

Photographers and the photographic act in the filmography of Pedro Almodóvar

Los fotógrafos y el acto fotográfico en la filmografía de Pedro Almodóvar

Os fotógrafos e o ato fotográfico na filmografía de Pedro Almodóvar

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ABSTRACT | Among the characters in Pedro Almodóvar's movies stand out those related to artistic professions: singers, musicians, film directors, screenwriters, writers, painters, sculptors, etc. This research focus on the figure of the photographer. We ask about how the director characterizes this figure, to respond to two objectives: to establish how the photographer and the photographic act are shown in Almodóvar's photograph and to determine which ones are the most common typologies and characteristics that define them. The film production by this director was analyzed through a qualitative content analysis, focused on a sample of eleven films whose common feature is the presence of the photographer. Therefore, the units of analysis correspond to the scenes in which the photographer is having the leading role and allow to elaborate typologies, based on previous investigations (Dubois, 2013 and Parejo, 2011). We conclude that in Almodóvar's filmography the photographic acts that show professionals portraying celebrities are prioritized and, on the other hand, an evolution of the professional photographer towards the characterization of other roles such as voyeurism, domestic photography, and stolen images.

KEYWORDS: photographer characters; film director; Pedro Almodóvar; photographic act; content analysis; cinema.

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RESUMEN | *Entre los personajes de las películas de Pedro Almodóvar destacan los relacionados con las profesiones artísticas: cantantes, músicos, directores de cine, guionistas, actores, escritores, pintores, escultoras, etc. Esta investigación se centra en la figura del fotógrafo para establecer cómo se muestra al fotógrafo y al acto fotográfico en la filmografía de Almodóvar. El segundo objetivo es determinar cuáles son las tipologías más habituales y los atributos que las definen. Para ello, se realizó un análisis de contenido cualitativo de la producción íntegra de este director, delimitando una muestra de once películas cuyo rasgo común es la presencia del fotógrafo y como unidad de análisis las escenas que este protagoniza. Se elaboraron algunas tipologías a partir de una clasificación de elaboración propia basada en investigaciones anteriores (Dubois, 2013; Parejo, 2011). Se concluye que en la filmografía de Almodóvar se priorizan los actos fotográficos de profesionales retratando a famosos y se observa una evolución del fotógrafo profesional hacia la caracterización de otros roles, como el voyeurismo, la fotografía doméstica y la de imágenes robadas.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *personajes fotógrafos; director de cine; Pedro Almodóvar; acto fotográfico; análisis de contenido cine.*

RESUMO | *Entre as personagens dos filmes de Pedro Almodóvar, destacam-se aqueles relacionados às profissões artísticas: cantores, músicos, cineastas, roteiristas, atores, escritores, pintores, escultores etc. Esta pesquisa foca-se na figura do fotógrafo a fim de estabelecer como o fotógrafo e o ato fotográfico são apresentados na filmografia de Almodóvar. O segundo objetivo é determinar as tipologias mais comuns e os atributos que as definem. Foi utilizada a análise de conteúdo qualitativa que parte de toda a produção deste diretor, delimitando uma amostra de onze filmes cuja característica comum é a presença do fotógrafo e como unidade de análise são as cenas em que ele desempenha o papel principal. Algumas tipologias foram elaboradas a partir de uma classificação baseada em pesquisas anteriores (Dubois, 2013; Parejo, 2011). Conclui-se que na filmografia de Almodóvar se priorizam os atos fotográficos de profissionais retratando pessoas famosas e observa-se uma evolução do fotógrafo profissional na caracterização de outros papéis como o voyeurismo, a fotografia doméstica e as imagens roubadas.*

PALAVRAS CHAVE: *personagens fotógrafos; diretor de cinema; Pedro Almodóvar; ato fotográfico; análise de conteúdo; cinema.*

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Photographers and filmmakers share in their modes of production a technological background and creative forms of expression. This situation has led to a constant dialogue between the professions they both practice, as well as various transfers in the exercise of their activity. A journey through their history reveals different possibilities, which materialize in photographers who have ventured into the medium of film (Man Ray, Lazlo Moholy Nagy, Henry Cartier Bresson, William Klein, Larry Clark, Robert Frank...), film directors who come from photography (Stanley Kubrick, Agnés Varda, Carlos Saura...), and filmmakers who combine their work with photography (John Waters, David Lynch, Peter Greenaway, Wim Wenders, Pedro Almodóvar...). In this regard, it is worth mentioning the publication *Cine de fotógrafos* (Ledo, 2005) and the monograph of the magazine *Exit* entitled *Fuera de campo* (2001).

