FEMALE ARCHETYPES AND THE STAR SYSTEM IN SPANISH FILM HISTORY*

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As pointed out years ago by Edgar Morin (1972), archetypes in cinema are associated with the faces of the stars who, in the early years of the medium, portrayed the same prototypical characters repeatedly with the implicit strategy of cultivating audience loyalty. In the case of actresses, the various representations of the female (from the virgin ingénue to the femme fatale) evolved over the years to a point where the bad girls were no longer so diabolical, nor the good girls so angelical. During the first half of the 20th century, despite the initial power of influential film industries like the French, Italian and German, the Hollywood star system ultimately became the main point of reference for the production of female archetypes associated with particular stars. Many years later, Molly Haskell (1973) and Marjorie Rossen (1973) introduced a critical feminist reading of the archetypes portrayed by the actresses of Hollywood's Golden Age. Since then, film stars and the archetypes they have represented have been

studied through various lenses, including feminism (Haskell, 1973; Rosen, 1974; Hollinger, 2006), psychoanalysis (Gledhill, 1991), gender studies (Studlar, 1996; Studlar, 2013), and reception theory (Hansen, 1986; Dyer, 1987; Stacey, 1994; Mayne, 1993; Staiger, 2000). The fact that contemporary film stars have to exhibit different identities, portraying an "elastic self" (King, 2003), as if they needed to destroy—or play at destroying—some of the principles associated with the notion of the archetype invented by classical cinema, makes it clear that the history of film stardom is a process of iconic mutations in perpetual motion.

The short methodological arc linking film stars to particular archetypes is not as easy to trace in studies of Spanish cinema. A monograph published in the early 1990s, edited by Vicente Sánchez-Biosca and Vicente Benet (1994) for the journal *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, constituted perhaps the first comprehensive attempt at scholarly reflection on the film star in Spain, but neither the

question of archetypes nor the specific context of Spanish cinema was the focus of the monograph. There is thus an appealing field of research for developing our understanding of Spanish cinema through the intersection between the recurrent archetypes that have defined Spanish film production and the stars who have portrayed them. In this context, the recent proliferation of studies drawing on feminist film theory, which attempts a critical review of the role women have played in the configuration of cinematic imaginaries, offers a wide range of possibilities for exploring some of the representations of women in Spanish cinema (Labanyi, 2000; Gil Gascón, 2011; Feenstra, 2011; Rincón Díez, 2014; Nash, 2014; Morcillo, 2015; Losilla, 2017a; Losilla, 2017b), although the concept of the star has rarely been a focus of attention in these studies.

Santos Zunzunegui (2005: 142) confirms that "there have not been many attempts to evaluate the specific weight that actors have had in the historical development of Spanish cinema," and in a footnote he references some studies of male actors like José Isbert (Pérez Perucha, 1984). Alfredo Landa (Santos Zunzunegui, 1993) and Antonio Casal (Castro de Paz, 1997). Zunzunegui does not cite any studies of actresses, reflecting a gap in the literature in relation to Spanish female stars. In the 21st century, thanks to the increasing interest in star studies in the academic world (Shingler, 2012), different approaches to studying stars have emerged, with the analysis of Spanish film actresses by authors like Eva Woods Peiró (2012), who explores the "white gypsies" portrayed by Raquel Meller and Imperio Argentina, and Kathleen M. Vernon (2016), who examines the importance of the voice in the identity of the actress Gracita Morales. Vernon's study forms part of a book that explores different acting styles in Spanish cinema, Performance and Spanish Film by Dean Allbritton, Alejandro Melero and Tom Whittaker, which includes two chapters on specific actors (José Luis López Vázquez and, as mentioned above, GraciTHERE IS THUS AN APPEALING FIELD
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ta Morales). Another collection, A Companion to Spanish Cinema (2013), includes a section on "Stars as Cultural Icons", featuring an article by Katherine Vernon and Eva Woods titled "The Construction of the Star System", and another by Tatjana Pavlovic, Chris Perriam and Nuria Triana Toribio titled "Stars, Modernity and Celebrity Culture", two particularly significant contributions to scholarly study on Spanish stars. Finally, it is also important to note that this journal, L'Atalante, which has taken an interest in performative questions since its issue 19 (Hernández Miñano and Martín Núñez, 2015), included an article in issue 23 titled "Desire and Eroticism in Dictatorial Times" (Bou, Pérez, Hernández Pérez, 2017), focusing on the tension between female performances and censorship under the Franco regime. The same area of research was explored extensively in the book El cuerpo erótico de la actriz bajo los fascismos. España, Italia, Alemania 1939-1945 [The Erotic Body of the Actress under Fascism: Spain, Italy, Germany 1939-1945] (Bou, Pérez, 2017), which drew on the tradition of star studies to explore the contradictions between stardom and censorship in the work of the most prominent actresses of Europe's fascist regimes, including the Spanish stars Imperio Argentina, Ana Mariscal and Conchita Montes.

