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Abstract: Almodóvar's unique status within Spanish, European and world cinema(s) issues a methodological challenge to existing taxonomies. Building upon Tim Bergfelder's distinction between reputedly "open" Hollywood films and "culturally specific" European fare, this article focuses on the production and reception of *Todo sobre mi madre/All about my Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999). Numerous critics have pinpointed intertextual references but have assumed that the Spanish filmmaker draws upon "universal" texts to make a "culturally specific" vision legible for international audiences. The binaries on which such a model is predicated do not withstand close cinematic or socio-historical scrutiny. *Todo sobre mi madre* conveys distinct meanings in Spain as opposed to in the international arena; this is not exclusively, or even necessarily predominantly, the result of autochthonous reference points, but also due to the contingencies of reception when Hollywood films are translated out of their domestic habitat. Tracing some of these journeys and identifying various interpretive communities will not only develop understanding of Almodóvar's craft and commercial success, but also help to contextualise and potentially reconcile some of the frequently embittered battles between Spanish and Anglo-American critics over the right to define and describe his cinematic output.

Keywords: Pedro Almodóvar, *Todo sobre mi madre*, *All about My Mother*, intertextuality, European cinema, Hollywood

Bringing It All Back Home?
Performance Intertextualities in *Todo sobre mi madre/All about my Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999)

In an article titled ‘Rethinking European film studies’, Tim Bergfelder deconstructs a series of well-established and frequently interiorised binary oppositions. Specific attention is paid to the ostensible divide between “universal” Hollywood texts, and “culturally specific” European art-house fare:

In contrast to the ‘open’ American film, the closed textuality of European films (and of nationally popular genres in particular) is perceived to demand a culturally competent viewer, which simultaneously denies access to mass audiences in other countries who do not share or acquire the same competence.¹

Furthermore, ‘[a]s European films are mostly treated as discrete cultural phenomena, transnational modes of reception are frequently ignored’.²

This article seeks to address this critical deficit in relation to *Todo sobre mi madre*, often considered to be Almodóvar’s finest cinematic achievement. It has become axiomatic to the to the point of cliché to foreground intertextuality in scholarship on this Oscar-winning film,³ commentators frequently departing from the premise that the Spanish filmmaker drew upon “universal” texts to make a “culturally specific” vision legible for international audiences. I will suggest, however, that this heuristic model is predicated on a series of binaries that do not always withstand close cinematic or socio-historical scrutiny. In the first section, I trace the transfusion of North American texts into the accented vernacular before, in the second, moving onto a discussion of how and why the actors and characters that inhabit the on-screen Barcelona self-consciously reference prior performances. This paves the way for the third and final part in which I argue that not all palimpsests are afforded equal visibility, a bone of contention in the frequently embittered battles between Spanish

and Anglo-American critics staking their claims for ownership of a filmmaker who, for better or worse, has come to embody ‘a one-man national cinema’.⁴

Hollywood Abroad: *All about Eve* and (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Elia Kazan, 1951)

As Hilary Radner notes, ‘Hollywood classical films provide a bank of images and stories that constitute a source of cultural and intellectual capital for movies within an international market’.⁵ This does not, however, imply that films mean the same things in different places; if an openness that facilitates the transposition of North American filmmaking into the vernacular is key to their universality, it issues a methodological as well as a commercial threat to the pristine identity and survival of ostensibly pure national cinemas. In the words of Mark Glancy:

As the study of British cinema has proceeded apace over the past few decades, film scholars and critics have usually conceived of it as a separate and distinct entity from Hollywood [...] However, it is not necessary to define British cinema solely in relation to film production, film-makers or even films. It can also include audiences and their cinema-going habits, experiences and preferences.⁶

The translation of this approach is particularly germane to the study of Spanish cinema and Almodóvar in particular: *Todo sobre mi madre* draws and reflects upon an idiosyncratically accented (re)vision of Hollywood cinema deeply rooted in the personal biography of the filmmaker and his country’s socio-political past.

A hallmark of Almodóvar’s oeuvre is characters watching films on the big and small screens: this technique generally performs an affective function, as well as constituting a privileged form of characterisation. Although it is never explicitly stated in *Todo sobre mi madre*, Esteban’s cultural tastes implicitly suggest that he is gay:⁷ his mother buys him a copy of Truman Capote’s *Music for Chameleons* – a book originally dedicated to Tennessee Williams – for his seventeenth birthday, and they excitedly sit down to watch *All about Eve* together. As the opening credits roll,

Almodóvar's script highlights the latent totalitarian kitsch of the dubbing of foreign films from the Francoist period that have remained extant in democratic Spain via television repeats: 'When the adverts finish, the title of the film, *All about Eve*, appears on the screen. A grandiloquent voice in Spanish says, <<*Eva al desnudo*>>'.⁸

Esteban comments that the translation of the film title into Spanish – *Eva al desnudo* – is incorrect: in his view it ought to be *Todo sobre Eva*. This is a fairly innocent example of potential linguistic slippage but, as Almodóvar has noted,⁹ the Franco regime attempted to control and distort at least some of the cinematic messages in an attempt to infantilise Spanish viewers.¹⁰ Forty years before the idea occurred to Disney with *High School Musical* (Kenny Ortega, 2006), the Spanish censors had already decided to make Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* more palatable by dubbing Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film adaptation so that Juliet does not commit suicide.¹¹ In the case of *Eva al desnudo*, the line "Are you two lovers?" was dubbed as "¿Son ustedes amigos?" [Are you two friends?].¹² In general, however, the film had experienced far more problems with censors in the United States than it did in Spain.¹³ It was premiered amidst much fanfare at Madrid's central Callao on 12 April 1952; Mankiewicz, who himself began in the industry providing subtitles for the inter-titles of foreign cinematic texts, has frequently remarked on the merits of his cinematic wanderings: '[m]y films – particularly those I write as well as direct – seem to lose something in the original English'.¹⁴

In Spain, *All about Eve* was screened for the first time in 'versión original' [original version] with subtitles when it was given a high-profile re-release in 1985; old habits nevertheless die hard and it is the dubbed version that was then screened on Spanish television the following year.¹⁵ Beyond its continued popularity amongst cinephiles and the general public, the film – as in many other countries – accrued a

loyal gay following.¹⁶ On travelling to Paris for the first time to visit an older lover in the early 1960s, Terenci Moix – a cultural critic and Spain’s self-elected custodian of camp – recalls that one of the most indelible discoveries was the ability to attend screenings of films from Hollywood’s Golden Age. Singling out Mankiewicz’s classic for special attention, he notes in his memoirs how: ‘The projection of *All about Eve* took place amidst the passion of the cinephiles and the delirium of the poofs fully committed to the worship of Bette Davis’.¹⁷

The 1970 Broadway production *Applause* – based on the source text for *All about Eve*, Mary Orr’s short story *The Wisdom of Eve*, because the rights to the latter were much cheaper than to the former¹⁸ – was, according to Bruce Kirle, ‘the musical most directly influenced by the Stonewall riots’.¹⁹ Staged in Madrid as *Aplausos* in Madrid in 1975, it was, alongside *Jesus Christ Superstar*, a popular phenomenon that firmly established the Anglo-American musical in Spain for the first time. Evidence of continued local inflection can, however, be detected in the choice of casting. The camp aesthete Addison Witt was played by Alfredo Mayo, who Carlos Saura had previously cast as a frustrated and brutalised middle-aged man in *La caza/The Hunt* (1966) in part to deconstruct the actor’s earlier heroic roles such as the figure representing the dictator in *Raza/Race* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1942), a film scripted by Franco himself; and Conchita Márques – Eva Perón’s goddaughter whose mother was Concha Piquer, Spain’s leading singer of *coplas* who spent much of the early 1920s as a teenage Broadway star – took the role of the eponymous villain. Sharply attuned from a young age to the vagaries and connotations of popular culture, Almodóvar, who arrived in the capital from his native La Mancha in 1968, could hardly have been unaware of these various intertexts.

The Francoist censor and the church were more preoccupied with cinema than other media because Spain was a nation of dedicated film-goers throughout the dictatorship period; as Alfonso Guerra, vice-president from 1982-1991, notes in his autobiography, ‘the cinema was the university of life’,²⁰ one of the few places where young women were allowed to go unaccompanied and a potentially democratic art-form in a fearful climate with high rates of illiteracy. If this helps to contextualise how prominently the cinema features in films set in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War,²¹ this ubiquitous social phenomenon did not meet with universal approval. A published treatise on youth problems by Father Aparicio Pellín expressed fears that, although cinema was a gift from God: ‘The soul of the young, extremely impressionable and in a period of heightened sensitivity and passions, has to resist with force if he is a regular recipient of a cinematographic education’.²² Almodóvar would confirm the cleric’s worst fears; *La mala educación/Bad Education* (2004) clearly parodies such opinions to suggest that cinema provides a correlative and a corrective to the lessons learned through religious instruction.

The pedagogical and psychological importance of cinema is one of the defining authorial stamps of Almodóvar’s oeuvre from even before the making of his first full-length film, *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón/Pepi, Luci, Bom and other Girls like Mom* (1980). In ‘Relato superficial de la vida de Miguel/The superficial tales of Miguel’s life’, an early short story contained in the collection *Relatos/Tales* that predates his cinematic debut, ‘Miguel evokes his adolescence and a summer vacation with his relatives in a small village: a summer full of sex and films “based on sordid tales from Tennessee Williams”, with Liz Taylor or Natalie Wood. He felt that they perverted him, little by little’.²³ This prose homage to cinema is echoed in Almodóvar’s subsequent depiction of *Todo sobre mi madre*:

[...] the film is as autobiographical as any about a director from La Mancha who has just won an Oscar. *All about My Mother* even talks about the way I became a spectator, and about how I became a film-maker. I like to think that my education as a spectator was formed by films adapted from works by Tennessee Williams, notably *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Desire – ‘El Deseo’, in Spanish – is the name of our production company; it’s the key word in the title of one of my films, and desire itself is present in all of the others.²⁴

Todo sobre mi madre also mimics the film adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in its resistance to fixity as regards translation across artistic media and national borders.

