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# The (Ab)use of Politics and Eroticism in the Culture of the Spanish Transition to Democracy (1975-1982)

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

THE (AB)USE OF POLITICS AND EROTICISM IN THE CULTURE OF THE  
SPANISH TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY (1975-1982)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SPANISH

by

Wenceslao Gil

2011

To: Dean Kenneth Furton  
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Wenceslao Gil, and entitled The (Ab)use of Politics and Eroticism in the Culture of the Spanish Transition to Democracy (1975-1982), having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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María Asunción Gómez

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Santiago Juan-Navarro, Major Professor

Date of Defense: October 17, 2011

The dissertation of Wenceslao Gil is approved.

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Dean Kenneth Furton  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi  
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2011

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## DEDICATION

To my wife; simply, my life.

To my parents; without them, I would not be who I am. . . or where I am.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Santiago Juan-Navarro, for his unconditional support, his priceless advice, and his friendship during this long but rewarding process. I want to thank the members of my committee—Dr. María Asunción Gómez, Dr. Ricardo Castells, and Dr. Aurora Morcillo— for their input and overall help. I also want to thank the Department of Modern Languages for being there for me during the past four years.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION  
THE (AB)USE OF POLITICS AND EROTICISM IN THE CULTURE OF THE  
SPANISH TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY (1975-1982)

by

Wenceslao Gil

Florida International University, 2011

Miami, Florida

Professor Santiago Juan-Navarro, Major Professor

This dissertation analyzes the (ab)use of politics and eroticism within the framework of the Transition to democracy in Spain, its social and cultural impact—on literature, film, music, and popular media—, and its consequences. After a period of nearly four decades, when the country was subjected to a totalitarian regime, Spanish society underwent a process of democratic restoration. As a result, the two topics considered taboo during almost forty years of repression—i.e., politics and sexuality/eroticism—, gushed out fiercely. Every aspect of culture was influenced by and intrinsically linked to them. However, while we have been offered a more or less global approach to the Transition—the Transition as a whole—, and some studies have focused on diverse areas, no research to date has covered in depth the significance of those issues during that historical moment.

Considering the facts stated above, it was imperative to conduct a more detailed analysis of the influence of both eroticism and politics on the cultural production of the Transition from different perspectives. Although the academic intelligentsia has often rejected them as expressions of mass culture, we must consider Pierre Bourdieu's

theories—in line with the tradition of classical sociology, that includes science, law, and religion, together with artistic activities—, Michel Foucault’s ideas on sexuality, and New Historicism, examining texts and their contexts.

This work concludes that the (ab)use of both subjects during the Spanish Transition was a reaction to a repressive condition. It led to extremes, to societal transgression and, in most cases, to the objectification of women because of the impositions of a patriarchal society. It was, however, part of a learning and, in a sense, cathartic process that led, eventually, to the reestablishment of the status quo, to a more equitable and multicultural society where men, women, and any political or sexual tendencies are respected—at least, in theory.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION: POLITICS AND EROTICISM IN TRANSITION .....	1
1. THE NOVEL IN THE CULTURAL TRANSITION: VERTICAL SMILES AND POLITICAL FLANEURS .....	12
1.1. Politics and Eroticism in the Novel of the Spanish Transition. An Overview ....	12
1.2. The Planeta Awards during the Transition Years.....	28
1.3. “La sonrisa vertical.” Vertical Smiles and Explicit Sex.....	33
1.4. Politics and Eroticism. Leopoldo Azancot and <i>Los amores prohibidos</i> .....	41
1.5. The Political Flaneur. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s <i>Los mares del Sur</i> . Pseudo Detective Fiction as an Excuse for Sociopolitical Criticism.....	51
1.6. Women Writers. Sex and Politics from the Female Perspective. Almudena Grandes and Post-Transition Eroticism.....	62
2. THE FILMS DURING THE TRANSITION YEARS. “SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL,” AND POLITICS .....	75
2.1. Politics and Eroticism in the Films of the Spanish Transition. An Overview.....	75
2.2. José Luis Garci’s <i>Asignatura pendiente</i> . The “Sex-and-Politics” Course We Should Have Never Failed .....	106
2.3. Eloy de la Iglesia’s <i>El diputado</i> . Left-Wing Politics and Homosexuality as Symbols of Transgression during Francoism and the Early Transition .....	118
2.4. Women Directors: Pilar Miró, Josefina Molina, Emma Cohen, and Lina Romay .....	128
2.5. The S-rated Movies: When Transgression Pays Off .....	131
2.6. <i>La Escuela de Barcelona</i> .....	134
3. THEATER AND MUSIC IN TRANSITION .....	137
3.1. The Theater during the Transition. Sex and Politics Onstage .....	137
3.2. Independent Theater Groups and Companies.....	152
3.3. <i>Equus</i> and <i>La torna</i> . Theatrical Controversy on a Stage in Transition .....	154
3.4. Women Playwrights and Directors.....	158
3.5. Music in Transition: A Cry for Freedom, <i>Cantautores</i> , Rock, Punk, Rumba, and the Early <i>Movida</i> .....	160
3.6. <i>Cantautores</i> . Solo Singers, Movements, and Groups.....	162
3.7. Luis Eduardo Aute. Politics and Eroticism in the Lyrics of the Transition. “Al alba.” .....	189
3.8. Rock, Punk, <i>la Movida</i> , and Rumba. Social Criticism, Transgression, and Sexual References during the Transition.....	193
3.9. Women Singers in the Spanish Transition. Politics and Feminism.....	200