In this complex field of analysis, the system of production that gave rise to the fame of the greatest divas of the big screen is of vital importance. In this respect, it is clear that from the outset the Spanish film industry took note of the Hollywood

star system (although in its early years there were no major Spanish studios that could construct a star system like the one that existed in the United States), and studios like Cifesa and Suevia promoted their stars in a manner that imitated the American model (Benet. 2017). Marta García Carrión (2017) draws the revealing conclusion that the popularity of actresses like Raquel Meller in the 1920s reflects a culture of stardom among Spanish filmgoers that was evident in the magazines and newspapers of the era. Meller, who was known as an international star in Spain, offered the country its first archetype of the modern woman, portraying characters that were psychologically extremely complex. Along the same lines, with the consolidation of the Spanish film industry in the Franco years, actresses like Amparo Rivelles, Conchita Montenegro and Sara Montiel represented different female archetypes over the course of their respective careers both in Spain and abroad, demonstrating that they could portray characters that subverted (sometimes quite explicitly) the qualities of the passive, domestic and servile female archetype dictated by the fascist regime.

Mary Nash suggests that "archetypes are extremely important cultural artefacts because they establish ideal models that mark collective beliefs with a huge impact on social practices" (2014: 189). In this sense, Nash underlines the importance that the regime gave to the creation of a domestic, submissive, maternal archetype, stigmatising women who could not conform to this dominant model. It is undeniable that female characters in Spanish cinema departed from the Falangist parameters, and some stars were occasionally or even regularly able to portray women whose personalities slipped out of the boundaries of the model they were supposed to represent. It would be impossible to argue that there may have been a revolutionary star who set out to challenge or tear down the hegemonic archetype, but there are numerous cases of actresses who, by creating their own repertoire of gestures or

portraying characters in implausible stories (usually melodramas inclined towards exaggeration), were able to expose new discursive spaces that resisted the patriarchal logic.

Vicente Benet (2017) points out that two of the most successful Spanish stars of the late 1940s, Amparo Rivelles and Aurora Bautista, made their names in a cycle of historical films and melodramas in which both played characters of great strength and personality. From Madness for Love (Locura de amor, Juan de Orduña, 1948) to Agustina of Aragon (Agustina de Aragón, Juan de Orduña, 1950) in the case of Aurora Bautista, and from The Duchess of Benamejí (La duquesa de Benameji, Luis Lucía, 1949) to Dawn of America (Alba de América, Juan de Orduña, 1951), in the case of Amparo Rivelles, the active, vibrant and strongwilled characters these actresses played dazzled both male and female spectators of the era. In an article published in 2002, Jo Labanyi argues that at the end of the 1940s, just when female stars had begun adopting a more empowered persona, there emerged "a dissident art film movement, based on Italian neorealism, which broke away from the mainstream cinema of the previous decade. This meant the abandonment of the big female stars of the 1940s and the rise of a new set of social themes primarily targeting an academicandtherefore male—audience [...]. The result was a group of films that achieved their effects not through pleasure, but through ideas. This might have been an advance in political terms, but for the representation of women it constituted a step backwards" (2002: 59).