Some of these transfers are of interest to visualize how filmmakers have embraced the figure of the photographer in their productions. From this particular consonance between the filmmaker and the photographer representation, this text has two specific objectives. The first seeks to answer how this film director characterizes the photographic characters and the photographic act in his films. The second, what are the typologies to which this figure is submitted. It should be noted that this article will not analyze the directors of photography in Almodóvar's films, a subject already addressed by Montesinos Soudry (2011).

It should be remembered that the first starring roles of a cinematographic photographer are to be found in silent films. This is the case of the 1928 film *The Cameraman* (Edward Sedwick), in which Buster Keaton plays a street portrait photographer. It is a highly significant production, where the main character replaces the camera with the one provided for him in his new job at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In this case, the gaze of the photographic operator gives way to that of the cinematographer. Another paradigmatic example of the incursion of the figure of the photographer in cinema that remains to this day is the one that captures unauthorized records. The term paparazzi, which appeared for the first time in the film *La Dolce Vita* (Federico Fellini, 1960), when Marcello Mastroianni calls the photographer who accompanies him paparazzo, was already present in *Picture Snatcher* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933). Here, the protagonist portrays an execution in the electric chair without being seen. To do so, he uses a mechanism of his own design, in which the camera hidden in the lower part of his pants is activated by means of a cable release that he hides in his fly.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The stated objectives imply considering the previous studies that constitute the theoretical framework in three directions: that of the links between photographers and film directors, that of the studies on Pedro Almodóvar's cinematography, and that of Pedro Almodóvar's photographic works specifically.

Concerning the former, Phillipe Dubois' (2013) contributions in *Fotografía & Cine* describe how the photographic medium is introduced into other visual arts and how, in particular, it "examines the territory in which cinema becomes photo or photography becomes cinema" (p. 10).

Pantoja's (2014) vision of photography as a pretext for cinematographic creation is also of special interest. The author defends that "the participation of photographers in cinema as that of filmmakers in photography has been established as a dialogue that has derived in the creation of a fully authorial vision and in an unusual transfer of creativity" (p. 72). According to Olivares (2001), some film directors have considered photography "as a different language" (p. 9).

Other publications that relate photographers and filmmakers investigate how cinema shows the lives of a dozen renowned photographers (Esparza & Parejo, 2011), and the common features of these professionals in certain films (Parejo, 2011), to ultimately group them into four typologies: the paparazzi, the war photographer, the voyeur photographer, and the research photographer and biographies (i.e., films that tell the life story of a photographer or biopics).

As for the studies on Pedro Almodóvar's cinematography, some of them account for the relevance of identity in his cinematography (Thibaudeau, 2013). Saavedra and Grijalba (2020) focus on stereotypes; Thibaudeau (2013) focuses her research on this same aspect, covering not only the individuals' identity, but also that of works. However, studies on intertextuality have been especially considered here. Those of Poyato (2012, 2015) regarding the intertextual processes in his films and their themes stand out, as well as Melendo's (2012) studies on the meta-filmic nature of *Los abrazos rotos*. This author points out that "Almodóvar finds an effective method in meta-cinema to meditate and theorize about the image and its evolution" (p. 41). Other research focuses on the characterization of the personages, a relevant aspect for our object of study. In the case of *Los abrazos rotos*, Broullón Lozano (2011) points out a series of common features of the characters such as "the transfer of autobiographical aspects, an accentuated psychological dimension in their presentation, and situations that border on madness and the display of the artifice of cinema" (pp. 139-140).

In relation to the third path proposed –the works of Pedro Almodóvar as a photographer– one of the features of his filmography is its evident self-referential nature, which we find when he inserts a film director as a character. This can be observed in *La ley del deseo* (1987), *Átame* (1990), *La mala educación* (2004), *Los abrazos rotos* (2009), or *Dolor y Gloria* (2019). In terms of the self-referentiality just mentioned, it is relevant to bear in mind that this filmmaker sometimes works as a photographer.

