



The Main Feature

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Pain and Glory (Dolor y Gloria)

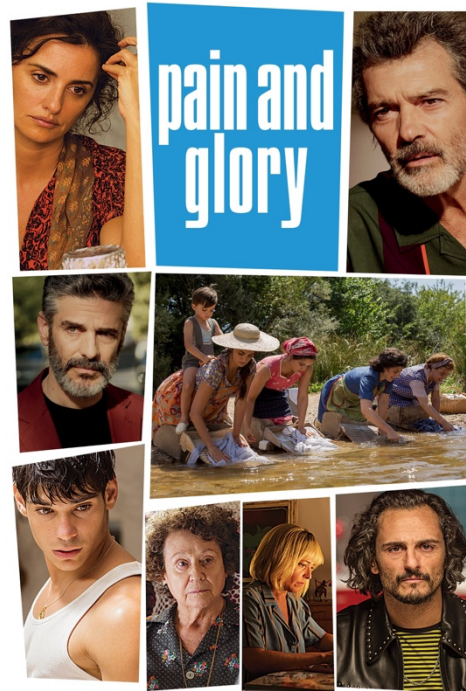
Spain 2019

108 mins. Certificate 15

Writer and Director	Pedro Almodóvar
Photography	José Luis Alcaine
Production Designer	Antxón Gómez
Set Design	Vicent Díaz
Music	Alberto Iglesias
Art Direction	Maria Clara Notari

Cast

Antonio Banderas	Salvador Mallo (adult)
Asier Flores	Salvador Mallo (child)
Asier Etxeandia	Alberto Crespo
Leonardo Sbaraglia	Federico Delgado
Nora Navas	Mercedes
Sara Sierra	Conchita
Julieta Serrano	Jacinta Mallo (elderly)
Penélope Cruz	Jacinta Mallo (young)
César Vicente	Eduardo



Pain and Glory is Pedro Almodóvar's 21st film, & the fourth to be screened by WNCC¹.

Almodóvar's films typically feature strong women; vivid imagery; autobiographical elements and permissive attitudes to sex and drugs; all told using a revolving coterie of ensemble casts. *Pain and Glory* ticks all these boxes, with a rich and warm production design (note the predominance of red); beautiful interiors and a particularly strong sense of biopic. This was Almodóvar's eighth collaboration with Antonio Banderas and his sixth with Penélope Cruz.

Banderas plays Salvador Mallo, a celebrated but ageing auteur in the twilight of his film career. He lives alone in an expensively (and exquisitely) decorated Madrid apartment, reliant on a house-keeper Conchita (Sara Sierra) and an ultra-loyal PA/fixer Mercedes (Nora Navas). He is yet to recover from the death of his beloved mother, Jacinta, four years ago and from a more recent back operation. Racked by pain, both physical and mental, he feels unable to work and is broodily dependent on medication.

For more than three decades he's been estranged from actor Alberto (Asier Etxeandia) the lead in his 1980s film *Sabor (Flavour)*. A festival is presenting a restored print, and wants them to

¹ 26th April 1994 - *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down! (Átame!)* (1990) – rating 6.1; 23rd November 2000 - *All About My Mother (Todo sobre mi madre)* 1999 – 6.97; 8th May 2008 - *Volver* (2006) – 7.06

reunite for a Q&A after the show. Alberto is a habitual heroin user who introduces Salvador to chasing the dragon. This triggers a mosaic of vivid flashbacks: the childhood that saw his parents move to live in a cave in Valencia; his ambitious and loving seamstress mother (Penelope Cruz) who secures her precociously intelligent child a free place at a seminary; first desire, experienced as a childhood fainting fit; and the thrill and agony of unforgettable (gay) love in Madrid, the city that would become (in bullfighting parlance) “a difficult ring”. He later recalls his last days with his now-frail mother, and remembers apologising for not being the son she wanted him to be. He allows Alberto to perform an old monologue – “Addiction” – a powerful confessional piece



about Mallo’s tempestuous past love affair with Federico (who by chance sees the play and visits Salvador for a brief but tender reminiscence).

By the end of the film, Salvador has sworn off the heroin, is finally being treated for his dysphagia (swallowing disorder) and tells his surgeon that he is working again....

The film was released in Spain on 22nd March 2019 to rapturous reviews, and ended the year as the top grossing local release (earning €6.5m). It made its international debut at the 2019

Cannes Film Festival, where it competed for the Palme d’Or and won two awards: Banderas for Best Actor and Alberto Iglesias for Best Soundtrack.

There was widespread appreciation for Banderas’ performance. Empire magazine commented that “Banderas is immense but tiny. His performance is world-weary and downcast, trying to reconcile himself with his past while not having the strength to deal with the present” whilst the Times trilled “Banderas has rarely been better. The hangdog expression is riven with pain and he plays Mallo as emotionally cauterised, yet beneath it all still desperate to connect, love and make more films.”

At the 92nd Academy Awards, *Pain and Glory* was nominated for Best International Feature Film (it lost to *Parasite*) and Banderas was nominated for Best Actor (Joaquin Phoenix won, the joker!). The New York Times and Time magazine named *Pain and Glory* as “The Best Movie of 2019”. The Guardian’s annual “50 Best” list ranked it as 10th best (*The Irishman* from Netflix was voted #1. No comment).