Labanyi's argument suggests that even in the early years of the Franco regime there were female film stars portraying women with strong personalities. But in the later years of the dictatorship, new stars appeared who built on the achievements of Bautista and Rivelles. In the 1950s, a noteworthy example is the series of musical melodramas featuring Sara Montiel, beginning with the box office success of *The Last Torch*

Song (El último cuplé, Juan de Orduña, 1957). Similarly, Emma Penella starred in a series of films in the 1950s and 1960s, from Fedra (Manuel Mur Oti. 1956) to La cuarta ventana [The Fourth Window] (Julio Coll, 1963), in which she portrayed characters whose distaste for the values of the patriarchy became increasingly visible. The liberated spirit that Raquel Meller had begun to forge in the 1920s, to which Sara Montiel added an air of sophistication, ultimately found its "icon of modernity" in Marisol (Labanyi, Pavlovic, 2013: 323), and the height of the developmentalist period of the regime saw the success of Rocío Durcal and Concha Velasco. Although the female bravado of these last two stars was normally transformed by the end of their films into conventional submission, they nevertheless portrayed women who sought different archetypal models to attract both female and male audiences.

In her book *La mujer en España*. 100 años de su historia [The Woman in Spain: 100 Years of Her History], written in 1963, the Spanish feminist and intellectual María Laffitte argued that "[t]he

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appeal that the cinema holds for young Spanish women-young Spanish men are irrelevant-is immense." In relation to actresses who move on from the stage to the screen, she remarks: "The new wave strives to achieve a certain mobility, among other things, an ease in the gestures and postures not used on-or, of course, off-the Spanish stage. The Spanish woman is shy and has generally been raised with a singular sense of modesty, an attitude that was reflected in the theatre. The new type of actress sets out to play her role with a greater confidence in her movements. But rather than reflecting the youth of today, who have acquired more freedom in their gestures, she seems to copy the exaggerated dynamism of certain foreign actresses, which look extremely artificial when adopted by a Spanish woman" (Laffitte, 1963: 344). Although critical of a certain mimicry of the gestures of foreign actresses, Laffitte suggests that Spain's female film stars subvert the Franco regime's dictates on how women should behave. In this sense, it is unsurprising that her chapter titled "The Actress" should begin with a full-page picture of Conchita Montes, about whom she writes: "The prototype of the evolved actress, spearheading the new wave, is Conchita Montes. She has a degree in law, a lively intelligence [...] and has translated several plays from English and French into Spanish, some of which she has performed in herself" (Laffitte, 1963: 343). This conception of a "prototype of the evolved actress," which Laffitte identifies not only with Conchita Montes but also with other stars like Aurora Bautista, Sara Montiel and Concha Velasco, points to the emergence of a different type of femininity (not passive or submissive, but with an independent voice), which, although it may not have been within reach of every "real woman", was offered as an alternative possibility to the spiritual, homebound, "modest" image endorsed by the Falange.

Laffitte describes a model of intelligent, independent, creative woman—like Ana Mariscal—who knows how to move in spaces that had

traditionally been exclusive to men. This "prototype" also responded more or less consciously to an assertion of the right of women to be able to explore the patriarchal logic in a way that may sometimes even be critical. It could be added that Laffitte's "prototype" is equivalent to a female archetype whose centrality, strength and awareness could be classified as "feminist". Susan Martin-Márquez suggests that "in the context of Spain, the phrase 'feminist cinema' could only be considered an oxymoron" (1999: 2), but as she demonstrates in her book, it is possible to identify "alternative approaches to gender difference" (1999: 5) that would contribute to the creation of a "feminist discourse". Until the end of the dictatorship, the female film star by definition represented a personality that radiated modernity both on and off the screen.

Heide Schlüpmann (2010: 15) argues that since its consolidation in the 1920s, the image of the female star in film industries all over the world was by default a "new woman" who conveyed new possibilities of female behaviour to audiences with the greatest of ease. Schlüpmann maintains that the modernity that actresses expressed could not be associated with any single way of being a woman: "She (the actress) presents femininity as nonunitary." Cinema thus opened up the possibility of seeing the woman as more than just a single, predetermined model and, for narrative purposes, foreshadowed one of the key feminist theories of the 1990s: the subject is complex, polymorphous and contradictory, and cannot be treated as monolithic (De Lauretis, 2000: 90).