Kazan’s film faced problems from both the censorship board of the Motion Picture Industry and members of the Legion of Decency. Opinions vary as to the effect of the cuts,²⁵ but it is a useful reminder that Francoist Spain was hardly an isolated example of censorship in the post-war period. Williams’s play had been successfully staged in London and New York before Elia Kazan decided to make a film adaption starring many of the same actors from the Broadway production. As in Spain, North American legislators subscribed to the philosophy that different rules pertained to the screen than the stage. As Gene D. Phillips recounts:

The industry censor, Joseph Breen, was worried that a play that was quite acceptable on the stage would not be an appropriate film project. As the official administrator of the Code of the Motion Picture Association (MPAA), he wrote to Irene Mayor Selznick, who has produced the play on the stage and was considering the possibility of a movie version, that the provision of the Production Code presumed that ‘motion pictures, unlike stage plays, appealed to mass audiences, the mature and the immature.’ In fact, the Production code contained a section declaring that ‘everything possible in a play is not possible in a film’ because motion pictures command a mass audience, and ‘the larger the audience, the lower the moral resistance to suggestion’.²⁶

The two major points of contention were Stanley’s rape of Blanche, and references to her ex-husband’s homosexuality: Williams was willing to compromise on the latter, but not on the former. Kazan attempted to circumvent the first objection by using ellipsis and symbolism to depict the rape; Breen was not, however, satisfied and insisted that Stanley be punished for his lust, and his wife thereby leaves him in the film,²⁷ as opposed to Williams’ play-text where Stella, however perturbed by the

situation, tacitly sides with her husband by allowing her sister to be taken away by doctors presumably to an asylum, to which Stanley responds by continuing to play cards before ‘[h]e kneels beside her and his fingers find the opening of her blouse’.²⁸

Kazan’s film received a seal of approval from the Code Commission but the Legion of Decency, which rated the suitability for their Catholic subscribers, then advised Warner Brothers that *A Streetcar Named Desire* would receive a “C” (Condemned) rating, and this led to a further twelve cuts which amounted to a total of four minutes.²⁹ In an example of the paternalism of Spanish censorial practices, a one-off-screening of a cinematic adaptation of a play that had yet to be approved for the stage was allowed for an invited audience in 1951,³⁰ but Kazan’s film then faced serious problems when it was slated for a general release in 1952. In his report, the censor José María Sánchez-Silva argued that:

The extraordinary artistic and literary qualities of this film – provocative but not in my opinion immoral – have made me think that it could be shown in Spain if all due precautions are taken. It ought to be screened for over-eighteens only and with a warning that, **EVEN IN THE HEALTHIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD** it could be frankly dangerous for those spectators who do not fully grasp a plot about sick lives and souls. Nevertheless, it could be a good thing that Spanish viewers have the opportunity to contemplate certain aspects of life in North America.³¹

In spite of this tentative individual approval, the general Censorship Commission decided on viewing the film on 30 June 1952 that it should not be imported to Spain.

This was not the first time Kazan had faced problems with the Spanish censor. In spite, or perhaps even because, of it being the year’s highest grossing film at the North American box office, *Gentleman’s Agreement* (1947) had been banned on the charge of heresy; this caused controversy back home where the *New York Times* ran an article condemning Spanish attitudes. This, in turn, prompted a response from the Director-General of Cinematography through the US embassy in Madrid claiming that racism was not an issue in Spain, and they were not thus interested in such sordid

aspects of North American life.³² On the one hand, this would likely have predisposed the censorship office to have viewed *A Streetcar Named Desire* with suspicion; conversely, the escalation of the Cold War, and the Franco regime's longstanding vocal opposition to Communism, ensured that its potential release coincided with a vital period of rapprochement. This was not, however, without its tensions. In the cinematic realm, relations between the MPEAA and the Spanish government entered a new more conflict-riven phase between 1955 and 1957, as the former wanted to exert the kind of control over the type and number of Hollywood films released as it did elsewhere in Europe.³³ Somewhat ironically given the problems it had experienced at home, *A Streetcar Named Desire* would constitute a high-profile litmus test for North American soft power and Spanish malleability.

In a letter dated 3 March 1956, the distribution company implicitly threatens the Spanish government by stating that, taking into account the film's multiple Oscar wins, the continued prohibition of *A Streetcar Named Desire* could be interpreted as an attack on North American values. Offering a somewhat hypocritically anodyne interpretation of the narrative, they ask what possible objection could be levelled against 'the story of a woman who becomes mentally disturbed as a result of losing her beloved husband and son in the war'.³⁴ The argument was persuasive. A censorship board unanimously agreed it could be shown without cuts, despite noting that a censored version had been insisted upon in both Canada and Holland.³⁵ Although no edits were made, dubbing once again allowed for a covert form of censorship: a note in a student film magazine, *Cinema Universitario*, complained that 'prostitute' was dubbed as 'extravagante' / 'extravagant';³⁶ while Terenci Moix, who was first drawn into writing through translation, recalls how he 'spent whole days translating Blanche Du Bois's dialogue in an attempt to recuperate the original

meaning that had been sequestered by the censors'.³⁷ As late as 1974, Hispanex's request to re-release the film in Spain was conditional on admission being for adults and a dubbed as opposed to a subtitled version been screened.³⁸

The belated opening of *A Streetcar Named Desire* only served to increase expectations and interest. According to trade magazine *Cine Asesor*: 'The huge diffusion that this title has had in both magazines and newspapers alongside the names of the actors and the prestigious awards it has won, will be more than enough to ensure that the film's premiere will be eagerly awaited'.³⁹ It was awarded the ecclesiastical rating of '3R Rosa fuerte/Vibrant Red', which indicated the film was highly unsuitable for minors – without entering into the 'Grana/Crimson Red' category, which would have meant it was unequivocally dangerous⁴⁰ – likely attracted at least as many spectators as it served to detract. Publicity materials sought to maximize the sensational shock value with proclamations such as the following:

At last, the most violent characters ever to shown on-screen: at last, the seventh art's most vigorous and crushing actors. After playing her role in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the famous actress Vivien Leigh needed help over a serious crisis of her nerves: that's how powerful her character is.⁴¹

Unlike in the UK or the US, Spanish audiences experienced *A Streetcar Named Desire* on the screen prior to its arrival on the stage.

The first theatrical production, based on a translation by José Méndez Herrera and directed by Alberto González Vergel, premiered in at Madrid's Reina Victoria in 1961. According to at least one contemporary review, it functioned as an antidote to the softened film version: 'The Spanish stage has offered us an unrelenting version, which is very hard and has the asphyxiating whiff of a cloistered chamber'.⁴² This did not, however, prove popular with audiences: its staying power did not reach 100 performances.⁴³ The play would not be revived for the professional stage until 1994; the production, under the direction of José Tamayo, would open at Madrid's Teatro

Bellas Artes, perhaps not coincidentally the site chosen by Almodóvar for the Madrid production of the play in *Todo sobre mi madre*. This absence of a substantial performance tradition does not imply that Williams is not a canonical author in Spain,⁴⁴ but rather that for the film, which remains a popular classic,⁴⁵ casts too heavy a shadow; as one review of the Tamayo production noted: ‘The bar was set too high and the celluloid version was so popular that nobody amongst us dared to stage it’.⁴⁶

Urban and Performance Palimpsests

At the time of writing, *Todo sobre mi madre* is the only Almodóvar film in which a departure from Madrid indicates a move to an urban as opposed to a rural setting withstanding the international air space of *Los amantes pasajeros/I’m so Excited!* (2013). A challenge for a director with international ambitions – and, in indeed, for a remarkably centralist national cinema – is that the Spanish capital lacks an iconic urban topography. The city’s principal landmark, the Puerta de Alcalá, is no match for the Sagrada Familia which, as Robert Hughes notes, ‘is to Barcelona what the Eiffel Tower is to Paris or the Harbour Bridge to Sydney: a completely irreplaceable logo’.⁴⁷ If a kitsch recasting of Gaudi’s unfinished masterpiece in *Matador* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1986) provides the backdrop for a postmodern diegetic catwalk, the architectural monument provides a privileged gateway in *Todo sobre mi madre* to the Catalan capital in both narrative and promotional terms. As Mariana Liz observes:

[...] Barcelona is introduced by a spectacular aerial view of the city. Ismaël Lô’s ‘Tajabone’ song begins as a soft guitar while the film’s protagonist Manuela (Cecilia Roth) is on a train. As the harmonic is played and the music’s intensity increases, a helicopter shot shows Barcelona at night, seen from mount Tibidabo. In the following shot, a taxi drives through the Monument to Colón; the film then cuts to Manuela looking at [...] the Sagrada Familia Cathedral, from the taxi window. The music is moving and nostalgic, appropriate for someone returning to a place dear to them after a long absence; in this sequence, Almodóvar invests the city with a strong emotional charge.⁴⁸

Both the subject and the tone of this description is symptomatic of the fact that, as Maria M. Delgado notes, the ‘iconography of Barcelona is bound up with performance’.⁴⁹ Urban topography might remain, but the mise-en-scène and players have clearly changed irrecoverably since the then young pregnant woman left the city seventeen years previously, while the development of Barcelona reveals much about the idiosyncrasies of Spain’s Transition to democracy.

