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*, but there are many more) and the influence of Douglas Sirk's melodramas are undeniable elements present in Almodóvar's work, as he himself is keen to acknowledge. Likewise, his use of music – and the scores to his films are remarkable in their own right – suggests both a global sensibility and an ear for the newest trends close to home. From the post-punk new wave of his early movies to the boleros, the bossa nova and the flamenco of his melodramas and more mature work, Almodóvar's cinema provides a veritable feast of transnational eclecticism.

The fact remains, however, that the most significant (and yet largely unrecognised) influence is that of the Spanish cinematic tradition that stretches back to the Second Republic of the 1930s. Almodóvar is the direct filmic descendent of Edgar Neville – Spain's finest director of the 1940s – as well as the absurdist humour of dramaturgs Miguel Mihura and Enrique Jardiel Poncela (all three of whom, incidentally, learned their cinematic trade while working on Spanish-language versions of Hollywood films in the Los Angeles studios of the late 1920s). Likewise, Almodóvar has repeatedly drawn attention to the debt that he owes to Neville's heir – and the closest Spanish filmmaker to Federico Fellini – the great Luis García Berlanga as well as to the director/actor Fernando Fernán Gómez (who appeared in Almodóvar's Oscar-winning 1999 movie *Todo sobre mi madre*).

There is, moreover, another major – and often unremarked upon – cinematic influence on Almodóvar. Luis Buñuel, who went into exile in Mexico in 1939 after Spain's Civil War is a constant referent for contemporary Spanish cinema. Buñuel, though, has long been associated critically with precisely the elitist pantheon of filmmaking that Almodóvar has rejected (or that has rejected him). Indeed, Buñuel is very often not even considered to be a Spanish cineaste by foreign critics, owing to the fact that much of his best-known work after 1939 was produced outside of the country, particularly in Mexico and France. Nonetheless, there are a number of parallels between the two directors. Both inhabit an ambivalent critical space that defies discursive categories of nominative definition, in which adjectives such as "popular" or "arthouse" are employed.
to classify and codify filmmaking. Although both directors are often referred to as auteurs, it is a little-known fact that Buñuel, whose international reputation comes principally from his surrealist collaborations with Salvador Dalí, was a key figure in the promotion of popular filmmaking during the Second Republic (1931–39). Likewise, Almodóvar – especially in his early work – was the leading exponent of the kind of popular urban comedy very much associated with Madrid in the 1980s. Almodóvar’s 1997 film Carne trémula – interestingly a film that for the first time in his oeuvre had a plot marked by the passage of historical time – quotes directly from Buñuel’s creepily comic 1955 tour de force, Ensayo de un crimen.

The intense, difficult and invariably complex relationship with the country of his birth provides us with the key to understanding the cinema of Almodóvar. The central issue in his films, and it is one with which he engages in a myriad different ways, from his earliest work to his most recent is the question of identity. This key feature of Almodóvar is never more consistently depicted than through the motif of writing. Writing reality into existence (and thereby changing it) through fiction is a means of interrogating all forms of subjectivity and subject formation. One need only note the abundance of characters who adopt multiple pseudonyms, the repeated images of typewriters, the information transmitted through found notes, the eerie presence of ghostwriters.

This critique of the subject extends to all other forms of identity. His refusal to kowtow to the academic exigencies of the Spanish establishment or to indulge in political posturing through his cinema does not mean that Spain is not central to Almodóvar’s subject matter nor that he is uninterested in politics. In much the same way – and in a country where same-sex marriage is now legal – his obsessive concern with the fluidity of genders, the interchangeableability of sexual tastes and orientations, his constant interrogation of discrete sexual identities has disappointed certain militant gay activists who, for political reasons, evidently would prefer a clearer – and less ambiguous – definition of sexual identity (and would also like to have seen Almodóvar take a stance in favour of gay rights). The point is an important one, Almodóvar’s characters are never exclusively heterosexual or homosexual, instead they perform their identities and thus are identifiable by what they choose to be at any particular moment. The point is made tellingly in several of his films but a clear example is in his 1986 La ley de deseo. In this film Almodóvar cast the well-known post-operative transsexual (at least to a Spanish audience), Bibi Andersen, as the mother of a child who – to all intents and purposes – has been adopted by an onscreen transsexual played by Carmen Maura. Similarly, Almodóvar is responsible (in this film and others such as the 1982 Laberinto de pasiones) not only for having launched Antonio Banderas’ film career but also for having converted him into a gay icon. In this sense Almodóvar has an affinity with the new queer cinema of the 1980s and 1990s and owes a particular debt – again via Sirk – to Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Although Almodóvar has gone out of his way to disavow
the suggestion that he is a gay filmmaker (rather than a filmmaker who just happens to be gay), the content of his films often subtly points up a gay geneology. In Todo sobre mi madre – a film that is essentially a work of mourning of a mother for her son and Almodóvar’s recent loss of his own mother – the intertextual references abound to create a patchwork of literary antecedents that inflects and subverts the forward march of teleological history of facts and figures. This is a text structured around a set of other texts produced by globalised community of gay writers: Federico García Lorca, Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams.