Almodóvar's relationship with photography is not limited to the moments in which he introduces it as a character in the script, when he includes photographs in the sets, or as a formula to advance the narrative. These last two aspects, which we hope here to contribute to complete with the study of the photographer's figure, have been treated in depth previously, from the perspective of photography in the cinema of Pedro Almodóvar (Parejo, 2020).

Almodóvar also captures still images with his camera. In the filmmaker's work as a photographer there is a trajectory that begins with images of the shootings and ends with series that are not related to them and that make up a creative work of his own, evoking his cinematography. The photographs from the filming of *Hablé con ella* (2002) belong to the first series, with which a catalog was made and exhibited in different branches of the *Fédération Nationale d'Achats des Cadres*, FNAC, in 2002. Precisely, in that catalog, FNAC Councils emphasized: "the director's view of the film shooting, and to be able to discover a photographer Almodóvar who offers scenes from his film from a different point of view than the one that can be seen on the big screen" (FNAC España, 2002). Subsequently, on the occasion of the filming of *Volver* (2006), *Los abrazos rotos*, and *La piel que habito* (2011), two diaries illustrated with images of the filmmaker were published. Specifically, there are a series of still images that correspond to the wardrobe and makeup tests of *Los abrazos rotos*, which refer directly to the photo shoot of the protagonist of the film (Lluís Homar) with Lena (Penélope Cruz), but the photographs show a greater number of styles that are not accessible in the footage. It is a series characterized by spontaneity and where, again, the function "of promotion is acquired as the director's own vision is interesting" (Virués Escalera, 2012, p. 138).

As for the photographs with their own entity, and extrinsic to the shootings, it is necessary to highlight a first exhibition at La Fresh Gallery in September 2017 entitled *Bodegones Almodóvar*, in which he uses "two backgrounds, what he sees in his office towards the left, and a plug and a window of his kitchen" (Belinchón, 2018). They are 60 images that show in a pop way everyday objects that the filmmaker has been acquiring and, what is more significant for our object of study, that have been part of the sets of his films. Along the same lines, but

with a more pictorial style, he presented in June 2018 the collection *Vida Detenida* at the Marlborough gallery. According to Enrique Portocarrero (2018), there is a connection with his filmography:

Although this is not the purpose of the exhibition, it is difficult not to think of this link when looking at images whose tone is reminiscent of stills from his cinema. They are two disciplines that share a harmony, a certain aesthetic –the hallmark of his work–, a lighting, and even a composition (par. 8).

METHODOLOGY

In view of the nature of this research, it was deemed appropriate to use a qualitative content analysis. This method allows us to analyze the films of the author under study in terms of the photographers who appear in them as characters and to determine the typologies that are present, as well as the actions they perform in the films. Based on Wimmer and Dominick (1996), who outline five possible areas in which content analysis is effective, we examined the image of specific social groups.

This method led us to consider the entire filmography of Pedro Almodóvar (22 feature films) as the universe of the research. Once reviewed, we proceeded to narrow down a sample of 11 films in which photographers appear as characters: *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980); *Laberinto de pasiones* (1982); *Entre tinieblas* (1983); *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?* (1984); *La ley del deseo* (1987); *Tacones lejanos* (1991); *Kika* (1993); *Carne trémula* (1997); *Hablé con ella* (2002); *Los abrazos rotos* (2009), and *Madres paralelas* (2021).

The criterion for this selection has been closely linked to the establishment of the analysis unit which, as Lozano (1994) points out, is “the specific element of the message from which the information will be extracted” (p. 144). In this case, it is the scenes in which the figure of the photographer is present. At this point, we should allude to Berelson (1952), who included characters among the possible units of analysis.

At this point, we established a series of categories that correspond to the different typologies that appear in the characters of the selected scenes. This has led us, at first, to analyze them separately to later regroup them according to the analogous elements they have, and organize them under a summary representative of these common places. Based on these considerations, five typologies have been established: professional photographers who become voyeuristic, photographers whose target is celebrities, photographers who, immersed in the footage, correspond to a real photographer, film directors who recreate photographs, and police documentation

photographers in their double aspect, in the performance of their work and those who adopt the role of paparazzi.

RESULTS. THE PHOTOGRAPHERS IN ALMODÓVAR'S FILMS: TYPOLOGIES

The results are synthesized in a table that brings together the 11 films and compares them with the five typologies reiterated in Almodóvar's films. Subsequently, each of these typologies is discussed to specify at what point in the film narrative they appear and how they have evolved (table 1).