The city has become a ‘model for post-industrial reform’ since the 1992 Olympics firmly put it on the international map.⁵⁰ As Edgar Illas notes, the transformation constituted ‘the articulation of a municipal political process that aimed to have an effect on each social sphere of the city while implementing a comprehensive urban renovation’;⁵¹ this process has not, however, met with universal approval: Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s *Barcelonas* and Manuel Delgado’s *La ciudad mentirosa: fraude y miseria del “modelo Barcelona”/The Fabricated City: The Fraud and Misery of the “Barcelona Model”* constitute bitter laments against ostensibly left-leaning technocrats who, in their view, sacrificed socialist ideals and the well-being of the working classes through the gentrification of areas such as the Barceloneta and the Raval required to turn the city into a chic global brand.⁵² Even if the Olympics and the concomitant urban transformation were not necessarily the only or the best possible response, there is a danger in underplaying to what extent Barcelona in the 1980s was in desperate need of a fix: many of the city’s most iconic areas around the central artery of Las Ramblas had become no-go areas; even left-leaning anarchist magazine, *Ajo blanco*, complained about the number of needles left in La Raval, and the horrific violence unleashed by the presence of drug-trafficking and foreign mafias.⁵³

Todo sobre mi madre constitutes a largely atemporal fairytale, simultaneously poeticising the transgressive energy of the past and the cosmopolitan gentrification of

the present. Manuela is reunited with transsexual prostitute Agrado in an old haunt, a re-creation of Barcelona's infamous red-light district known by locals as the Via Litúrgica;⁵⁴ for someone on a nurse's salary, she then rents an improbably chic design apartment in the Plaça Reial, a square that, pre-gentrification, had 'became a theatre for knife-fights and running battles between rival drug gangs'.⁵⁵ From Agrado's flat, the viewer can make out the pillars of the Palau de la Música while the description of a photo on her lounge table is described in the script as follows: 'It was taken at the beginning of the 1980s when the Barceloneta beach was a splendid display of beach bars and freedom'.⁵⁶

A recurring cast of extras from around the world alongside the presence of the plaintive harmonica of the Senegalese "Tajabone" reveal the urban landscape as being what Samuel Amago terms the 'centre of multi-cultural Spain' and the 'capital city of globalized Spain'.⁵⁷ At a time when large-scale immigration of the kind that would not occur until the onset of the twenty-first-century, multiculturalism is shown to be an attractive feature of the cityscape rather than a potential source of conflict. *Todo sobre mi madre* pertains to the dominant tradition in film for side-lining the challenges faced by newcomers to Barcelona in having to negotiate a multi-lingual reality by only including dialogue in Castilian, but the film clearly pays homage to Catalonia's cultural specificity and reputed tolerance and openness.

Almodóvar, like Manuela, was swept up by the energy of the city's post-Franco liberation which arrived prior to *La Movida*, the drug-fuelled movement that put both him and Madrid on the (inter)national cultural map. As Alberto Mira notes, brief snapshots of the young filmmaker with leading lights of this Catalan counter-cultural movement reveals that he was not only familiar with its existence, but also a protagonist,⁵⁸ albeit with a more peripheral status to the one he would subsequent

occupy in the explosion of creative energy in Madrid. Almodóvar appears in a small role in *Un hombre llamado flor de otoño/A Man Called Autumn Flowers* (Pedro Olea, 1978), as a bitchy performer filmed in the dressing room of a transvestite cabaret in Barcelona, set in the 1920s during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.

In temporal, aesthetic and industrial terms, *Todo sobre mi madre* resides at the interface between films such as this or *Ocaña, un retrat intermitent/Ocaña, an Intermittent Portrait* (Ventura Pons, 1978) – a semi-documentary about the eponymous protagonist, an Andalusian cross-dresser as prone to quoting Lorca as to exposing his penis to passers-by along the Ramblas – and the performative reiteration of Barcelona as global brand in subsequent English-language studio productions. Although largely funded by European money, films such as *Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona* (Woody Allen, 2008) and *The Gunman* (Pierre Morel, 2015) are largely indistinguishable from Hollywood fare. If, as Edgar Illas notes, ‘[f]oreigners find its fusion of European sophistication and Mediterranean lifestyle irresistible’,⁵⁹ then the simulation of this cosmopolitan cocktail is reminiscent of the a certain Disneylandization of the urban metropolis, the Las Vegas model brought to the Old Continent: ‘Barcelona is a visible sign that European cities have become the real imitation of their imitation’.⁶⁰

Todo sobre mi madre not only employs multiple intertexts but is also sharply attuned to performance intertextuality. As Juan Carlos Ibáñez observes, ‘the most revealing connections with history are found in the margins of the text, in the subtle intertextual play established by Almodóvar between the character of Manuela and the biography of actress Cecilia Roth’.⁶¹ In a manner analogous to the way that the narrative allows Manuela to re-connect with figures from her past, the film itself constituted the first major professional collaboration between the director and actress

since *Laberinto de pasiones/Labyrinth of Passion* (1982), an almost-documentary like depiction of Madrid at the time. Roth, born in Argentina, was an active participant in *La Movida* following her arrival from her native Argentina as a result of the military coup: Her father had decided to move the family to Madrid after his teenage son Ariel – who would go on to form hard rock band Tequila – was threatened alongside friend Alejo Stivel. Alejo’s parents were the filmmaker David Stivel and the actress Zulema Katz, whose last film role was as the patient of the father of Sexilia – the character played by Cecilia Roth – in *Laberinto de pasiones*.

Roth claims that, due to personal disagreements, Almodóvar subsequently punished her with small or non-existent roles;⁶² he, conversely has suggested that she was simply one of the weaker actresses to perform in his film.⁶³ What changed his mind and convinced him that he wanted to reignite their working relationship was seeing *Martín (Hache)/Martin (Hache)* (Adolfo Aristarain, 1997),⁶⁴ a Spanish-Argentine co-production that, like *Todo sobre mi madre* and so many of its intertexts, is about the theatre and highly theatrical but, somewhat counter-intuitively, makes frequent use of the close-up, a quintessentially cinematic device;⁶⁵ Roth’s role in *Hache* is almost equidistant between Sexilia and Manuela: a drug-addled Argentine actress living in Madrid going out with a middle-aged self-absorbed Marxist filmmaker who took refuge in the Spanish capital fleeing repression in Buenos Aires.

In a reversal of what had happened prior to, during and after the Civil War – when Latin American film and theatre benefitted immensely from the presence of Spanish Republican exiles – Manuel Palacio and Carmen Ciller have ventured to say that, from 1976 onwards, ‘Spain was filled with actors, actresses and practitioners from Argentina [...] the theatrical and cinematographic diaspora is the largest on record since the end of the Second World War’.⁶⁶ Amongst the Argentine community

in Madrid during the early 1980s was Carlos Gandolfo, an expert in Tennessee Williams who performed an important pedagogical role for the next generation of Madrid-based practitioners. Penélope Cruz is amongst the alumnus of an acting school established in 1978 by Cristina Roto, another Argentine exile.⁶⁷

In spite of this tradition of intercultural exchange, the habit of dubbing has rendered Spanish audiences remarkably conservative in terms of the accents they expect in film.⁶⁸ Roth was dubbed in *Laberinto de pasiones* although the name of her character, Sexilia, is an in-joke based on how the name Cecilia would be rendered phonetically in Peninsular Spanish if it were pronounced in an exaggerated Argentine accent. It is, however, her voice that is heard in *Todo sobre mi madre*. Almodóvar employs accents as a source of humour and pathos for the attuned ear: hence, for example, in a morbid joke that is lost in translation, Manuela refers early on to someone being of blood type 0-positive or ‘cero-positivo’; because the Argentine accent renders ‘c’s’ as ‘s’s’ to the Spanish ear, this is rendered as ‘sero-positivo’ which translates as ‘HIV-positive’.

Performance intertextuality similarly performs an important role as regards Spanish actors in the film. As Silvia Colmenero Salgado notes of the casting of Huma Roja, ‘Almodóvar created this role specifically for Marisa Paredes, totally in line with her prior performances, in a kind of eternal prolongation of her reflected image’.⁶⁹ Huma’s dressing room contains what appear to be real-life photos of Paredes’ stage performances, whilst the role marked the third time that the actress had appeared in an Almodóvar film as an exemplary and successful professional, whose personal life is a mess, following starring roles as a bolero singer in *Tacones lejanos/High Heels* (1991) and as a romantic novelist in *La flor de mi secreto/The Flower of My Secret* (1995). Even in the case of Candela Peña, an actress who had never worked with

Almodóvar previously, her role as Huma's much younger lesbian drug-addled lover evokes prior performances and roles, most noticeably as heroin addict in *Días contados/Numbered Days* (Imanol Uribe, 1994).

If Almodóvar has always been attentive to performance, then this is a habit he acquired when young. In interviews, he has claimed that it was watching his mother effectively lie that taught him about story-telling.⁷⁰ This provides one clue as to why motherhood and acting are so frequently conflated within *Todo sobre mi madre*, while also contextualising how and why critics are so divided as to whether the film ought to be considered a pro- or anti-feminist text.⁷¹ Broadly speaking, the former camp – in line with, say, the work of Spanish feminist Victoria Camps⁷² – believes that qualities that have traditionally been denigrated as feminine, ought instead to be celebrated; for the latter, the film is predicated on a remarkably essentialist and antiquated view of gender norms. One defence that can be wielded in Almodóvar's favour is the unfairness of an overly-literal reading, and that for him one of cinema's greatest gifts is the ability to transform as opposed to merely reflecting a pre-existing reality.

In line with this conception, *Todo sobre mi madre* constitutes a salient case of Daniel Frampton's Deleuzian interpretation of filmosophy:

It appears that film, in some of its forms, can rejig our encounter with life, and perhaps even heighten our perpetual powers. Cinema allows us to re-see reality, expanding our perceptions, and showing us a new reality. Film challenges our view of reality, forcing a phenomenological realisation about how reality is perceived by our minds.⁷³

Lourdes Estrada has carried out an analysis of *Todo sobre mi madre* along precisely these lines,⁷⁴ while, in a similar vein, Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Abilla has suggested that Almodóvar not only reflects but also goes beyond the theories of Judith Butler: 'This ethical and aesthetic process of becoming a "queer mother" makes us think of

cinema less in terms of “reflecting” an external reality or an external referent than as a means of producing theory itself.⁷⁵

In a manner akin to Aristotle’s evocation of ‘poetic’ as opposed to ‘historical’ truths to rebuff Plato’s dismissal of art as morally pernicious mimesis masquerading as reality, Almodóvar challenges mainstays of patriarchal discourse such as the idea that women are prone to deceive; the film reverses the traditional logic and re-claims this trait as positive as opposed to negative. Characteristics that are frequently denigrated in relation to women and female characters are venerated within *Todo sobre mi madre* – the fact that Sister Rosa frequently struggles to act and lie is seen to be to the detriment of her own psychological and physical well-being, while it is significant that her mother, the film’s only unattractive female character, is indelibly linked with copying rather than transforming reality through her occupation of forging Chagall paintings. This moral (re-)positioning is replicated through the re-appropriation of a number of the intertextual sources as Almodóvar reinscribes a dominant tradition of meta-theatrical films produced prior to and, in fact, after *Todo sobre mi madre* – see, for example, *Black Swan* (Darren Aaronofsky, 2014) and, to a lesser extent, *Clouds of Sils Maria* (Oliver Assays, 2014) – which suggest physical decline and female rivalry to be largely insurmountable obstacles for actresses, and arguably women in general, to negotiate as they advance into middle age.