Identity, though, is principally subverted in Almodóvar’s work through the human body. In La flor de mi secreto (1994) and Todo sobre mi madre we see explicit references to the donation and transplant of organs (and Spain is one of the world’s most generous nations in this respect). The common idea that one’s “essence” is contained in the particularity of a single organ (such as a heart) is upended by Almodóvar. Likewise, cloning (Laberinto de pasiones), sex changes (La ley de deseo) and wholesale resuscitation (Hable con ella [2602] – Almodóvar’s most metaphysical film) all make the body the agent of flexibility and change. In Todo sobre mi madre, the transsexual character of Agrado (Antonia San Juan) delivers an ostensibly comic speech concerning the surgical alterations performed upon her own body, which she pointedly claims are what make her who she really is. The discourse surrounding artifice and reality is, of course, at the heart of Miguel de Cervantes Don Quixote, the key text in the Spanish literary canon. Almodóvar and Cervantes not only undermine Christian notions of the body as an essential and inviolable representation of being but they also subvert identity by proposing the body as a site of imitation. One of the characters in Tacones lejanos (1991) is a magistrate whose investigation leads him to impersonate (in drag) a fading 1960s cabaret star (played by Marisa Paredes), while also assuming the identity of a drug dealer. The fact that the character is played by one the most important figures of the Spanish pop scene, Miguel Bosé (who, in the past, has modelled himself upon David Bowie) adds an additional star quality to the dimensions of the character. In a melodrama clearly related to Sirk’s 1959 Imitation of Life, the film raises the possibilities of mimicry as more real than that which it seeks to imitate.

It is perhaps because of this play on the boundaries of identity – or borderline ambiguities – that Almodóvar delights in threshold locations. His use of airports especially Madrid’s Barajas airport, which appears in many of his films, from his second to his most recent; the dressing rooms of film studios, theatres, nightclubs, replete with mirrors that lend themselves to particular filmic effects; cemeteries, in Madrid, Barcelona and (again) in his latest film, Volver. These are points of transition but they are also locations of transformation. This spatial aspect to Almodóvar is an important one. Urban space, the precincts the city arenas that have marked recent Spanish history and crucially, the element of freedom of movement are associated with questions of identity and with bridging those features that seem most peculiar in this particular director’s work. Critics have noted the importance of space in films such as
the early ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? (1984) or in Carne trémula but its implications have rarely been analysed. The cultural intersections and the abundant hybrid forms produced of Spain's uneven development and the dramatic and rapid changes of recent decades have provided Almodóvar with a rich mine of material. In both Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios and Volver rural life is at the heart of urban culture and vice versa.

On March 11, 2004 a series of explosions ripped through three commuter trains as they approached Madrid. 191 people were killed and thousands more were injured in Europe's worst ever terrorist attack. The bombings came three days before the Spanish general elections and a week prior to the programmed release of Almodóvar's 15th feature, La mala educación. The right-wing ruling party in government at the time sought to capitalise on the event by blaming it on the Basque separatist group ETA, while simultaneously concealing information that indicated that an Islamic terrorist group was responsible. Very quickly it became apparent that the government had lied and on March 14, in the face of all predictions to the contrary, the opposition Socialist Party won the elections. Almodóvar applauded the result. Almost exactly a year previous to the bombings Madrid had hosted one of the largest demonstrations ever held to protest Spain's involvement in the invasion of Iraq. The three main speakers at the end of the march were Pedro Almodóvar, his leading actress in Hable con ella, Leonor Watling, and veteran director and actor Fernando Fernán Gómez. At the premiere of La mala educación later in the month of March 2004, a right-wing mob outraged at Almodóvar's statements gathered to insult and hurl rotten vegetables at those entering to see the new film. After winning two Oscars and numerous other awards both at home and abroad, it is testimony to the enduring reputation for transgression that Almodóvar remains a refreshing source of contention and controversy.