	Professional photographer	Celebrities' photographers	Real photographers	Recreated imaged photographers	Police photography or paparazzo
<i>Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón</i> (1980)		X			
<i>Laberinto de pasiones</i> (1982)		X	Pablo Pérez Mínguez		
<i>Entre tinieblas</i> (1983)		X			
<i>¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?</i> (1984)					X
<i>La ley del deseo</i> (1987)		X			
<i>Tacones lejanos</i> (1991)	X	X			
<i>Kika</i> (1993)	X				
<i>Carne trémula</i> (1997)					X
<i>Hablé con ella</i> (2002)		X			
<i>Los abrazos rotos</i> (2009)			Inge Morath	X	
<i>Madres paralelas</i> (2021)	X	X			

Table 1. Typology of photographic characters in Pedro Almodovar's films

Source: Own elaboration.

From professional photographer to voyeur

The photographers in Almodóvar's films are characterized by not being protagonists, with the exception of Janis (Penélope Cruz) in *Madres paralelas* and Ramón (Álex Casanova), whose work in *Kika* is based on manipulating photographs to obtain collages. In fact, José Luis Sánchez Noriega (2017) studies the professions embodied by the characters in each of his films and, despite the fact that a high number of professionals from the creative field can be appreciated, the photographer is only present in *Kika*.

In this feature film, his appearance is already visible in the credits. They begin with a flash through a keyhole on the body of a woman who is undressing. The image freezes and the credit titles show the title of the film, which merges in red with a collage of Dis Berlin. Almodóvar emphasizes that, while characterizing the personages, he discovered the work of this artist, which "was like a revelation because through these images the character was much better understood" (Bonet, n.d., par. 1). He also emphasizes that his images, "hundreds of brilliant collages, all of them dominated by the woman's naked body, always treated in an irrational, admiring, tense, ironic way, with large doses of perversion and hermetic exhibitionism" (Almodóvar, 1993), perfectly portrayed Ramón's mood. On the other hand, the insertion of collage is justified because it is the film "where aesthetics is used more directly to understand a story that clearly reflects the logic of collage" (Holguin, 2006, p. 418).

From this moment on, we see that the apparent gaze of a voyeur gives way to the figure of a photographer conducting a session with a model for advertising lingerie. The scene stands out for the close-ups and for how the footage shows this photographic act in a shot in which the photographer stands over her at a short distance, while abruptly giving her successive indications. Sánchez Noriega points out that "traumatized by the death of his mother, Ramón exercises his profession as a photographer as a true voyeur (...) he turns the sessions into an exercise of seduction or sexual harassment" (2017, p. 454).

This opening scene, in which the shot opens to show the whole team and which belongs to the professional advertising field, is echoed in two later scenes. In the first, *Kika* (Verónica Forqué) and Ramón are having an affair. At the same time, he convulsively shoots a Polaroid camera, while the copies are deposited on the bedside table. At one point, he handles the camera to *Kika*¹ so that she can continue with the photographic counterplan, but she is unable to concentrate

1. Later, in *La mala educación* there is a very similar scene, although in this film the recording is made with a super8 camera, which the now director of a publishing house, Mr. Berenguer (Lluís Homar) and former father Manolo (Daniel Giménez Cacho), gives Juan (Gael García Bernal).

and they have to stop. The concomitances in terms of the photographic recording procedure are obvious, as is the setting. However, this is now about domestic photography. And this statement is not trivial, since paradoxically, although in the credits Ramón is presented as a professional photographer, in the rest of the film we do not see him doing his job. Moreover, this ties in with the second scene, where he again becomes a voyeur, just as the credits announced. Here, the film camera captures the frame of a telephoto lens (later it will be discovered that it is Ramón) that spies on Kika while she is being raped in her house. According to Agustín Gómez Gómez, “as is usual with the director from La Mancha, he resorts to intertextuality processes to configure the characters and you will find them in films that have to do with the gaze: *The Rear Window*² and *Peeping Tom*” (2012, p. 77). References to the former are not limited to the scenes in which Ramón scrutinizes his girlfriend with his camera, which is facilitated by a planned courtyard set, as Francisco Perales Bazo points out, to encourage voyeurism (2008), but extend to the narrative development. Both films begin with the introduction of a professional photographer (in the case of L.B. Jefferies (James Stewart), a press photographer specializing in sports) who becomes a voyeur, but we do not see him activate the shutter of his camera.