Blanche’s reported liaison with a seventeen year-old boy loses her a job as a secondary school teacher in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In *All about Eve*, Margo Channing approaching forty – what David Thomson terms, ‘that uninsurable accident for every actress’⁷⁶ – is increasingly insecure about both her career and her relationship with a man eight years her junior; echoing the pairing of an ageing actress and her toy-boy from *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950). Huma’s relationship

with the much younger Nina is dysfunctional but, unlike the earlier film, is neither grotesque nor humiliating. When Manuela is reunited with Huma and Agrado at the end of the film as they rehearse a homage to Lorca, the latter tells of how Nina is now married with an ugly child; as Almodóvar comments, 'the return to the village really is a failure, a goodbye to her life as an actress, to the *dolce vita*'.⁷⁷ Unlike, say, the talented but lonely ageing matriarch or the stage in *Bullets over Broadway* (Woody Allen, 1994), Huma is surrounded by a supportive network. The wig she dons for the new production is an intertextual wink to the one worn by both Eve and Margo in Mankiewicz's film but Huma adopts a classical tragic grandeur rather than being subject(ed) to an unflattering comparison with a younger alter-ego.

Performance, for Almodóvar's women, constitutes less of an escape from than a transformation of the empirical world; while most of the women in the film's source texts are engulfed by fantasy and ensnared by reality – or, perhaps, vice versa – his protagonists are liberated and socialized through theatre and fiction. According to the film's press book, Manuela is 'the anti-Eve Harrington'; as Gwynne Edwards notes, Huma, like Blanche Dubois is mentally anguished, but the 'latter lives in a world of fantasy, of gentleman callers, of imagined refinement and elegance, while Huma is a realist, toughened by hard work and accustomed to the triumphs and disappointments of life in the theatre'.⁷⁸ This is both the product and cause of the fact that, unlike her North American predecessor, she can genuinely rely on the kindness of (female) strangers. The scene in which Huma, Rosa and Manuela sit on a sofa discussing sexual mores is self-consciously reminiscent of *How to Marry a Millionaire* (Jean Negulesco, 1953), but with the key distinction that homosocial bonding and life plans are not predicated on meeting a rich man.

Male characters are, in fact, ostensibly incidental but nevertheless carefully crafted components in the film. As Mark Allison notes, the casting of prime-time television presenter Carlos Lorenzo as Mario – the character who plays Brando’s role in the play-within-the film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and whose macho demeanour does not prevent him from being obsessed with Agrado’s penis – ‘not only increased media interest in the role, but also exploited the high-profile, high-masculine image of the actor’.⁷⁹ The choice of Fernando Fernán-Gómez, an iconic and well-respected figure from Spanish television, theatre and cinema, in the role of an infirm old man with Alzheimer’s alongside Toni Cantó, familiar to Spanish television audiences as a soap-opera heartthrob as Lola, are radically diverse tactics with a common aim: to keep the aegis of patriarchy at bay.

Almodóvar provides an unusual and arguably unparalleled outlet for mature female acting talent; this, however, carries its own dangers. If he holds the power to rescue women from the indignity of ageing, they too can become typecast and dependent on his patronage. Antonia San Juan, for example, shamelessly and somewhat indignantly riffs on her prior role as Agrado in *Piedras/Stones* (Ramón Salazar, 2002), while the fact that *Enloquecidas* (Juan Luis Iborra, 2008) is derivative of his work is intimated through the casting of Verónica Forqué – a former *chica Almodóvar* who last collaborated with him in *Kika* (1993) – as an ageing actress with a drink problem, who describes her biography as being akin to that of a Tennessee Williams character, and whose current play is attended religiously by a spectator who never misses a performance because his dead parents were fans of *All about Eve*. These specific examples hint at a much broader question to be addressed in the third and final part of this article: how best to forge an ethical and aesthetic appraisal of Almodóvar’s unique talent to exploit local talent for the international market-place.

Lorca and Lesser-Known Intertexts

‘[D]espite the sustained critique of the generalisations and abstractions of the “apparatus theory” subsequent theorisations of spectatorship and/or audiences remain largely indifferent to the transnational experience of cinema and the specificities of the engagement of spectators with “foreign” films’.⁸⁰ This is both the symptom and cause of a methodological challenge articulated by Michael Cronin in *Translation*

Goes to the Movies:

Students of modernity and globalization would be well advised to consider how film makers have handled translation issues within their narratives as a further angle to understanding how multilingual and multicultural concerns play out in a globally distributed medium. Though film scholars might be reluctant to dwell on language for fear of relegating image to a secondary position, or only consider translation in the context of the ‘technical’ concerns of dubbing and subtitling, the issues raised by representations of translation are too important or persistent to be ignored in any attempt to understand the impact of cinema as one of the pre-eminent idioms of the modern age.⁸¹

The study of cinematic intertextuality is well-suited to such a task, taking on board as it does multiple elements of which the verbal is not necessarily paramount. While, for example, Esteban quoting Truman Capote’s *Music for Chameleons* is a verbatim transcription of the original, many of the secondary filmic references are primarily visual: the appropriation, for example, of the running over of a seventeen-year old fan by an actress’s car on a rainy night from *Opening Night* (John Cassavetes, 1977), or the fetishistic dwelling on hospital drips and equipment rendered in a colourful mise-en-scène reminiscent of *Magnificent Obsession* (Douglas Sirk, 1954).

Federico García Lorca is both the film’s primarily autochthonous reference point and the only contemporary figure to rival the filmmaker’s stature as a global ambassador. Almodóvar has cited Lorca as the starting point for *Tacones lejanos*, while *Volver* (2006) clearly references *La casa de Bernarda Alba/The House of Bernarda Alba*.⁸² In *Todo sobre mi madre*, a cameo appearance by the theatre director

Lluís Pasqual is indicative of the fact that his dramatised anthology from 1996 of Lorca's rural tragedies, *Haciendo Lorca/Doing Lorca* was an inspiration for *Todo sobre mi madre*. The affective and thematic links become immediately apparent on reading a review of the earlier production, starring Núria Espert alongside Argentine actor Alfredo Alcón; Eduardo Haro Tecglen, *El País*'s chief theatre critic and a father who lost four of his six children, casualties of the *La Movida*, remarks on the selective appropriation of Lorca's words:

The theatrical talent of Lluís Pasqual selects, above all, words by Lorca's female characters: women from *Yerma*, *Bodas de sangre* and *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. The words of women without children, partner-less, or grieving the death of a man. I saw how some women in the stalls were crying (I went to the performance on Monday), and I suppose that it will be because of this, for women with a story to tell, childless or harbouring some tragedy: women penetrated by the word of a man who probably never knew a woman in the Biblical sense, and harboured some of their desires and frustrations, giving voice to them with unparalleled emotion.⁸³

The poet whose life was cut tragically short by fascist thugs at the outset of the Civil War is a perfect thematic fit for a film concerned with gay aesthetics alongside affective and physical rejuvenation through transplants and transposition. Lorca also functions as a recognisable icon for the filmmaker's (inter)national audience(s).

In his discussion of critical moments in translator decision-making, Jeremy Munday identifies concepts which are 'saturated with value in their culture' and 'attitudinally rich epithets' as key.⁸⁴ Within the global translation and exchange of culture, branded figures such as Almodóvar and Lorca perform precisely this role: they are approached with what Munday terms an 'invoked-associative' attitude.⁸⁵ Delgado's exemplary book on Lorca is effectively an attempt to provide an etymology for his present-day meaning(s), which she succinctly defines as follows:

More so than any other twentieth-century Spanish writer, he remains a paradoxical embodiment of the local, the national and the global. His life and work have become indelibly bound up in a process of mythification that has converted him into the ultimate countercultural icon – the gay, martyred seer

and a taboo topic in Franco's Spain – and now the establishment face of the newly tolerant post-dictatorship Spain.⁸⁶

When an English-language version of *All about My Mother* was staged at the Old Vic in London, the references to Lorca and *Blood Wedding* were developed further than they had been in the original film.⁸⁷ This, alongside the references to Sister Rosa's mother forging Picasso as opposed to Chagall paintings,⁸⁸ were the middle-brow equivalents to the introduction of a female bullfighter and cod-flamenco rhythms into a subsequent English-language musical production of *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios/Women on the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988).

As with most myth-making processes, much has been lost in the process. The Francoist state was unsurprisingly resistant to allow, let alone promote, productions of Lorca's works although, by the mid-1960s, even the right-leaning *ABC* newspaper marked the thirtieth anniversary of Lorca's death with a commemorative edition,⁸⁹ a symptom of a certain national(ist) reconciliation with the martyred poet that was both the cause and consequence of his works having received professional revivals on the contemporary Spanish stage. The first major post-War production of *Bodas de sangre* took place under the direction of José Tamayo at the Teatro Bellas Artes.⁹⁰ *Yerma* was staged at the Eslava theatre by Luis Escobar in 1961. This precipitated a heavy police presence outside of the auditorium, and would likely have suffered reprisals if it were not for the fact that Escobar was a well-connected aristocrat who took care to premiere the work abroad first – it represented Spain at the Spoleto Theatre Festival in Italy – and to invite his personal friend, and General Franco's eldest daughter, Carmen, to an early performance thereby pre-empting potential criticisms.⁹¹