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Pedro Almodóvar

Filmography

Pepi, Luci, Bom y las otras chicas del montón (1980)
La herencia de pasiones (Labyrinth of Passions) (1982)
Entre tinieblas (Dark Habits) (1983)
¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? (What Have I Done to Deserve This?) (1984)
Matador (1986)
La ley de deseo (The Law of Desire) (1987)
Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (Women On the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown) (1988)
¡Átame! (Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down) (1989)
Tacones lejanos (High Heels) (1991)
La flor de mi secreto (The Flower of My Secret) (1994)
Kika (1996)
Carne trémula (Live Flesh) (1997)
Todo sobre mi madre (All About My Mother) (1999)
Hable con ella (Talk To Her) (2002)
La mala educación (Bad Education) (2004)
Volver (Return) (2006)

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Articles in Senses of Cinema
The Flower of My Secret by Carla Marcantonio

Web Resources
Pedro Almodóvar
Official site. In Spanish, French and English.
**Film Directors – Articles on the Internet**
Links to online articles can be found here

**Almodóvarlandia**
An older fan page. In Spanish, English and German.

**Guardian/NFT interview: Pedro Almodóvar**
Transcript of interview with Jose Arroyo at the NFT, following a screening of *Talk to Her*.
Movida madrileña

De Wikipedia, la enciclopedia libre

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movida_madrile%C3%B1a

Saltar a navegación, búsqueda

Madrid por la noche.
Desde la movida siguen en el vocabulario madrileño expresiones como "Madrid nunca duerme", "Esta noche todo el mundo a la calle" o "Madrid me mata".

La Movida Madrileña fue un movimiento contracultural surgido durante los primeros años de la Transición de la España post-franquista y que se prolongó hasta finales de los años ochenta.

La noche madrileña fue muy activa no sólo por las salidas nocturnas de los jóvenes, sino a causa de un interés inusual en la llamada cultura alternativa, las drogas, underground o contracultura. La aparición de sellos independientes de grabación discográfica (Dro, TicTac, Tres Cipreses etc.) permitió la creación de una música distinta a la patrocinada por las multinacionales del disco.

Nacido en Madrid, el movimiento se extendió miméticamente a otras capitales españolas, con la connivencia y afiento de algunos políticos, principalmente socialistas, entre los que destacarían el entonces alcalde de Madrid, Enrique Tierno Galván, que había estudiado profundamente desde un punto de vista sociológico la cultura marginal juvenil (véanse los ensayos contenidos en su obra El miedo a la razón). El apoyo político a esta cultura alternativa pretendía mostrar un punto de inflexión entre la sociedad franquista y la nueva sociedad de la democracia; esta imagen de una España "moderna", o cuánto menos abierta a la modernidad, sería utilizada internacionalmente para combatir la imagen peyorativa que el país había adquirido a lo largo de cuatro décadas de dictadura. No
obstante, y a pesar de este movimiento contracultural, gran cantidad de las estructuras sociales y económicas del país eran heredadas del antiguo régimen.

La revista *La Luna*, entre otras acunadas por los ayuntamientos de Madrid y de Vigo (donde también tuvo lugar la conocida como movida viguesa), fue el baluarte del movimiento, que halló reflejo en algunos programas televisivos como *La bola de cristal* o *Si yo fuera presidente* de Fernando García Tola y otros musicales y de variedades presentados por personajes como Paloma Chamorro, Carmen Maura, etc., y tuvo su cronista en el escritor y periodista Francisco Umbral desde su columna en el diario *El País*, sus cantantes en Enrique Urquijo y Olvido Gara, más conocida como «Alaska», su poeta en Eduardo Haro Ibars, su graffitero en Juan Carlos Argüello «El Muelle», sus ídolos artísticos en Andy Warhol y Miquel Barceló y sus lugares de culto en Rock-Ola, Carolina, El Sol, El Penta, La Vía Láctea, etc. El poeta Luis Antonio de Villena novelizó esta época en *Madrid ha muerto*. Lo mismo hizo el novelista Gregorio Morales en su obra *La individuación*.

**Corrientes artísticas de la Movida** [editar]

![Alaska, vocalista de Alaska y los Pegamoides](image)

Pedro Almodóvar (en la foto con Penélope Cruz) fue uno de los iconos de la movida

Hubo estilos y vertientes nuevas en:
El cine de Almodóvar y la posmodernidad en España.  
(The Films of Almodóvar and Postmodernism in Spain.)

