

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

LA CULTURA DE LA MUERTE Y LA SUPERSTICIÓN

In La Mancha, like the rest of Spain funerals hold the same significance as they did in the past, with a wake the night after a death in the house or the house of a relative. Women have separate roles to men, responsible for remembering the dead. These funerals become social events bringing whole neighbourhoods together. They believe the dead don't abandon relatives. The majority of characters in the film believe in ghosts, except Raimunda, this is common through rural areas and the idea that their spirit stays between us especially when they have something they need to finish. Rural Spain is very superstitious with death and few dare to question stories of paranormal events or apparitions.

SUPERSTITIONS

Volver relies heavily on superstitions. The film opens on Sole and Raimunda cleaning gravestones, the other women in the background imply that it is a common ritual preparing for Día de Todos Los Santos to remember relatives and remind them they are not forgotten. The repeated reference to customs followed without question through Raimunda as Paula is confused and doesn't understand this purpose, this implies the traditions were not passed through Raimunda as well as the religious changes throughout Spain at the time of her upbringing. Only 20-25% of Catholics attend mass. Despite this the significant influence of Catholicism is an important theme within Volver. Almodóvar grew up on these traditions making the film a homage towards them.

LAS MUJERES

It is commonly known that Almodóvar is a director for women more than men. The media name these women as Almodóvar girls referring to the actresses commonly appearing in his films. It is debated whether the women in La Mancha today are represented truly in Volver. With enhanced stereotypes but they may be based on elements of reality. The character of Raimunda presents a young, attractive woman, a survivor and a protector of her daughter. To compare to this, the character of Agustina is visually, the opposite presented as less attractive but her generosity and empathy are overwhelming. Irene is a typical elderly woman in manchega who only wants to reunite her family. Tia Paula is depicted as a grandmother, clueless but affectionate a common stereotype. These characters have strong personalities and unnoticeable attributes to present them through the stereotypes.

WOMEN

In recent years over 40% of mothers are unmarried, partly due to the liberal society as a result of an increase in single-parent households. With the role of the mother ever changing they depict a strong heroic image in society fulfilling demands of working and looking after the home. Almodóvar epitomises the characters to display determinations, allowing the women in the film to defy their fate a reflection of the women in La Mancha.