From a logistical and legal perspective, this production established a precedent because it ensured that *Yerma* had been approved for performance. The continued sensitivity of Lorca's work alongside the circumstances surrounding his death is well

demonstrated by the issues Argentine director Victor García had in an elaborate staging of *Yerma* with set design by Fabio Puigserver and starring Núria Espert. This production toured Europe – and was central to the canonisation of Lorca – while the controversy in Spain exacerbated by the presence of practitioners openly critical of the regime led to frequent cancellations by the authorities on spurious grounds, which only served to heighten the renown and popularity of the production and Lorca alike.⁹² A more significant and resilient barrier to the staging of his play than the Francoist regime has, however, been the Lorca estate;⁹³ this is especially marked in references to the poet's homosexuality, which he tried to maintain secret from his family during his life.⁹⁴ Although Lorca's sister, Conchita, appeared in Escobar's production when staged in Italy, the director – himself a closet homosexual – notes that Federico's youngest sister, Isabel, was paranoid over any potential insinuations about her brother's sexuality in her policing of the production prior to the premiere in Spain.⁹⁵ As Javier Herrero remarks, more generally, '[f]or almost half a century after Lorca's death there has been an almost impenetrable wall of opposition to the any [suggestion of] opposition of his gayness [sic]'.⁹⁶ Almodóvar – whose homosexuality is itself flagged and framed more positively abroad than at home – implicitly resists this this tendency and effectively inscribes both himself and Lorca into a global gay canon alongside Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote, both of whom spent extended periods of time in Spain from the 1950s onwards.⁹⁷

In twenty-first century Spain, Almodóvar is a far much more contested figure than Lorca.⁹⁸ The Manchegan director is frequently accused by critics, the industry and the general public of offering an excessive, clichéd and repetitive image of the country and its culture for international consumption. This impression is, somewhat ironically, forged largely by the frequent recourse to national traditions and references

likely to remain invisible to non-Spanish audiences; as Josetxo Cerdán and Miguel Fernández Labayen lament:

The persistent inability on the part of many Spanish critics to appreciate the multiple facets of the Almodóvar oeuvre is the product of a schematic vision that continues to evaluate forms of cultural expression in terms of high versus low and art versus folklore.⁹⁹

Los amantes pasajeros was, for example, so readily dismissed by national critics for its ostensible frivolity in casting Cecilia Roth as an actress clearly intended to resemble Barbara Rey – a former glamour model, actress and vedette, who is strongly rumoured to have had an affair with King Juan Carlos – or the inclusion of television heartthrobs Mario Casas and Hugo Silva in leading roles.¹⁰⁰ Conversely, however, these domestic reference-points and in-jokes to, say, ‘agua de Valencia’ – literally ‘Valencian water’, but also slang for a specific kind of drugged cocktail – provided a challenge to the film’s legibility in the international marketplace.

Todo sobre mi madre is, in many respects, the exception that proves the rule. It won six Goyas – the Spanish Academy Awards – and was put forward as the official Spanish entry for the “Best Foreign Film” at the Oscars; as Marvin D’Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon note of its subsequent victory, ‘the event confirms and celebrates the deterritorialization of Almodóvar’s cinema beyond its presumed Spanish origins, a process that has been ongoing throughout the previous decade but which is now brought more dramatically into public light’.¹⁰¹ This ‘deterritorialization’ was nevertheless instrumental in terms of domestic reception: references to Truman Capote, a more elite literary citation in the Spanish as opposed to the Anglo-American cultural sphere, alongside the homage to Cassavetes inscribe the Spanish filmmaker into an international cultural elite; *Opening Night* was not even given an official release in Spain and, if Almodóvar claims to have discovered it at a screening in Paris,¹⁰² then this only serves to heighten the film’s distinction in the

eyes of Spanish critics for whom a little-seen work of a foreign director will almost invariably be construed to be more distinguished than a domestic television series. *Todo sobre mi madre* can, in fact, be profitably construed as the antithesis of *Los amantes pasajeros*: national and international reference points are both legible and infused with cultural capital for domestic and foreign audiences and critics alike.

According to Marsha Kinder, Almodóvar's 'films increasingly perform an evocation of earlier works (both his own and intertexts of others) that leads us to read them as an on-going saga and to regroup them into networked clusters'.¹⁰³ Hence, for example, *Todo sobre mi madre* might be variously grouped alongside *La flor de mi secreto* – in whose narrative the motif of the transplant first appears – and *Carne trémula/Live Flesh* (1997) as part of a new mature phrase; the final part of a trilogy in which Marsia Paredes plays divas in various personal and professional guises; or as a refinement of the references to *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *All about Eve*, first sketched in the made-for television short film, *Trailer para amantes de lo prohibido* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1985) and his prose-alter ego, Patty Diphusa, respectively.¹⁰⁴

Re-writing and improving upon pre-existing works of art is a habit that the filmmaker also picked up in the cinema auditoriums of his childhood; according to his brother, Agustín, he would take great delight in returning home and attempting to improve on the films he had just seen in his fictional re-telling of the cinematic narratives.¹⁰⁵ This anecdote goes some way to contextualising what we might term Almodóvar's freedom as opposed to anxiety of influence:

I don't take it to be something passive. After you see a film, it leaves its mark, like a current that goes between you and the film. The film, then, is now a memory, it has become part of my experience, that is, the experience of having been present and having felt it all. At that point, it's no longer a matter of paying tribute or whatever; you become imbued with your conversations with your father, your mother, your brother, your fiancée, with what goes on in the streets, with what you read, but all that eventually becomes a part of you. Once you have experienced a feeling, that feeling is yours, and that's the one

you'll remember. When I create a film, that's how I work, like something...well, the truth is, what I create is almost like a theft.¹⁰⁶

There is, however, an ethical issue with this embodied approach to intertextuality and appropriation in a context where, for many spectators outside of Spain, Almodóvar has virtually patented the national cinema.

This issue is compounded by the fact that the filmmaker and academic commentary on his work are far from consistent in the attention and detail expended on acknowledging citations from different media and traditions. Paul Julian Smith has, for example, persuasively noted that the influence of *How to Marry a Millionaire* on *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* – and, to a lesser extent, on *Todo sobre mi madre* – has been referred to much more regularly than domestic TV series from the 1960s such as Jaime de Armiñan's *Chicas de la ciudad/City Girls* (1961).¹⁰⁷ In comparison with, say, Michael Keaton and Edward Norton in *Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2014), international audiences are less likely to clue into the conflation of actors and roles in *Todo sobre mi madre*, with the most recognisable performance intertextuality being Marisa Paredes's previous collaborations with Almodóvar. The dedication to Gina Rowlands at the end of *Todo sobre mi madre* is recognition of not only her own tragic personal life, which involved the death of a son, but also the film's indebtedness to her performance in *Opening Night*, especially in the ability of her face to communicate emotion through under-stated but highly affective close-ups.

In interviews, Almodóvar frequently refers to the influence of the white-faced man dressed in black in *Det sjunde inseglet/The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957) on the father's appearance at Esteban's funeral: 'Lola makes quite an impression in that setting, descending the stone stairway of the cemetery as though a model on a fashion shoot'.¹⁰⁸ It may be a remarkable coincidence but there is an

almost identical scene in *Más que amor, frenesí/Not Love, Just Frenzy* (Alfonso Albacete, Miguel Bardem and David Menkes, 1996), a film little-seen internationally that features a cameo appearance from Penélope Cruz and stars Bibiana Fernández, a real-life transsexual who goes by the stage name of Bibi Anderson and was a regular *chica* Almodovar up to and including *Kika*. Despite occupying radically different positions on the hierarchy of aesthetic forms, television and theatre can both be rendered equally invisible to non-localised commentators.

Almodóvar cast Antonio Banderas in his debut cinematic role in *Laberinto de pasiones* after the filmmaker and Cecilia Roth saw the young actor from Malaga in a production of Calderón de la Barca's play *La hija del aire/The Daughter of the Air* in 1981.¹⁰⁹ Future studies would do well to study how Banderas' early performance as Gaveston in a theatrical production of *Edward II* directed by Lluís Pasqual fed into the construction of the fragile masculinities embodied in subsequent screen appearances. To cite another camouflaged genealogy, conventional wisdom amongst foreign and domestic commentators dictates that the town mayor in *¡Bienvenido Mister Marshall!/Welcome Mister Marshall* (Luis García Berlanga, 1953) is a caricature on Franco that cleverly circumvented the censor;¹¹⁰ Pepe Isbert – the actor who played the aforementioned role – appears completely unaware of this connotation in his autobiography, where he voices unconditional admiration and support for the dictator, noting that his performance feted at Cannes builds upon a long-standing tradition in Spanish theatre for buffoonish local mayors.¹¹¹

In 2006, the *Almodóvar Exhibition* opened at the *Cinématique Française*. The seventh part, titled “La Vie Spectacle”, was dedicated to films the director has referenced in his own cinematic works; some were then screened as part of a season to coincide with the exhibition for which Almodóvar was one of the curators.¹¹² The

sole Spanish entry was *El verdugo/The Executioner* (Luis García Berlanga, 1963), also starring Isbert. That said, Almodóvar's inclusion of thirteen Spanish films that had inspired him as part of a BFI season dedicated to his works suggested a shift in his public acknowledgement of his compatriots and a deliberate gesture towards inscribing his work within a national canon. In addition to *El verdugo*, works included *El extraño viaje/Strange Voyage* (Fernando Fernán-Gómez) and *Blancanieves/Snow White* (Pablo Berger, 2012) alongside *Arrebato/Rapture* (Iván Zuleta, 1979) and *Jamón Jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992), two films from which the Manchegan director could previously have stood accused of appropriating from without due credit.