Richard Dyer (2001: 29) asserts that "the analysis of images of celebrities reveals a society's complexity, contradictoriness and difference." In this sense, Heide Schlüpmann's observations are perfectly applicable to a modern, pluralist construction of the careers of Raquel Meller, Imperio Argentina, Amparo Rivelles, Conchita Montes, Aurora Bautista, Conchita Montenegro, Carmen Sevilla, Sara Montiel, Concha Velasco and Mari-

sol, cinematic models of a new femininity, despite the conservative context in which they moved.

The tension between the female archetype fostered by the patriarchal imaginary and the resistance to that patriarchy through the actress's subjectivity marks the whole history of a film industry scarred by the long years of the Spanish dictatorship. The articles compiled in this edition of *L'Atalante* cover certain aspects that expose this contradiction underpinning the Spanish star system and invite readers to reflect on it.

On the one hand, it is important to bear in mind that the archetypal image of a star always extends beyond her presence on the screen. Film stardom does not end when the projector stops but spills over into the public appearances of the celebrities concerned. One of the first stars that the Francoist ideology attempted to construct in accordance with its standardised pattern was probably Conchita Montes, a woman who had never worked in cinema before her appearance in Carmen fra i rossi [Carmen Among the Reds] (Edgar Neville, 1939). In their article titled "Dramatic Expression in Carmen fra i rossi: Conchita Montes, the First Female Archetype of the Spanish Civil War", Gema Fernández-Hoya and Luis Deltell reveal how the efforts of the fledgling film industry of the Franco regime to turn Montes into an emblematic representation of the woman fighting for the national cause came into conflict with the approach of an actress who, in her public life, never completely fit the mould the dictatorship sought to make for her. While her début as a film star (and co-author of the screenplay) might have led the Francoist ideologues to believe that she would be the perfect emblem to convey their National Catholic values, Montes's participation in the promotion of her own image and her anything but submissive relationship with the press clashed with such simplistic expectations. As the article demonstrates, a history of film stardom in Spain and of the archetypes that underpinned it needs to be compared against the film industry's

process of manufacturing stars, but also with the contrasting perspective that the stars themselves can offer. In this sense, rather than a "star of the regime", Montes could be viewed as an actress for her audience, less ideologically defined and more versatile.

The area of film genres is another vast field that informs the actress-stardom relationship. Given that the way the Spanish star system was organised at the beginning of Franco's dictatorship was clearly imitative of the Hollywood model, it should hardly be surprising that each actress would create her own specific image within that system. However, the film studio model also allowed for movement between genres, and such movement offers a fascinating opportunity for reflection on the critical enrichment of pre-existing archetypes. The article by Jo Labanyi that opens this monographic issue, "The Complex Relationship between Female Agency and Female Desire: Aurora Bautista and Amparo Rivelles", offers a detailed exploration of the opposing trajectories of two actresses who were essential to the organisation of female stardom at CIFESA, one of Spain's biggest studios. Bautista made her on-screen début in the genre of the patriotic historical film as Juana la Loca in Madness for Love (Locura de amor, Juan de Orduña, 1948), with the emblematic encapsulation of an archetypal model that would be hugely influential on the historical film genre in those years. However, the versatility of the star system based on the Hollywood model allowed her to enter territories of intimacy associated with pure melodrama in the film Pequeñeces [Trifles] (Juan de Orduña, 1950), shot just two years later. Amparo Rivelles, on the other hand, went in the opposite direction, shifting from a quintessential melodrama in The Nail (El clavo, Rafael Gil, 1944) to embrace the patriotic model (by that time abandoned by Bautista) in her fiery performance as The Lioness of Castille (La leona de Castilla, Juan de Orduña, 1951). Such cross-contaminations between genres reinforce rather than undermine

the expressive potential of the big stars of Spanish cinema under Franco. However, as Labanyi explains, they should also be understood in terms of their potential ideological consequences (in relation to feminist theory): sometimes, submission to a conventional view of the woman as a victim or passive subject prevails; but in other cases, this shift serves to explain the empowerment of a star who unrestrainedly defies what the Francoist patriarchy expects of its female characters.