Regarding the role played by Penélope Cruz in *Madres paralelas* (2021), it is worth noting the concomitances with the protagonist of *Kika*, since both productions begin with a clear allusion to her profession from the credits. Likewise, the references to other artists are obvious. If in *Kika* we talked about Dis Berlin, here the aesthetics of photographer William Klein is evident. Other aspects they share are the photographic genre they work in, professional advertising photography, and the way they approach it in relation to the photographic act. It is not in vain that we find here clear similarities between the two photographic studios and the equipment on which the camera stops. However, if *Kika*'s photographer prioritized a certain aggressiveness in the sessions, Janis' indications to her models recover the traditional formulas. While the photographer encourages her subjects to look their best, they try to seduce the camera.

2. It will be a recurring film in Almodóvar's career, also alluded to in *Matador* (1986), when Ángel (Antonio Banderas) spies on his neighbor Eva (Eva Cobo), or in *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1988), at the moment when Pepa (Carmen Maura) looks at the windows of the building where the ex-wife of the man who has just left her, Lucía (Julieta Serrano), lives. The nod to Hitchcock is evident from the first moment, when Pepa notices a dancer in her underwear in the window frame.

Another element to underline is how in *Madres paralelas* the photographer's activity is not limited to the shooting of models, but also includes product photography. We see parading before Janis' lens authentic still lifes of handbags, glasses, lipstick, shoes... This fits with Portocarrero's (2018) appreciation, who establishes a connection between Almodóvar's photographic and cinematographic work. It is enough to compare these still lifes from *Madres paralelas*, for example the one that shows red high-heeled shoes, with those of Almodóvar's graphic images to see how these pop objects share aesthetics, organization in the framing, and coloring.

In the case of a professional photographer as a supporting character, we find Manuel (Feodor Atkine) who in *Tacones lejanos* (1991) proposes to Becky (Marisa Paredes) to photograph her for a reportage. At first, the music diva does not accept the offer, but when the reporter adds that they could carry it out in a shooting in Mexico, she agrees. After this presentation, we do not see him exercising his profession. In this sense, he is only referred to again in a newspaper headline: *Fotógrafo que enamoraba a todas* (Photographer who made every woman fall in love).

The celebrity photographer

This will be precisely a common trait of the photographers in Almodóvar's films: portraying famous people. We see it in *La ley del deseo* (1987) when after the premiere of his film, the film director Pablo Quintero (Eusebio Poncela) and his sister Tina (Carmen Maura) go out to celebrate. The photographers take their portrait while they flirt with the camera. The composition that places Pablo and Tina elevated with respect to the photographer is significant. From an opposite angle, practically zenithal and without looking through the viewfinder, the photographer who captures the exit from the bullring of the famous bullfighter Lidya (Rosario Flores) after being caught by the bull in the bullring in *Hablé con ella*, shoots his camera. It is a camera positioning that suggests the outcome (she will go into a deep coma that will lead to her death) after being wounded by the bull.

Similarly, in *Entre tinieblas*, the sister of Sister Rata del Callejón, who is pretending to be the famous writer Concha Torres (Chus Lampreave), is being portrayed while she is being interviewed. The photographers in these images are characterized by having little prominence, either because they are accompanied by an editor who carries the weight of the conversation or because they are out of the field, as in the case of *Hablé con ella*. This does not prevent the register from lacking relevance. For example, in the first one, Sister Rata del Callejón thus discovers how her sister is benefiting economically from her work and the social relevance it gives her.

In the same vein, in *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*, a photographer captures the moment when the docile wife of a policeman, Luci (Eva Siva), and the member of a punk band, Bom (Alaska, Olvido Gara), are about to kiss.

It is a domestic picture taken with a Polaroid for which he wants to charge 100 pesetas. Finally, Pepi (Carmen Maura) buys it to blackmail Luci's husband who had raped her days before. Dolores Arroyo (2011) considers it as a reference to mass culture: "Among other elements of popular culture are some photos such as the snapshot that captures Bom and Luci's kiss during an underground party" (p. 262). This film has another episode in which the photographic act is present. The same amateur photographer in the previous scene records the *General Erections* contest, whose prize goes to the one with the largest penis. The winner requires a fellatio by Luci, which is portrayed in detail.