Pedro Almodóvar has become one of the most popular, innovating, and influential film directors in contemporary Spain. The international successes and the critical acclaim his films have received over the decades are due mainly to his playful attitude to modern Spanish society, his idiosyncratic visual style and gift for color, the controversial representation of gender roles and sexuality in general, the deconstructive analysis of national identity, and the celebrated performance of his characters. All these qualities, combined with the intertextual presence of mass media, music and songs, film, literature, and parody have contributed to a new postmodern aesthetic that has reshaped Spanish cinema in the last two decades. This intensive course is designed as an introduction to contemporary Spanish culture and society through a selection of Almodovar’s most representative cinematic output. We will view an average of ten of his films and discuss them daily. We will focus on important features such as postmodernist aesthetics, questions of national identity, pop culture, parody, the social construction of gender, and the celebration of heterodox desires vis a vis repressive social conventions. Another feature of his films we will study is the relation Almodovar draws on from social movements like la movida, a sub-culture that emerged from marginal society in Madrid’s late eighties. These major thematics will be studied in conjunction with the stylistic principles that have contributed to making Almodovar the distinct director he is known to be in contemporary Spanish cinema. The course will also include trips to Madrid (the city that Almodovar’s cinema is most associated with). These excursions will include a visit to his film studios El Deseo, a guided tour to a museum of contemporary art, and visits to some of the city sights that bear significance in his films.

Students will view these films together outside of class in the afternoon. Class discussion of approximately two and a half hours in the morning session will center on film analysis drawing on a wide range of material published on Almodóvar. All viewing, reading, and discussion will be done in English and Spanish. Spanish majors will be expected to write their papers and exams in Spanish. The rest of course participants have the option to write them in English.
Films to be studied:

Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón (1980)
Entre tinieblas (1983)
¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? (1984)
Matador (1986)
La ley del deseo (1987)
Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (1988)
La flor de mi secreto (1995)
Todo sobre mi madre (1999)
Hable con ella (2002)
Mala educación (2003)
Almodovar y el cine (en España)*

Francisco Javier Gómez Tarín

Almodovar es un director cinematográfico que no deja indiferente a ningún espectador, pero, al mismo tiempo, no admite un término medio: se disfruta o se rechaza. Hoy sus películas son éxito seguro en España y fuera de nuestras fronteras; los americanos harán un remake de <i>Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios</i>; <i>Cahiers du Cinema</i> alaba su último film, <i>Todo sobre mi madre</i>; la mayor parte de la crítica española se ha rendido a sus virtudes...

Aun a riesgo de ir contra corriente, nuestra posición no concuerda con la hegemonía. No negaremos que Almodovar consigue presentarnos argumentos insólitos o donde un mundo propio cobra consistencia, un universo muy diferente, plagado de símbolos y colorido; no negaremos que el cine español se ha potenciado gracias en parte a los éxitos sucesivos de este realizador; tampoco negaremos que algunos actores y actrices han encontrado el camino a través de sus películas. Con todo, sus mundos se nos antojan de cartón piedra y sus personajes de plastelina; la simbolología nos recuerda al barroquismo exacerbado; los colores nos remiten al pastiche más naïf. La parábola mesiánica de <i>Carne trémula</i> no soporta la comparación con el efecto metafórico de un solo plano de <i>Blade Runner</i> (crucifixión por crucifixión). Ahora bien, Almodovar, hace su cine, personal e intransferible, y nos congratulamos de que pueda hacerlo; en un país donde es difícil poder hacer cualquier cosa que se salga mínimamente de lo establecido, él ha conseguido constituirse en medida, en norma. Eso es un éxito.

Lo preocupante es: 1) Que Almodovar haya sido un marco de referencia, un punto de inflexión. Su éxito de público ha sido la clave que ha permitido el relanzamiento de un cine español de nuevo cuño y que también bate records de espectadores. 2) Que el sistema de valores y códigos cinematográficos con que trabaja la crítica se haya alterado, consumando una irritante fusión entre éxito económico y calidad filmica.

A todo lo anterior hay que añadir el hecho crucial de que la industria cinematográfica española posee en su haber indudables técnicas de calidad, lo que garantiza el resultado formal de los productos. La comparación que antaño se hacía entre nuestro cine y el americano, no sólo se rendía ante la sordera de sus guiones y direcciones, o ante el <i>star system</i>, se rendía sobre todo ante la profesionalidad, el rigor formal. Hoy las posibilidades técnicas son comparables, a nivel de formación que no de medios, por supuesto. Por ello no puede sorprendernos que el cine de Almodovar esté bien hecho, formal-

*Publicado en Revista <i>DISENSO</i>, núm. 28, Sociedad de Estudios Canarias Crítica, La Laguna, 2000, págs. 52-53
mente bien construido; pero ni es el caso de su cine ni el de ningún otro director español, puesto que la maquinaria funciona con precisión (subrayamos que al hablar de maquinaria hablamos de industria, lo que ya consti-
tuye una cláusula de control, de embudo dicta-
tado por el factor económico).

