

lo ideológico, lo político y lo económico que conforman los marcos culturales de la cinematografía española. Por todo ello, esta guía se presenta como un básico instrumento de referencia actualizado y sumamente útil para todos los interesados en el cine español.

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CREACIÓN

Alberto Olmos. *A bordo del naufragio*. Barcelona, Anagrama, 1998, 172 pp.

On page 89 of Alberto Olmo's *A bordo del naufragio*, the narrator makes a significant declaration that one might apply to the recent contemporary novel as a whole:

Está muy bien pero si te plantan una cámara en plena cara tú, je, tú no dices ni que te gusta leer. Y no digamos ya lo de escribir una novela, un libro más bien; tú no serías capaz de entonar la primera persona: yo creo que tal, no, de ninguna de las humanas maneras, tú te esconderías en la tercera persona, como hacen muchos, o en la segunda, casi por prurito técnico y diferenciador, pues que ser de la parva no te hace ni puta gracia (89).

The criterion of this attack is somewhat surprising —that a weak-skilled writer hides behind third person narration— but it is representative of a major aspect of many novels published in Spain today: the use of a first person narration that often clearly reflects the persona of the author behind the text. Whether it is the result of postmodernism's effect on Spanish letters, feminism's (a literary approach that often makes use of the first person), or perhaps simply a generational revolt against a more traditional narrative technique, contemporary prose relies heavily on first person narration, with the frequent concomitant result of a prose that is limited referentially and self-oriented even when the author has carefully distanced him/herself from the narrator.

Such is the case in this, Olmos's first novel, where in a one hundred seventy-two page paragraph the narrator constructs an interior monologue devoted principally to his own condemnation of himself, along with a highly subjective and envy-driven diatribe against the non-alienated individuals who inhabit his world and make it that much more unlivable. The preoccupation with the self is foremost, and therefore all references to a surrounding reality —the University of Madrid, the Metro system, the streets— function basically in their role as elements that help the narrator concentrate on himself and generally enlarge upon his sense of alienation.

The city does play another important role, however, for an essential part of the plot line revolves around the clash between rural and urban

culture. The narrator, who has left his rural town to study at the University of Madrid (it is to be assumed) feels totally out of place in the city, which he refers to as «la gran cacharrería». Thus there is a certain reminiscence of Martín-Santos's *Tiempo de silencio*, where the main character, Pedro, always has to reconcile himself with his not having been born in the city and not possessing the full ability to compete in his urban surroundings. A comparison might also be made with Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*, another stellar example of an alienated individual living and suffering in the midst of a stable functioning society.

Alienation is in no way a new theme in the modern novel, nor is the interior monologue an innovation. In Spain, Martín-Santos's above-mentioned work, published almost forty years ago, may be considered one of the classic works in both categories, along with works by such writers as Cela and Benet. Olmos, therefore, has entered into well-charted territory with his work, and the reader must search for a justification for the format of this novel. It is to be found in the intensity of the monologue, which takes place over just a few hours during which every moment is filtered through the narrator's uninterrupted silent commentary. A second interior monologue, marked by the use of italics, is introduced intermittently and takes the reader back in time to the narrator's past and his generational conflict with his grandfather. This oscillation between past and present is effective and further supports the choice of an interior monologue as the format of the novel.

Thus, while neither innovative nor highly significant with regard to a transcendental message, Olmos may be credited with having made a valiant attempt to succeed in following in the footsteps of important predecessors. At times his approach towards creating a message is imaginative, as when, for instance, his narrator, wandering through the streets of Madrid, simply names everything that he sees: people, cars, buildings, etc. Although this tactic risks boring the reader, it also emphasizes the alienation of a character who feels so small and insignificant when surrounded by the immensity of daily life. And it also may be, as is the entire text, a metafictional commentary on the realist mode, similar to the hyperrealist movies of Andy Warhol, *Eat* and *Sleep*, which reflect reality in its minutest detail and its full chronology.

In sum, Alberto Olmos has not offered any substantial innovation to the technique he undertook to apply in this novel, which is why the reader may question, at the beginning of the reading experience, why the text is constructed as it is. But the narrator is well portrayed and the monologue grows sufficiently in intensity so that it slowly captures the reader's attention, thus finally justifying both the format of the text and the none too original theme of alienation in the urban center.