Real photographers

Laberinto de pasiones is a continuation of the previous feature film, but with some nuances. In this production there are two scenes with the figure of a photographer. The first one, with an evident presence, shows the well-known photographer of the Madrilenian Scene Pablo Pérez Mínguez portraying a scene for the last issue of the photo-novel *Foto Porno Sexy Killer*. This shows Patti Diphusa (Fabio McNamara) in a photographic session in which a drill threatens his body covered with traces of blood. In the shot we also see Almodóvar, whose directives are followed by both the protagonist and Pablo Pérez Mínguez (whom he calls by name), who compulsively shoots his camera on Patti, situated in an idyllic setting, although, as Holguin (2006) points out, he is not the only one to be seen. "*Laberinto de pasiones* was shot, partly, in the home of the photographer Pablo Pérez Mínguez" (p. 168). More precisely, we would have to remember Gallero's words about the photographer's studio (where this film was also shot):

Deep down, it was like a club. But instead of meeting just for drinks, it was drinks, drugs, intimacy, photography, now I'm getting naked, now I'm getting you naked... At nine o'clock at night, Fabio de Miguel would start throwing pesetas against the windows to get me to open the door. Each time a different group would come. One day Guillermo Pérez Villalta would come in to paint, and the next day the whole *Laberinto de Pasiones* troupe would show up to shoot (1991, p. 86).

The film camera also lets us in on Pablo Pérez Mínguez's authorship of a black and white photograph showing Patti under the headline: *La famosa estrella internacional del porno nos habla de los hombres* (The famous international porn star talks to us about men) and, at the bottom, Pérez Mínguez's signature (who was also in charge of the still photo for the film).

At the end of *Laberinto de pasiones*, after the chase at the airport, the second scene happens. Although the photographer is not seen in this one, the idea of a promotional photo is obvious. The manager of the musical group sees the

opportunity for two girls from Sexi's musical group (Cecilia Roth), who has just left on a flight to Contadora (Panama) with the son of the emperor of Tiran, Riza (Imanol Arias), to be photographed with Princess Toraya (Helga Liné). The three of them pose deliberately, while the manager enjoys thinking about the profits that this image will bring him.

Pablo Pérez Mínguez is not the only real photographer alluded to in Almodóvar's cinematography. In *Los abrazos rotos* there is a verbal reference to the photographer Inge Morath. In the second scene of the film, Judit (Blanca Portillo), representative of screenwriter and film director Harry Caine (formerly Mateo Blanco when he was not blind, in both cases played by Lluís Homar), talks to him and his assistant Diego (Tamar Novas), whom she urges to start thinking about their next script. The former says he would like to develop the story of Daniel, Inge Morath and Arthur Miller's youngest son with Down syndrome. Harry alludes to an article in *El País* (Celis, 2007) in which he read that the writer left him in an orphanage four days after his birth. The film's dialogue focuses almost exclusively on the writer's abandonment and a chance encounter at a public event, in defense of a mentally handicapped man accused of murder, in which Miller intervened in 1995. It also stands out that at the end of this act Daniel introduces himself to his father and embraces him. According to Pedro Poyato, this is one of the usual themes in Almodóvar's filmography, paternal-filial relationships:

Los abrazos rotos, at its very beginning, raises the theme of the paternal-filial relationship, but not with a view to configuring a narrative around it, as evidenced by the fact that throughout the film nothing more is known of this story, nor if finally, as Harry wished, it became a screenplay, but only to incorporate a theme that, in the discursive plane, will find its continuation in the next scene, where Harry receives a visit from Ray X, also about the writing of a screenplay (2012, p. 9).

Although Ray X (Rubén Ochandiano) proposes a script in which a son (himself) wants to take revenge on his father because he alienated him, this plot line does not correspond to the starting point (Arthur Miller's relationship with his father). Later, however, a connection is found between the information that the film does not provide about Arthur Miller and Inge Morath's son and the paternal-filial relationship between Harry and Diego. The film text omits the photographer's opposition to his admission to the mental institution and that "Morath visited his son almost every Sunday" (Noain, 2007), while Miller never went to see him. This evidences two parallels. The first is that, although for different reasons, both Miller and Harry when they have their son in front of them do not recognize him. The latter because he is unaware that he is Diego's progenitor due to Judith's keeping

that a secret. Let us remember that this is not the first time Almodóvar deals with this subject; already in *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999), Manuela (Cecilia Roth) hides her Lola (Tony Cantó) his paternity. The second parallelism has to do with the fact that the absence of affection on the part of the father figure does not diminish in either case the attraction that the children feel for him.