Almodóvar wrote on the BFI website that: 'Bigas Luna's film was Penélope Cruz's debut and the reason why so many directors, me included, dreamt about working with her some day [...] *Jamón Jamón* is a celebration of a genuine celebration of all things Spanish'.¹¹³ In a series of rants against what he perceives as the usurpation of his national cinema by foreign critics, Santos Zunzunegui argues that the targets of his attack have failed to pay sufficient attention to autochthonous traditions, what he terms 'the richest, most original and creative vein of Spanish cinema'.¹¹⁴ In his view, the man from La Mancha provides an iconic manifestation of what he terms 'the paradigm of transcultural reinscription':¹¹⁵

[...] it is possible to contribute to the erasure of the postmodern cliché that, for example, has led foreign critics to turn Pedro Almodóvar into a mere fetish in order to situate him in his genuine terrain: that of an exemplary redresser of numerous aesthetic forms from the Spanish tradition.¹¹⁶

There is a valid point to be made about critics not always paying sufficient account to Spanish inter-textual sources but the broader argument quickly collapses in a number of important respects. First, Almodóvar is clearly complicit in this process: his talent and success is predicated on his ability to factor in the contingency of reception so as to retain a degree of creative control, while appealing to diverse audiences. Second,

his relatively low critical standing at home is at least in part the result of domestic reviewers being unable to see anything in his films beyond recycled and frequently critically derided aesthetic forms. Third, the reification of national culture fails to address what music scholar and sociologist Motti Regev terms, ‘the consolidation of aesthetic cosmopolitanism as the global cultural condition of late modernity’;¹¹⁷ Spanish imports as well as exports are subject to re-signification. The long Franco dictatorship delayed the onset of late modernity in Spain but, even then, a certain aesthetic cosmopolitanism was the cause and consequence of the appeal of Hollywood films; that this phenomenon is similarly not always taken into account is, for example, demonstrated by US-based critic Isolina Ballesteros attributing a feminist re-writing of *A Streetcar Named Desire* – by which Stella leaves Stanley – to Almodóvar,¹¹⁸ without taking sufficient account of the fact that Kazan’s film is the more prominent antecedent than Williams’s play-text.¹¹⁹ Fifth, foreign critics and approaches cannot so readily be coalesced into a homogenous group and they are not invariably unaware of cognitive and cultural limitations.¹²⁰

Zunzunegui’s argument would not warrant more than cursory attention if it were not for its resilience and influence in the domestic context; it is most significant in terms of his not unjustified concerns over the cultural ownership and sequestration by Anglophile critics of Spanish cinema became consecrated as an object worthy of study in universities around the world.¹²¹ The problem, however, is that the chauvinistic re-entrenchment in national paradigms and cultures is not only flawed methodologically, but also unlikely to prove productive. Heuristic tools and cultural (re-)appropriation change the meaning of films. This is as true of some Hollywood films as it is of ostensibly beleaguered European national cinemas. As Elsaesser notes: ‘What the auteur theory saw in them was not what the studios or even the

directors “intended,” but this did not stop another generalization of American viewers appreciating exactly what the *Cahiers du cinema* critics had extracted from them’.¹²²

Mapping international (and not necessarily universal) theories onto the films of Almodóvar can admittedly be suspiciously convenient: in the case of *Todo sobre mi madre* this is particularly marked by what Ernesto R. Acevedo-Muñoz terms, the ‘use of theatrical situations as the locus of “authentic” disclosures’.¹²³ Agrado’s monologue on authenticity and her various operations in her quest to become the perfect woman lends itself to being interpreted as an iconoclastic and concise recapitulation of the major tenets of gender performativity but that very directness can limit what can be gained from their application. In *Bodies that Matter* – the follow-up to the canonical *Gender Trouble* – Judith Butler argues against the ironically literal and reductionist reading(s) to which her most-famous text had been subject(ed):

[...] it would be a mistake to impose the same criteria on every cultural product, for it may be precisely the partiality of a text which conditions the radical characters of its insights. Taking the heterosexual matrix or heterosexual hegemony as a point of departure will run the risk of narrowness, but it will run it in order, finally, to cede its apparent priority and autonomy as a form of power. This will happen within the text, but perhaps most successfully in its various appropriations.¹²⁴

This is precisely the form of labour adopted throughout *Todo sobre mi madre*.

On the one hand, the re-signification of performance intertexts ensure that meanings ricochet in ways that criticism can never exhaustively capture. Conversely however, this does not imply that the desire to capture and analyse various iterations is futile, or that local commentators have the monopoly on the identification of sources of far from singular provenance. The translations and transfusions of *Todo sobre mi madre* resist reification and retreat into national paradigms or, for that matter, too sharp a division between text, theory and performance. Future studies would be well-advised to adapt a transnational approach at the level of both

production and reception; films such as *Mujeres al borde un ataque de nervios* and *Volver* have, for example, enjoyed international visibility to warrant the application of methodologies developed by the international *Lord of the Rings* audience project.¹²⁵

Conclusion

A celebrity in Japan, with bars and restaurants established in his honour in Australia, Almodóvar is a genuinely global phenomenon, unique amongst the select group of internationally feted Hispanic auteurs for having never shot abroad or in English. The “openness” of his films make them well-placed to midwife a transition away from what Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee-Lim term ‘the iron grip of hierarchised binarism’,¹²⁶ by which anything not generically and geographically grounded in North American commercial cinema is automatically posited as Hollywood’s “other”. If *Todo sobre mi madre* conveys distinct meanings in Spain than abroad then this is not exclusively or even predominantly the result of autochthonous reference points but can also be attributed to the contingencies of reception when Hollywood films are translated out of their original habitat.

The outlandish masquerade of Almodóvar’s cinematic output can frequently disguise the extent to which he is an ascetic Catholic consumer of myriad aesthetic forms. Critical endeavours of this kind require local knowledge combined with a sensitivity to multiple inflections through a transnational sphere that ‘is not an anarchic-free-for-all in which blissfully deracinated postnational subjects revel in ludically mystified states of ahistoricity’.¹²⁷ Cataloguing various intertextual appropriations runs the risk of lapsing into academic train-spotting but the re-inscription of multiple performance intertexts also provides the possibility of tracing alternative genealogies and the opening up of new vistas onto the work of a

remarkable Spanish filmmaker who has so successfully resisted standard taxonomies of national, European and world cinema(s).

¹ Tim Bergfelder, 'National, transnational or supranational cinema? Rethinking European film studies', *Media, Culture Society*, vol.27, no. 3 (2005): pp. 315-30, p. 325.

² *Ibid.*, p. 325.

³ See, for example, María Asunción Gómez, 'Todo sobre actrices: la reinscripción de *All about Eve* en *Todo sobre mi madre* de Pedro Almodóvar', *Letras Peninsulares*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2003), pp. 277-90; Linda Craig, 'From national to transnational in Pedro Almodóvar's *All about my Mother*', *Transnational Cinemas*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2010), pp. 161-74; Cristina Manzano, 'Todo sobre mi madre' in Antonio Castro (co-ord.), *Las películas de Almodóvar* (Madrid: Ediciones JC, 2010), pp. 211-26; and Vilma Navarro-Daniels, 'Tejiendo nuevas identidades: la red metaficcional y intertextual en *Todo sobre mi madre* de Pedro Almodóvar', *Ciberletras: revista de crítica literaria y de cultura*, vol. 7 (2002): unpaginated.

⁴ Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), p. 14.

⁵ Hilary Radner, 'Hollywood Redux: *All about my Mother* and *Gladiator*' in Jon Lewis (ed.), *The End of Cinema as We Know It: American Film in the Nineties* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), pp. 72-80, p. 74.

⁶ Mark Glancy, 'The Hollywood woman's film and British audiences: a case study of Bette Davis and *Now, Voyager*' in Melanie Bell and Melanie Williams (eds.), *British Women's Cinema* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), pp. 49-61, p. 49.

⁷ As Stephen Maddison notes of *Todo sobre mi madre*, it 'is practically a lexicon of camp allusions and queer iconic references'; unlike earlier films, however, it is, to borrow a phrase from Patrick Paul Garlinger, 'not a camp film but a film *about* camp'. Stephen Maddison, 'All about women: Pedro Almodóvar and the heterosexual dynamic', *Textual Practices* vol. 14, no. 2 (2000): pp. 265-84, p. 277. Patrick Paul Garlinger, 'All about Agrado, or the sincerity of camp in Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre*', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2004): pp. 117-34, p. 118.

⁸ Pedro Almodóvar, *Todo sobre mi madre/Tout sur ma mere* (Paris: Petite bibliothèque des Cahie du cinèmea, Scénario bilingue, 1999).

⁹ See, for example, his discussion with Maria Delgado at the BFI on 11 January 2015 at the screening of a new print of *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios/Women on the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown* about how and why he made two of the central characters in the film specialists in dubbing.

¹⁰ The best documented source of information on this process is the following unpublished doctoral thesis: María del Camino Gutiérrez Lanza, *Traducción y censura de textos cinematográfico en la España de Franco: doblaje y subtítulo inglés-español (1951-1975)* (University of León: Doctoral Thesis, 1999).

¹¹ Paco Ignacio Taibo I, *Un cine para un imperio* (Mexico: Lecturas Mexicanas, 2000), p. 84.

¹² Alejandro Ávila, *La censura del doblaje cinematográfico en España* (Barcelona: Editorial CIMS), p. 80.

¹³ Sam Stagg, *All about Eve: The Complete Behind the Scenes Story of The Bitchiest Film Ever Made* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 52-57.

¹⁴ Gary Carey and Joseph L. Mankiewicz, *More about All about Eve* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 99.

¹⁵ Ángel Fernández Santos, 'El cine en la pequeña pantalla', *El País*, 27 March 1986.

¹⁶ In 1991, the director Juan Antonio Bardem was amongst the speakers at a high profile "Cinema and literature" summer course centred around the film, and held in El Escorial. Fernando Trueba, the Oscar-winning director of *Belle Epoque/The Age of Beauty* (1992) has, for example written the following: 'In its day, *All about Eve* upped the mental co-efficient of cinema to levels that it had hitherto been known it could even aspire. If we compare it with the films that are now exhibited in any "civilized" city, the abyss between them is even more marked'. Fernando Trueba, *Mi diccionario de cine* (Barcelona: Galaxis Gutenberg, 2006), p. 136.

¹⁷ Terenci Moix, *El beso de Peter Pan* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2003), p. 610.

¹⁸ Sam Stagg, *All about Eve: The Complete Behind the Scenes Story of The Bitchiest Film Ever Made*. pp. 284-290.

¹⁹ Bruce Kirle, *Unfinished Business: Broadway Musicals as Works in Progress* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), p. 191.

²⁰ Alfonso Guerra, *Cuando el tiempo nos alcanza: Memorias, 1940-1982* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2004).

²¹ See, for example, *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice, 1973); *El sur/The South* (Víctor Erice, 1983); *Beltenebros/Prince of Shadows* (Pilar Miró, 1991); *El embrujo de Shanghai/The Shanghai Spell* (Fernando Trueba, 2002); and *Los girasoles ciegos/The Blind Sunflowers* (José Luis Cuerda, 2008).

²² Rvd. Padre Aparicio Pellín, *Problemas de la Juventud* (Madrid: Editorial El Reino del Corazón de Jesús, 1960), pp. 269-97.