THE GENRE THAT MOST CLEARLY FACILITATED THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ELEMENT OF DISRUPTION INTO THE COMFORTABLE IDEALISED MODEL OF THE FRANCOIST WOMAN IS FILM NOIR. AS NURIA CANCELA EXPLORES IN HER ARTICLE, "THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN CINEMA ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FEMME FATALE IN SPANISH CRIME FILMS OF THE 1950S", THE FEMALE CHARACTER INTRODUCED BY THIS GENRE REPRESENTS ALL THE BEHAVIOURS THAT THE SPANISH WOMAN WAS EXPECTED TO REJECT, BUT THE FASCINATION WITH THE FEMME FATALE ARCHETYPE IN INTERNATIONAL CINEMA. OVERTAKING THE EXOTICISM OF THE VAMP ARCHETYPE THAT PRECEDED IT. WAS PRESENTED TO AUDIENCES AS A MODERN-DAY EPIPHANY OF A LIBERATED WOMAN WITH AN INDEPENDENT PERSONALITY

The genre that most clearly facilitated the introduction of an element of disruption into the comfortable idealised model of the Francoist woman is *film noir*. As Nuria Cancela explores in her article, "The Influence of American Cinema on the Performance of the *Femme Fatale* in Spanish Crime Films of the 1950s", the female character introduced by this genre represents all the behaviours that the Spanish woman was expected

to reject, but the fascination with the femme fatale archetype in international cinema, overtaking the exoticism of the vamp archetype that preceded it, was presented to audiences as a modern-day epiphany of a liberated woman with an independent personality. What the regime's censors would normally only allow in foreign films found an expressive niche in the context of the Spanish crime film of the 1950s. As Cancela suggests, through the conventions of this genre female stars portrayed an autonomous reality with alternative values to the immaculate, prefabricated dignity of the Francoist woman.

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Other genres also established models to promote a female image that broke with the standards of behaviour expected of women in Spanish cinema under Francoism. In the case of comedy, the article by Maria Adell and Sergi Sánchez, "Lina Morgan: The Archetype of the Explosive Ingénue in Spanish Cinema of the Late Francoist Period", explores how one female star was ablemake a consciously adopted character her own through an exaggerated naivety that broke with the standards of the period. As the authors show, Lina Morgandid just this through an explosively creative repertoire of gestures that subvertedthe political standards of good behaviour, thereby laying claim to a territory of creative autonomy that established a popular

archetype remembered for qualities that were anything but normative.

This elevation of a female archetype above all the pre-existing limitations imposed by the industry has also been possible in the horror genre. While the so-called fantaterror of the 1960s and 1970s offered a foretaste of the horror heroine's subversive potential to destabilise the traditional behaviours of Spanish women, the contemporary [REC] saga, analysed from this perspective by Juan Medina-Contreras and Pedro Sangro in their article "From the 'Final Girl' to the Emancipated Heroine: Female Archetypes in the [REC] Saga", reflects the unique evolutionary path that the construction of the heroic female can take in the horror genre. One of the ways this is expressed is in the significant change of tone represented by the shift from the view of the heroine as the object of a recording controlled by an external camera to the destruction of that camera and the attribution of an active subjectivity to the female gaze. The analysis of the evolution of this model of heroine, not only in the saga itself but in the general corpus of horror films, contributes a contemporary dimension to this monograph, confirming that film genre conventions are subverted more today than ever in the interests of female empowerment.

But this kind of resistance to traditional expectations is not limited to the malleable structures of mainstream genres. The monograph closes with an article by Kathleen M. Vernon that studies a subtler (and seldom explored) form of challenging the institutional mode of representation: the voice of the female star, when presented as problematic or different. The article considers "dissonance" in relation to the neutrality of the female voice, which was subject to a Francoist production model whose insistence on the supposed effectiveness of dubbing condemned certain actresses (such as the famous case of Emma Penella) to the desexing sterility of voices that so often replaced their own. Vernon's article considers two foreign stars, Geraldine Chaplin and Cecilia Roth, who became