The recreated image photographer

Mención aparte requieren los tres actos fotográficos que tienen lugar en *Los abrazos rotos*. En el primero, de índole profesional, Mateo Blanco, que ha contratado a Lena para su próximo filme, la retrata con distintos estilos (Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe...). Aquí es preciso subrayar la necesidad del fotógrafo de que se comporte como una modelo frente al espejo e imite a actrices famosas³ –Marlene Dietrich, Bette Davies...– quienes, por otra parte, están presentes en la película en fotografías en paredes o en revistas y que, según Broullón Lozano (2011), consiguen que “el relato vaya mitificando el personaje de Lena como una verdadera diva [...] Esto sucede de modo simbólico durante las pruebas de maquillaje cuando se transforma en Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn en *Desayuno con diamantes*)” (p. 136).

The second takes place upon his arrival on the island of Lanzarote, when Mateo begins to photograph. Specifically, the image *El secreto de la playa del Golfo* stands out, since it is a real photographic act of Almodóvar himself during a vacation in 1999, which is framed in the field of the tourist image and leads us to reflect on what it is that seduces the tourist's gaze. Carmelo Vega (2011) states that “enraptured by the views they contemplate from the viewpoints [...] and dazzled by the colors, the smells or the sounds of what is different [...] they are static and ‘blinded’ beings who abstract from reality to create their own reality” (p. 163); this, applied to Almodóvar in this record, leads us to observe how he focuses on the landscape and omits the couple embracing. A photographic act that the protagonist of *Los abrazos rotos* replicates, while Lena also embraces him. In this regard, Almodóvar will say: “When I took the picture, the shot was very wide and I did not see the couple” (Virués, 2012, p. 139). The concomitances between the shot of the real filmmaker and the cinematographic photographer are obvious. The promotional press book (n. a., 2009) echoes this: “I felt the need to know the story of that couple”, Almodóvar will say. Likewise, Mateo will need to write to find out their secret. Another aspect to consider, already dealt with by other authors⁴, is the fact that the photograph refers to the film *Blow up* (Antonioni, 1966). In this film, as in Almodóvar's, there is a

3. For more information on the importance of Hollywood actresses in Almodóvar's filmography see Perales Bazo (2008).

4. For more information on this issue see Melendo (2012).

different perception between the moment of the photographic shot and the moment when the image is viewed. Therefore, the concept of photographic distance⁵ is applicable to both. Likewise, Thomas, the photographer of *Blow up*, returns to the place where he took the photograph, just as Almodóvar will return, with all his crew, to the place where he took his.

The last of the photographic acts in this film also features an embrace, that of Mateo and Lena, who are on the sofa of an apartment on Famara beach watching on television *Viaggio in Italia* (Roberto Rossellini, 1954). The movie camera shows the scene in the film in which the remains of a couple who have died together are found in Pompeii, and the reverse shot shows how Lena is moved. At that instant, Mateo gets up to prepare the camera's self-timer, and we see them getting ready and positioning themselves in each other's arms, as they both smile at the moment of the shot. The screen does not reproduce the picture, but a blank image that merges with the next scene and suggests a relationship with no future. Broullón Lozano (2011) describes the scene and equates the two couples:

A connection is established between the two sides of the screen, between Mr. and Mrs. Joyce (George Sanders and Ingrid Bergman) with Lena and Mateo. During a visit to Pompeii, Bergman and Sanders witness the excavation of archaeological remains including the fossil of a pair of lovers. Lena, moved, bursts into tears at the same time as Bergman in the film, and Mateo, to reassure her, takes the photograph and thus fixes the instant forever (2011, p. 136).

In this regard, Castro de Paz (2012) echoes the significant blank shot to which the self-portrait gives rise: "After being shot it should result in a (never seen) photo of the couple -while enjoying and thrilling to the geological love of *Viaggio in Italia* in their impossible, lunatic, and unreal island refuge- with the absolute white of emptiness, premonition of tragedy" (p. 37).

From police photography to paparazzo

Finally, it is worth mentioning the photographs taken by police officers in *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?* (1984) and in *Carne trémula* (1997). The first one records the moment in which the police investigators photograph the corpse of Gloria's husband (Carmen Maura) after she murdered him. The images are of a routine nature, with no continuity in the narrative, and only show the process of the investigation.