The film contains some coincidences that stretch credulity and is imbued with a pervasive air of pretention. Nonetheless, it’s a strikingly visual feast, with a strong narrative and a compelling central performance. The sanitised and consequence-free drug-taking is frankly reprehensible (in my eyes at least), but it should be noted that Almodóvar clarified that although many aspects of this movie are drawn from his own life (including the debilitating pain that Mallo experiences) he assured his friends, family, and colleagues that unlike his fictional character he has never actually turned to using heroin to self-medicate for pain.

Eugene Smith



We thank Red Eye for subsidising the cost of printing these notes. Red Eye Print, Unit 2D, Lansbury Estate, 102 Lower Guildford Road, Knaphill, GU21 2EP Tel: 01483 772111

Eugene Smith spotted this interview with Antonio Banderas in the Sunday Times Magazine – 4th August 2019 (Extract)

Antonio Banderas lives in a huge glass house in Surrey [in Cobham], picturesque and less than half an hour by train from London. He likes to watch deer frolic in his garden. “I hate big cities,” he says as we settle in the lounge. “I really do.”



The Spanish actor — heartthrob of *The Mask of Zorro*; beating heart of eight films for his auteur friend Pedro Almodóvar — is great and rambling company. He is casually dressed, as you tend to be when spending an afternoon indoors, in jeans, trainers and a burnt-orange T-shirt. He moves as if he has rubber bones, all bouncy gesticulation, a lot of leg-crossing and pushing his hands to his chest. A relaxed host, then, but this is a good time for him. Two years on from a heart attack, he is enjoying a career peak, having won best actor at Cannes in May for his role in Almodóvar's new film, *Pain and Glory*.

“It was a turning point, psychologically,” he says of the heart attack, Spanish accent rolling the syllables. “And the tendency you have as a human, after a cardiac event, is to show yourself in a perfect state. You want to do even more. You go, ‘I can do a good job!’ And so I chose to do more interesting movies.”

“*Pain and glory?*” he says, shaking his head, finding a sigh and a smile. “We all travel through life with a suitcase filled with miseries and greatness. When you look back at your life, everybody has to reconcile with certain people, sometimes to ask for forgiveness — things you have said and done, things you didn’t do or say.”

In 1992, after a decade of work in his native Spain, Banderas appeared in his first American film. Almodóvar's *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* had pushed the actor west to Hollywood. By the mid-1990s, he and his growling broodiness had appeared in everything from *Desperado* to *Evita*. He lived in the US because of work and his marriage to Melanie Griffith. *Puss in Boots*, the swashbuckling cat in the *Shrek* franchise, followed. If these were the highlights of a Hollywood career, though, the lows were fluff such as *Spy Kids* and *Take the Lead* - a far cry from the European stage and screen work of his early years.

Does Hollywood know how best to use European actors? For instance, Cruz and



Marion Cotillard have richer roles in their homelands. “There are a number of good things that come out of America,” Banderas says, “but if you get into that system, you have to know you’re going into a factory. Hollywood does products and those products are well done, because they sell. However, it’s like a fizzy drink — it makes you feel good, but it’s not the wine Europe tries to do.”

So, despite a tumultuous decade of divorce, health woes and professional ups and downs, he is well? “The only thing I can tell you today is, I’m very happy where I am now,” he says. He smiles. It’s hard not to smile back. “And truly, I don’t regret anything.” More glory than pain? “Of course!” he says, arms thrown up into an extended stretch. “Because you discover at some point the best movie is you. It’s your life. What is your movie?”

Update – Banderas now plans to return to Malaga, Spain and his house in Cobham is up for sale (£2.95m if you are interested).

Comments and reactions to: **The Personal History of David Copperfield**

No of reaction slips received = 27

Average score = 6.67

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
~	~	~	~	2	2	9	8	3	2	1	

Tried (and failed) to be hip. Just did not flow

This Dickensian hero is funny and sharp-witted

Excellent cast, excellent film. Second time I've seen the film and enjoyed it better second time round

Interesting rewrite of Dickens' David Copperfield – great cast and direction

The narrative was lost in the tricks – better than The Death of Stalin, though

Maybe this film was meant to be more Dickens than Copperfield!

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party! At times extremely irritating; especially the music. However, some glorious vignettes

Excellent film notes

Having seen the film a? ago, this version a disappointment

Very entertaining – great cast

Didn't quite work for me

Position	Film	Average score
1	Nomadland	7.13
2	Parasite	7.07
3	The Farewell	6.85
4	The Personal History of David Copperfield	6.67
5	Permission	6.60
6	The Crimson Pirate	6.42
7	Baby Driver	6.19
8	Bait	5.35

Forthcoming attraction: 10 February 2022 – **Breakfast at Tiffany's**



Whitewashed and solidified for the screen, Truman Capote's Breakfast at Tiffany's emerges an unconventional, but dynamic, entertainment that will be talked about and, resultantly, commercially successful. Out of

the elusive, but curiously intoxicating negative of Capote's fiction, scenarist George Axelrod has developed a surprisingly moving positive, touched up into a stunningly visual motion picture experience by the screen artisans assembled under the aegis of producers Martin Jurow and Richard Shepherd and surveillance of director Blake Edwards.

Variety