²³ Francisco A. Zurián, 'Creative beginnings in Almodóvar's work' in Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon (eds.), *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 39-58, p. 49.

²⁴ Cited in Frederic Strauss (ed.), *Almodóvar on Almodóvar*, trans. Yves Baignères (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 2nd ed., p. 204.

²⁵ Ellen Dowling, for example, has written: 'In my opinion, the censored version of *Streetcar*, while perhaps sparing some "innocents" from offense, does indeed "frustrate" the intelligent viewer'. Ellen Dowling, 'The derailment of *A Streetcar Named Desire*', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1981), pp. 233-40, p. 234. Although accepting that all the indications suggested this would be the case, Linda Constanza Cahir has argued precisely the opposite:

These cuts could have crippled the movie, reducing it to melodrama, diminished Blanche, and emptied characters of their most compelling and complex motivations. Instead, the film's [...] changes that Kazan and Williams knew to be painfully inappropriate, are worked to enrich the film by appropriately dislodging it from Williams's play.

Linda Constanza Cahir, 'The artful re-routing of *A Streetcar Named Desire*', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1994), pp. 72-77, p. 74

²⁶ Gene D. Phillips, *The Films of Tennessee Williams* (London: Associated University Press, 1980), p. 81.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85. For a detailed account of the film's problems with the censor, see also Brian Neve, *Elia Kazan: The Cinema of An American Outsider* (London: IB Taurus, 2009), pp. 33-45.

²⁸ Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), p. 226.

²⁹ Gene D. Phillips, *The Films of Tennessee Williams*, p. 87.

³⁰ Román Gubern, *La censura: función política y ordenamiento jurídico bajo el franquismo (1936-1975)* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1981), p. 127.

³¹ Taken from reports contained in the Administration's General Archive in Alcalá de Henares. Box no 36/03433.

³² Eva Woods Peiró, *White Gypsies: Race and Stardom in Spanish Musicals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 3-4.

³³ Pablo León Aguinaga, *Sospechosos habituales: el cine norteamericano, Estados Unidos y la España franquista, 1939-1960* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010), p. 297, p. 334.

³⁴ Box no. 36/03433 in the General Archive.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Cinema Universitario*, 'Aviso a la Real Academia Española', vol. 4 (December 1956), p. 3.

³⁷ Terenci Moix, *El beso de Peter Pan*, p. 318.

³⁸ Box no 36/04475 in the General Archive.

³⁹ *Cine Asesor*, 'Un tranvía llamado deseo', *Cine Asesor*, no. 1262 (1956), unpaginated.

⁴⁰ María del Camino Gutiérrez Lanza, *Traducción y censura de textos cinematográfico en la España de Franco: doblaje y subtítulo inglés-español (1951-1975)*, p. 70.

⁴¹ *Cine asesor*, 1956. 'Un tranvía llamado deseo', *Cine asesor*, 1262.

⁴² P. Ángulo, 'Estreno de *Un tranvía llamado deseo* en el Reino Victoria', *La Vanguardia Española*, 20 Jan 1961, p. 6.

⁴³ Paloma Cuesta Martínez, *Comunicación dramática y público: el teatro en España (1960-1969)* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Colección Tesis Doctorales, 1988), p. 102.

⁴⁴ Other plays by Williams such as *The Glass Menagerie* and *Talk to me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen* have been performed with a certain normality on the Spanish stage – it a sign of the playwright's standing in Catalonia that *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was chosen to re-open the refurbished emblematic Lliure theatre in Barcelona's Gràcia area. See Maria Delgado, 'Relocations, re-workings, re-openings:

Catalans in Madrid, Argentines in Barcelona', *Western European Stages*, 23.2 (2011): pp. 13-30, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Hence, for example, I was unable to attend a large outdoor screening at the pop-up outdoor summer cinema at the Centro Conde Duque in Madrid in 2014 because I'd failed to buy tickets in advance for this sold-out event.

⁴⁶ Enrique Centero, 'Un mito americano', *Diario 16*, Oct. 2 1993.

⁴⁷ Robert Hughes, *Barcelona: The Great Enchantress* (Washington: National Geographic Society, 2004), p. 130.

⁴⁸ Mariana Liz, *Euro-Visions: European Contemporary Cinema* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming). I'd like to thank Mariana allowing me to see the manuscript prior to publication.

⁴⁹ Maria M. Delgado, 'Performing Barcelona: cultural tourism, geography and identity' in Helena Buffery and Carlota Caulfield (eds.), *Barcelona: Visual Culture, Space and Power* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), pp. 173-92, p. 173.

⁵⁰ Gary McDonogh, 'Discourses of the city: policy and response in post-transitional Barcelona' in Setha M. Low (ed.), *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp. 342-76, p. 369

⁵¹ Edgar Illas, *Thinking Barcelona: Ideologies of a Global City* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 1.

⁵² Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Barcelonas* (Barcelona: Empúries, 1990); and Manuel Delgado, *La ciudad mentirosa: fraude y miseria del "modelo Barcelona"* (Madrid: Los libros de la Catarata, 2007).

⁵³ Vicente Gracia, "'El Chino": los chorizos autoctonos desbancados por los grupos extranjeros', *Ajo Blanco*, 2 (1987): pp. 52-61.

⁵⁴ As Robert Hughes description intimates, this is a Fellini-esque set(ing) in real-life:

Unless they get into a cat fight, which sometimes happens, their dignity is vestal [...] They stand widely separated, like idealized statues-carved from the gross and hairy male protein of their former selves, occasionally doing a circuit to mark off their territory, the older ones stalking and the younger ones teetering slightly in their high heels on the rutted surface. This one looks like Carmen Miranda, that like the young Anita Ekberg, a third like Veruschka, and a fourth, with an Egyptian wedge of frizzy hair, resembles Sonia Braga. But for a cache-sexe and some accessories – a feather boa, a leather bustier, or mesh stockings – they are naked, some with magnificent breasts that possess the artificial perfection of hothouse fruit, achieved like the grace of Saint Theresa through patient devotional mortification and self-denial: hormones, surgery, and much saving up to pay the doctors [...] Most of the time they exhibit a regal indifference, a self-absorption within the strutting temple of the redesigned body that goes far beyond the ordinary narcissism of mannequins.

Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 46.

⁵⁵ Donald McNeill, *Urban Change and the European Left: Tales from the New Barcelona* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 33.

⁵⁶ Pedro Almodóvar, *Todo sobre mi madre/Tout sur ma mere*, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Samuel Amago, 'Todo sobre Barcelona: refiguring Spanish identities in recent European cinema', *Hispanic Research Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2007), pp. 11-25, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Alberto Mira, 'Ocaña. *Retrat intermitten/Ocaña. An Intermittent Portrait* (Ventura Pons, 1977): the Mediterranean *movida* and the passing away of Francoist Barcelona' in Maria M. Delgado and Robin Fiddian (eds.), *Spanish Cinema, 1973-2010: Auteurism, Politics, Landscape and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 49-63, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Edgar Illas, *Thinking Barcelona*, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶¹ Juan Carlos Ibáñez, 'Memory, politics, and the post-transition in Almodóvar's cinema' in Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon (eds.), *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 153-75, p. 163.

⁶² María Guerra, Elio Castro-Villacañas, Juan Zavala and Antonio C. Martínez, *Cecilia dice... Conversaciones con Cecilia Roth* (Huelva: Festival de Cine Iberoamericano de Huelva, 1998), p. 80.

⁶³ Frédéric Strauss (ed.), *Almodóvar on Almodóvar*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ María Guerra et. al, *Cecilia dice... Conversaciones con Cecilia Roth*, p. 136.

⁶⁵ Although, for example, the influence of Rainer Werner Fassbinder can frequently be detected in Almodóvar's work, an inherently cinematic approach to a theatrical(ized) text comes to the fore if, for

example, one contrasts *Todo sobre mi madre* with *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant/The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972).

⁶⁶ Carmen Ciller and Manuel Palacio, 'Cecilia Roth en España (1976-1985)', *Signa*, 20 (2011), pp. 335-48, p. 340.

⁶⁷ Carmen Ciller, 'The influence of Argentinian acting schools in Spain from the 1980s' in Dean Allbritton, Alejandro Melero and Tom Whittaker (eds.), *Performance and Spanish Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 110-121, p. 116.

⁶⁸ Complaints were, for example, aired about the supposed unintelligibility of Viggo Mortensen – Aragorn from *The Lord of the Rings* (Peter Jackson, 2001, 2002 and 2003) saga – a Danish-American actor who spent his teenage years in Argentina, when he appeared as the eponymous Spanish mercenary in *Alatriste/Captain Alatriste: The Spanish Musketeer* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006). See Anne L. Walsh, 'Spanish stars, distant dreams: the role of voice in shaping perception' in Andrea Bandhauer and Michelle Royer (eds.), *Stars in World Cinema: Screen Icons and Star Systems across Cultures* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), pp. 92-103, pp. 98-99.

⁶⁹ Silvia Colmenero Salgado, *Pedro Almodóvar: Todo sobre mi madre* (Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós, 2001), p. 132

⁷⁰ See, for example, Javier Rioyo and Javier Ángulo, 'Una pareja estable: director y actriz de *Todo sobre mi madre*. Entrevista con Marisa Paredes y Pedro Almodóvar', *Cinemanía*, April 1999, pp. 8-11, p. 10.

⁷¹ In terms of the anti-camp, see Barbara Zecchi, 'All about mothers: pronatalist discourses in contemporary Spanish cinema', *College Literature*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2005), pp. 146-164; and María M. Donapetry, 'Cinematernidad' in Jacqueline Cruz and Barbara Zecchi (eds.), *La mujer en la España actual: ¿evolución o involución?* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2004), pp. 373-96, p. 384. Silvia Colmenero Salgado offers a detailed account of the pro-argument in her aforementioned book. Others who ascribe a feminist reading of *Todo sobre madre* include Leopoldo Alas, 'Todo sobre mi madre: un grado más', *Academia*, vol. 26 (1999): pp. 72-77; Susan Martín-Márquez, 'Pedro Almodóvar's maternal transplants: from *Matador* to *All about My Mother*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 81, no. 4 (2010): pp. 497-510, p. 508; and María R. Matz and Carole Salmon, 'Facing Almodóvar's vision of Spanish contemporary society: women, men and everyone in between' in María R. Matz and Carole Salmon (eds.), *How the Films of Pedro Almodóvar Draw upon and Influence Spanish Society: Bilingual Essays on his Cinema* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2012), pp. 13-35.