emblematic embodiments of female archetypes in Spanish cinema in spite of (or perhaps because of) their vocal dissonance in relation to the sterile neutrality of the dubbed voice. Chaplin had a magnetic force as an irreplaceable presence in the films of Carlos Saura, and the complexity of her voice (sometimes dubbed, sometimes presented as foreign, always betraying her accent even when the character she played was Spanish) reflects the power of the actress's real voice in the establishment of a uniquely feminine quality that has proved to be enduring. Cecilia Roth, on the other hand, for the post-Franco Spanish cinema represented so well by Pedro Almodóvar, would represent a process of overcoming the prejudices that led the director himself to dub her voice (or neutralise her accent) in his first films. The decisive tone of her voice, to the extent that Spanish cinema has normalised the recognition of diversity, raises the question of the ultimately enriching nature of vocal identity in a contemporary construction of film stardom free of prejudices and embalming routines.

In short, the articles in this monograph demonstrate that the cinematic archetypes portrayed by Spanish female stars offered (and continue to offer) a malleable image of femininity that is anything but monolithic, reflecting the modern, subversive nature of such complex representations. With this in mind, this issue of L'Atalante also features a long interview, conducted by Marga Carnicé and Endika Rey, with a key actress in the Spanish cinema of the past fifty years: Teresa Gimpera. Also featured in this issue are contributions by two major figures in contemporary acting, Bárbara Lennie and Irene Escolar, in a dialogue with Gonzalo de Lucas and Albert Elduque in the (Dis)Agreements section. Both these sections offer a very clear picture of these actresses active, self-aware, rigorous approach to the profession, characterised by an ambition to expand feminist discursiveness and replete with cultural significance, which has not only produced archetypes that have endured in the collective memory of their audiences, but has also nuanced them in diverse ways through the adoption of a creative responsibility that is passed on—andfor that very reason enhanced—from one generation to the next.

NOTES

* This article is part of the Spanish Government Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness research and development project "Representations of Female Desire in Spanish Cinema during Francoism: Gestural Evolution of the Actress under the Constraints of Censorship" (REF: CSO2017-83083-P).

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FEMALE ARCHETYPES AND THE STAR SYSTEM IN SPANISH FILM HISTORY

Abstract

Based on the view of the history of film stardom as a process of iconic mutations in perpetual motion, this article reviews the academic literature on the analysis of female film stars in the context of Spanish cinema. It finds that over the decades Spanish stars have represented diverse archetypes of modernity in different film genres. This finding is especially significant for the Francoist period because the female stars of that era often subverted the qualities of the passive, domestic and servile archetype dictated by the fascist regime. Through their own voice or repertoire of gestures, female stars were able to reveal new spaces of "feminist discourse" (Martin-Márquez, 1999) that resisted the patriarchal logic.

Key words

Archetypes; Film genres; Female stars; Modern woman; Spanish cinema; feminist discourse.

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Article reference

Bou, N., Pérez, X. (2021). Female archetypes and the star system in Spanish film history. L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos, 32, 7-16.

ARQUETIPOS FEMENINOS Y STAR SYSTEM EN LA HISTORIA DEL CINE ESPAÑOL

Resumen

Teniendo en cuenta que la historia del estrellato cinematográfico es un proceso de mutaciones figurativas en perpetuo movimiento, el artículo rastrea la bibliografía académica existente en el estudio de las stars femeninas en el contexto de la cinematografía española. Se demuestra que a lo largo de las décadas las estrellas españolas representan, desde diferentes géneros cinematográficos, distintos arquetipos de modernidad. Esta constatación es relevante sobre todo para el periodo franquista porque las estrellas estaban transgrediendo los atributos del arquetipo pasivo, doméstico y servil que dictaba el régimen fascista. A partir de una gestualidad o voz propia las stars femeninas podían visibilizar nuevos espacios de «discurso feminista» (Martin-Márquez, 1999) que se resistían al logos patriarcal.

Palabras clave

Arquetipos; géneros cinematográficos; star femenina; mujer moderna; cine español; discurso feminista.

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Referencia de este artículo

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Edita / Published by



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ISSN 1885-3730 (print) /2340-6992 (digital) DL V-5340-2003 WEB www.revistaatalante.com MAIL info@revistaatalante.com