However, in *Carne trémula* the police couple composed by Sancho (Sancho Gracia) and David (Javier Bardem) are part of the cast of protagonists.

5. For a more detailed definition of this concept, see Parejo and Mancebo (2007).

Photography is also very present. We will refer specifically to a series of shots in which David, from his vehicle, hidden from view, triggers the shutter of his camera more and more compulsively to capture the preliminaries of a love scene between Clara (Ángela Molina) and Víctor (Liberto Rabal). Regarding the research subject, we find a photographer who conducts a series of secret searches, reminiscent in their staging of Ramón spying on Kika with his telephoto lens. However, unlike Ramón and the policeman in *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?*, here the photographic act becomes a series of copies. Therefore, the function of the photographer is not limited to that of the voyeur, as was pointed out in the case of *Kika*. On this occasion, the footage shows a typology more in line with the figure of the paparazzi. In the words of Pepe Bosch, according to José Manuel Susperregui (2006), “the concept of paparazzi describes the photographer who goes in search of the non-consensual photograph, the stolen or unprepared photograph. The paparazzi is the unexpected photographer” (p. 132). Later on, he indicates that “what matters most is the impact it will have on the end consumer” (p. 137). In the film, that consumer is Clara’s husband (Sancho). Narratively, these photographic copies link the story and are the trigger for the end of the film.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the first question, how Almodóvar represents the photographer characters, it can be affirmed that, although he incorporates them in his films, with a few exceptions –such as Ramón in *Kika* and Janis in *Madres paralelas*– they do not play a starring role in the productions. Likewise, in these films there is an evolution in which the photographer stops operating the shutter of his camera, in the first case so that it serves exclusively as a viewing device (voyeur), and later he opts for an amateur type of register. In *Madres paralelas*, the protagonist, whose work is known from the beginning of the credits, stops working professionally to take sporadic shots of a domestic nature.

We find a certain parallelism in this structure with that of *Los abrazos rotos*, where the protagonist also begins his trajectory with a photo shoot (wardrobe and makeup tests for a filming) to opt for amateur photography (on this occasion a tourist one), and end with a self-portrait also of a domestic nature. This organization is disrupted in *Carne trémula*, where what a priori seems to be the gaze of a voyeur materializes in a new typology, that of the paparazzo.

Photographers in the exercise of their profession related to the press, whose function is to provide narrative support to the facts that are being shown and to reinforce the sense, positive or negative, given to the portrayed person, require special mention.

Concerning the purpose of the typologies of characters, it is necessary to underline that the most recurrent are the photographs of celebrities, and the one that encompasses the spectrum that goes from the professional photographer to the voyeur. In this regard, it should be underlined its evident sexual character. Precisely, this will be one of the most common themes approached by the photographers of Almodóvar's films, whether they are professional or amateur shots. It is enough to remember, in addition to those mentioned above, those of Pablo Pérez Mínguez in *Laberinto de pasiones* for a photo novel, those of the contest in *Pepi, Luci y Bom y otras chicas del montón*, or those captured by David as a paparazzo of Clara's extramarital relationship in *Carne trémula*.

On the other hand, most of the photographers represented belong to the field of fiction. Exceptionally, however, there are real photographers, such as the aforementioned Pablo Pérez Mínguez who plays himself in *Laberinto de pasiones*, or the verbal reference to the biography of Arthur Miller and his wife, the photographer Inge Morath, in *Los abrazos rotos*. In this last case, we can allude to a visual and narrative mode very present in Almodóvar's work, which consists of incorporating in his films the works of other artists, a process of intertextuality that we see in the countless paintings that hang in the protagonists' houses, the references to writers, playwrights, sculptors, designers, film directors, etc. Likewise, in *Los abrazos rotos* we find a film director who takes the photographs, which leads us to link him to the director from La Mancha. Finally, it should be noted that, although here we have dealt exclusively with the figure of the photographer and how he develops his work, Pedro Almodóvar's relationship with photography is not only limited to this aspect, but also serves as a prop, he uses it as a tribute, as a metaphor, and to advance the narrative. In addition, he takes his own photographs during his shoots with a different point of view from the cinematographic camera shots. More recently, his photographs have acquired a creative entity of their own that evokes his cinematography, since the contents and compositional elements refer to details of it.

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