⁷² See, for example, Victoria Camps, *El siglo de las mujeres* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998).

⁷³ Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), p. 3.

⁷⁴ Lourdes Estrada, "'La potencia de lo falso'" en *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999) de Pedro Almodóvar', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 15.6 (2014), pp. 530-546.

⁷⁵ Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Albilla, 'Becoming a queer (m)other in/and/through film: transexuality, trans-subjectivity and maternal relationality in Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre*' in Jo Labanyi and Tatjana Pavlović (eds.), *A Companion to Spanish Cinema* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 563-80, p. 576.

⁷⁶ David Thomson, *The Big Screen: The Story of the Movies and What They Did to Us* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 260.

⁷⁷ Cited in Frederic Strauss (ed.), *Almodóvar on Almodóvar*, p. 206.

⁷⁸ Gwynne Edwards, 'Almodóvar and the theatre', *ALEC*, vol. 30 no. 1 (2005): pp. 77-96, p. 82.

⁷⁹ Mark Allison, *A Spanish Labyrinth: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), p. 86.

⁸⁰ Dimitris Eleftheriotis, *Cinematic Journeys: Film and Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 180.

⁸¹ Michael Cronin, *Translation Goes to the Movies* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. xii.

⁸² María M. Delgado, *Federico García Lorca* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 8.

⁸³ Eduardo Haro Tecglen, 'Palabras en el espacio', rev. of *Haciendo Lorca, El País*, 30 April 1996.

⁸⁴ Jeremy Munday, *Evaluation in Translation: Critical Points of Translator Decision-Making* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 157.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁸⁶ María M. Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Duncan Wheeler, 'All about Almodóvar: *Todo sobre mi madre* on the London stage', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 97, no. 7 (2010): pp. 821-41, pp. 824, 828, 835-6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 829.

⁸⁹ María Delgado, *Federico García Lorca*, p. 33.

⁹⁰ Gwynne Edwards, 'Bodas de sangre in performance', *ALEC*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1997): pp. 469-91, p. 483.

⁹¹ Luis Escobar, *En cuerpo y alma: Memorias* (Madrid: Temas de hoy), pp. 205-209.

⁹² See Núria Espert and Marcos Ordóñez, *De aire y fuego: Memorias* (Madrid; Santillana Ediciones Generales, 2002), pp. 143-149.

⁹³ In the words of Maria M. Delgado:

Arbiters of, and financial beneficiaries from, the Lorca corpus, they authorize translations for staging, adaptation, and publication, approving or otherwise use of the writer's words for advertising, film, and television, and control reproductive rights over his drawings and illustrations. Theirs has been a grip as tight as that of the Beckett or Brecht estates.

Maria M. Delgado, 'Memory, silence, and democracy in Spain: Federico García Lorca, the Spanish Civil War and the law of historical memory', *Theatre Journal*, vol. 67, no. 2 (2015): pp. 177-96, p. 190.

⁹⁴ In the words of Leslie Stainton: 'He lived a compartmentalized life. With close friends he was open about his sexuality; with others – particularly his family – he was evasive'.

Leslie Stainton, *Lorca: A Dream of Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), p. 392.

⁹⁵ Luis Escobar, *En cuerpo y alma: Memorias*, p. 208.

⁹⁶ Javier Herrero, *Lorca, Young and Gay: The Making of an Artist* (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs, 2014), p. 131.

⁹⁷ The former's *Suddenly Last Summer* references the bad treatment of homosexuals in San Sebastián.

⁹⁸ While, for example, *Hable con ella/Talk to Her* (2002) won the Oscar for "Best Original Screenplay" – the first time a non-English-language film had won this category since *Un homme et une femme/A Man and A Woman* (Claude Lelouch, 1966) – it could not compete in the category of "Best Foreign Film" because the national Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences put forward *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (Fernando León de Aranoa, 2002), a socially-conscious drama about unemployment in Galicia – which failed to even secure an Oscar nomination – as the official Spanish candidate.

⁹⁹ Josetxo Cerdán and Miguel Fernández Labayen, 'Almodóvar and Spanish patterns of film reception' in Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon (eds.), *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 129-52, p. 148.

¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the performances in the film and their reception by Spanish critics, see Maria M. Delgado, 'Los amantes pasajeros/I'm so Excited! (2013): "performing" la crisis' in Dean Allbritton, Alejandro Melero and Tom Whittaker (eds.), *Performance and Spanish Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 252-69.

¹⁰¹ Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon, 'Introduction: the skin he lives in' in Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon (eds.), *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 1-16, p. 7.

¹⁰² Almodóvar has mentioned this in multiple interviews. See, for example, his David Lean Lecture for Bafta held in London in 2012. Available at <http://www.bafta.org/film/features/pedro-almodovar-david-lean-lecture-2012>. Last consulted on 30 July 2015.

¹⁰³ Marsha Kinder, 'All about the brothers: retroseriality in Almodóvar's cinema' in Brad Epps and Despina Kakoudaki (eds.), *All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 267-94, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴ Pedro Almodóvar, *Patty Diphusa y otros textos* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1991). In a text originally written in the early 1980s, Patty fantasises about how she will go to Paris and make friends with Catherine Deneuve: 'I'll become her right-hand woman, and, like Eve Harrington, take a great role of her when she least expects it' (p. 145).

¹⁰⁵ Maria M. Delgado recounted this from her conversations with Agustín at her plenary address in the AHGBI (Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland) annual conference held in Exeter in April 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Paula Willoquet-Maricondi (ed.), *Pedro Almodóvar Interviews* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), p. 147.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Julian Smith, 'City girls II: television's urban women, pre- and post-Almodóvar' in Paul Julian Smith, *Spanish Screen Fiction: Between Cinema and Television* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 38-64, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰⁸ Frédéric Strauss (ed.), *Almodóvar on Almodóvar*, pp. 185-6.

- ¹⁰⁹ Versing in the Spanish classics came in useful as a quick-witted rebuff to Ricky Gervais at the 2012 Golden Globe Awards when Banderas responded to the British comedian's derogatory comment about the accents of Spanish-language actors in Hollywood, by reciting lines from Calderón in Castilian at breakneck speed. See *¡Hola!*, 'Ricky Gervais volvió a hacer de las suyas en los Globo de Oro y criticó Salma Hayek y Antonio Banderas', *¡Hola!*, available at <http://www.hola.com/cine/2012011656474/ricky-gervais-globo-oro-2012/>, last accessed on 30 June 2015.
- ¹¹⁰ See Duncan Wheeler, 'Spanish films, 1992-2012: two decades of cinematic production and critical discourse' in Duncan Wheeler and Fernando Canet (eds.), *(Re)viewing Creative, Critical and Commercial Practices in Contemporary Spanish Cinema* (Bristol: Intellect, 2014), pp. 7-34, pp. 11-12.
- ¹¹¹ Pepe Isbert, *Mi vida artística* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1969).
- ¹¹² Javier Herrera, 'Almodóvar's stolen images' in Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon (eds.), *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 345-63, p. 352.
- ¹¹³ Available at <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/pedro-almodovar-13-great-spanish-films-influenced-me>. Last accessed 1 March 2017.
- ¹¹⁴ Santos Zunzunegui, *El extraño viaje: el celuloide atrapado por la cola, o la crítica norteamericana ante el cine español* (Valencia: Eutopías, 1999), p. 100.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ¹¹⁶ Santos Zunzunegui, *Historias de España: De que hablamos cuando hablamos del cine español* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana y IVAC, 2002), p. 15.
- ¹¹⁷ Motti Regev, *Pop-Rock Music* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p. 9.
- ¹¹⁸ Isolina Ballesteros, 'Performing identities in the cinema of Almodóvar' in Brad Epps and Despina Kakoudaki (eds.), *All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 71-100, p. 80.
- ¹¹⁹ As Stephen Maddison has explored, Almodóvar does nevertheless make one ostensibly small but telling departure from the film by not having Stella simply going upstairs but actually leaving the stage thereby implicating a more definite rupture. 'All about women: Pedro Almodóvar and the heterosexual dynamic', pp. 266-67.
- ¹²⁰ Andy Medhurst has, for example, set out to explore 'whether the specifically Spanish contexts of his comedy are lost on, or overlooked by, those international admirers (myself included) who revere Almodóvar as a totemic figure in queer culture'. Andy Medhurst, 'Heart of farce: Almodóvar's comic complexities' in Brad Epps and Despina Kakoudaki (eds.), *All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 118-38, p. 118.
- ¹²¹ See Duncan Wheeler, 'Spanish films, 1992-2012: two decades of cinematic production and critical discourse', pp. 7-34. Marvin D'Lugo – co-editor of *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Almodóvar* and chief editor of the *Studies in Spanish and Latin American Cinemas* journal – has, for example, referred to an essay by Antonio Francisco Pedrós-Gascón, clearly inspired by Zunzunegui's model as 'a mean-spirited chapter'. See Antonio Francisco Pedrós-Gascón, '¿Hacer cine como si Franco no hubiera existido?' in María R. Matz and Carole Salmon, *How the Films of Pedro Almodóvar Draw upon and Influence Spanish Society: Bilingual Essays on his Cinema* (Lewinston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), pp. 137-56; and Marvin D'Lugo, 'Review', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, vol. 92, no. 4 (2015): pp. 634-35, p. 635.
- ¹²² Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), p. 46.
- ¹²³ Ernesto R. Acevedo-Muñoz, *Pedro Almodóvar* (London: BFI World Director Series, 2007), p. 230.
- ¹²⁴ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 19.
- ¹²⁵ For an overview of this project, and some of the methodological issues it raised, see Martin Baker, 'Envisaging "visualisation": some challenges from the international *Lord of the Rings* project', *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2006): pp. 1-25.
- ¹²⁶ Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee-Lin, 'Introduction: situating world cinema as a theoretical problem' in Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee-Lin (eds.), *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film* (London: Wallflower, 2006), pp. 1-15, p. 1.
- ¹²⁷ Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, 'General introduction: what is transnational cinema?' in Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (eds.), *Transnational Cinema, The Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-12, p. 4.