La inflexión se produce cuando films como El día de la bestia, Airbag, Perdita Du-
rango, Torrente, el brazo tonto de la ley, o El milagro de P. Tinto, tienen gran éxito de público y la prensa les colma de parabienes (los dos factores que previamente señalábamos como problemas endémicos). Ya hemos visto que la capacidad técnica permite buenos resultados formales, pero nos encontramos ante películas mediocres, cuando no nulas, que son sistemáticamente aplaudidas por espectadores y crítica. Mientras tanto, productos tan relevantes como Amic, Amat o Flores de otro mundo, pasan desapercibidos.

Se está produciendo un extraño fenómeno que otorga privilegios a los más privilegiados (ahí tenemos como muestra la estimación de los últimos films de Trueba (La niña de tus ojos) o García (El abuelo), que no consiguen pasar el bajo listón de la mediocreidad). Y más grave, esos privilegios se traducen en presupuestos más que millonarios (amenaza el Fu-Manchú de Alex de la Iglesia). Se ha instalado en nuestro cine la cultura clip y los valores se han contaminado por el odioso culto al ritmo (deprisa, más deprisa).

La frescura inicial del Almodóvar de Pepi, Lucy. Bom y otras chicas del montón o de Laberinto de pasiones, fue paulatinamente transformándose hasta alcanzar esa cima en su producción que fue La ley del deseo; desde ahí, un descenso en picado que se colma con la insufrible Kika. Las referencias constantes de tipo cinéfilo no salvan en modo alguno el conjunto, incluso cuando llega a los extremos de insertar en la propia acción del film la cita (caso de Carne trémula que homenajea la etapa mejicana de Buñuel, o más evidente en la secuencia final de ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? en relación a Cielo negro, donde incorpora un referente formal a través del travelling).

El cine de Almodóvar nace y muere en sí mismo, en su microcosmos, universo cerrado y casi siempre enfermizo. El traslado a la generalidad del cine español de una perspectiva (no)referencial anclada en mundos (im)posibles ha fabricado como consecuencia un monstruo de proporciones difícilmente imaginables en este momento. Es muy clarificador a este respecto el éxito de Torrente, el brazo tonto de la ley, film absolutamente imprescindible que nos hace recordar los tiempos de Ozores, del que lo único salvage sería la clara visión comercial de Santiago Segura, dispuesto a reírse de sí mismo y a hacer negocio con un público al que satisface la sal gruesa. Más complejo es el caso de Airbag, película que indudablemente resulta agradable en una primera visión pero que no resiste la segunda.

El cine español está entrando con estos productos en una convivencia público - crítica altamente peligrosa ya que el éxito produce secuelas. Puesto que nuestra industria es poco menos que raquitica, debiéramos pensar que actúan vasos comunicantes: para que uno de estos productos salga a la luz, otros muchos son sejuzgados y aparecenados, cuando no definitivamente retirados. No solamente nos vamos a encontrar con una reducción cualitativa, sino que se pueden probar toda serie de subproductos (ya podemos alertarnos con cosas como Atómica).
Quizás la industria precisa de un revulsivo, pero donde sí es evidente que es indispensable es en el terreno de la crítica. El público, por su parte, necesita una gota de la fragancia perdida en que consistía el amor al cine; una gota que le posibilite la renuncia a la colonización por la industria americana (la audiovisual en general: aquí la televisión cumple un papel aleccionador de primera magnitud) y el flujo publicitario; una gota de ese elixir que le permita variar el orden de sus demandas cuando se enfrenta a la lectura de un texto filmico. Se trata de convertir el ¿qué me quiere decir (qué historia me cuenta)?, ¿cómo me lo cuenta?, ¿quién me lo cuenta?, por el más efectivo y sin duda creativo orden de prioridades: ¿quién me lo cuenta?, ¿cómo me lo cuenta?, y, en consecuencia, ¿qué historia leo/interpreto? (no importa en modo alguno lo que se nos quiso decir puesto que lo único que es válido es nuestra interpretación: ese es el texto).

En la dialéctica espectador-critico, ambas partes están obligadas a cambiar sus parámetros. Caso contrario, el cine español está hoy abocado a un tremendo fracaso que quizás no sea económico pero sin duda será de calidad.