

Epilogue

As we explained at the beginning, this book mainly follows the evolution of British and American critique with only an occasional appearance of ideas from the European continent or other spheres. The mainstream critical discourse that we wanted to analyse pays little or no attention to authors from other latitudes, as if they were also “others”. However I must stress here that the European critique often has meaningful, and on occasion, brilliant propositions to offer.

Walter Benjamin, referring to the hermeneutics of concealment once said: “Art criticism does not have to lift the veil. Rather, it must raise itself up to the true insight of beauty”. Perhaps the art historian who has come closest to the true insight of the beauty of our *Demoiselles* is Ángel González who pointed out the scant affinity between Cubism and the nude because “Picasso—he stated—came to painting convinced of the body’s infirmity”, of a body that is decaying, that is withering, sick and rotting like apples on a plate. “Bodies exposed—he wrote—like the woman crouching in the *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, pierced by a shudder”, and continues:

Bodies made of tow and paraffin... Torches in the night. Bodies miraculously upright, like sand castles; fallen bodies that tumble like the sprockets on a millwheel newly put into action after long disuse; bodies of this world because they are made of its remains; explicit bodies because they have nothing to keep silent. Bodies made of such clarity that some are seen as shadows: dark, obscene. But obscenity cannot be an attribute of the burning circuit of desire (González 2000, 329).

Despite all of which the painting continues to be an enigma.

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