4. THE MEDIA DURING THE TRANSITION: TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND COMICS. SEX AND POLITICS OVERLOAD .....	208
4.1. Spanish Television and Radio during the Transition .....	209
4.2. Newspapers, Magazines, and Comics. The Reflection of a Society in Transition.....	229
4.3. <i>Interviú</i> . The Epitome of the (Ab)use of Politics and Eroticism.....	243
5. CONTEMPORARY REVISION OF THE CULTURAL TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.....	247
5.1. The Contemporary Film Revision .....	248
5.2. Television and the Revisionist View of the Transition .....	263
5.3. The Musical Revision.....	288
5.4. The Literary Coup: 23-F Revisited.....	290
CONCLUSIONS.....	297
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	312
VITA.....	340

## INTRODUCTION

### POLITICS AND EROTICISM IN TRANSITION

Politics and eroticism, as well as the arts in general and literature in particular, are historically determined. They are, therefore, part of changing discourses whose meanings are socially and culturally constructed, “contained within the field of power” where they occupy “a *dominated position*” (Bourdieu, *Field* 37-38). In most modern societies, allusions and references to political and sexual tendencies are, to an extent, allowed, and any individual can express his or her own views freely without fear of reprisals. That aspect is even more tangible in certain periods—the beginning of the seventeenth century, for instance—when, according to Michel Foucault, “Codes regulating the coarse, the obscene, and the indecent, were quite lax compared to those of the nineteenth century” (*Sexuality Vol.1:3*). But free will and freedom of choice—especially in the above-mentioned matters—can ultimately be altered, or repressed, if a member of the social group decides, unilaterally, to impose his criteria upon the rest of his peers. This kind of repression took place in Spain from 1939 to 1975.

On July 18, 1936, Francisco Franco—at the time a General in the Spanish Army—, together with rebel factions of the military, carried out a coup d’état to overthrow the legitimate government of the Republic (1931-1939). Its partial failure (Brenan 316) resulted in a long Civil War that left an estimated 500,000 people dead (“Spanish judge”) and that would split an already divided country forever. On April 1, 1939, after almost three years of fratricidal conflict, Franco rose to power as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Armed Forces. It was the starting point of a period of nearly four decades in the history of Spain when the entire society was

subjected to a totalitarian military regime with the unconditional support of the Catholic Church—at least, during the first decades.<sup>1</sup> The enforcement by public authorities of traditional Catholic values and ideals of “unity” imposed severe restrictions on all forms of public sexual or political expression.

After the dictator’s death, on November 20, 1975—preceded by a long sickness that appeared both as metaphor and metonymy for Francoism (Medina Domínguez 48)—, Spanish society underwent a process of democratic restoration. The length of the process is always controversial because of the diversity of opinions regarding the exact dates (Buckley xii).<sup>2</sup> The period finalized, for some critics, on December 29, 1978, when the new democratic Constitution came into effect. For other analysts, however, the process continued until October 28, 1982, with the electoral triumph of the Spanish Socialist Workers’s Party (PSOE). Regardless of time line, this historical period is known as *transición*—Transition, a time of hope, but, likewise, of uncertainty:

Si se hace bien, el proceso de marcha hacia una democracia se podrá ir recorriendo con mil prudencias, con mil escollos, amarrándose bien a la legalidad, pero se podrá intentar recorrer. Si la elección es equivocada, ese

---

<sup>1</sup> The Second Vatican Council in 1962, the renovation of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Tarancón, and Monsignor Añoveros would represent the beginning of the discrepancies Church/State. As stated in “Historia de la Transición,”

En marzo de 1974 Franco entró en un grave conflicto con la Iglesia. El gobierno de Carlos Arias se empeñó en expulsar de España a Antonio Añoveros, obispo de Bilbao, por una homilía, y la jerarquía eclesiástica amenazó con la excomunión a todos los políticos responsables . . . La Policía de Franco perseguía a los curas más progresistas, mientras en algunas parroquias se cobijaba a la más activa oposición de Franco. Había ya una ruptura con la Iglesia. El régimen franquista se agotaba a espaldas de quienes en sus orígenes le había protegido. (Sinova 33)

<sup>2</sup> Ramón Buckley, following Raúl Morodo’s idea of “pretransición,” argues that the beginning of the “transición ideológica” starts in 1968, “porque para entender la transición de 1975 hay que entender esa transición anterior a la transición misma, la de 1968 (xii-xv). It is what he calls the “double Transition.”

proceso de reforma puede quedar abortado desde el inicio y es seguro que la agitación social que va a estallar en la calle de la mano de la oposición democrática puede acabar provocando una respuesta de los duros del franquismo y desembocar en un auténtico enfrentamiento en el país.

(Prego 311)

Society in general feared that the wrong steps might lead to a disastrous situation and a possible return to the former regime. In any case, in the first few stages, and despite unsolved issues, the terms that best described the period for some critics were euphoria and celebration (Vilarós 5). However, the initial *hype* will be followed, eventually, by a feeling of *desencanto*, disillusionment, when reality did not fulfill the high expectations created around the process and the ghosts from the past haunted the nation—the dichotomy between the *pacto de silencio*, a pseudo *omertá* against the past, and, later, the attempts for the *recuperación de la memoria histórica*<sup>3</sup> in Spanish society.

Culturally and socially speaking, as an almost foreseeable and logical reaction, the two subjects considered taboo during the forty years of repression, namely politics and eroticism, gushed out fiercely. Francoist censorship, in a political *tour de force*, forbade the free expression of both; now, they reemerged with a vengeance. As Ramón de España explained, Spaniards were tired of prohibition and, as soon as the *vejestorio*,

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<sup>3</sup> As Teresa Vilarós argued,

Aunque el final del franquismo señalado por la enfermedad, agonía y muerte de Franco debería haber indicado el inicio de un espacio de reflexión y análisis del pasado inmediato, el cuerpo social español entra por el contrario en un proceso enquistatorio de un pasado que hemos convertido en desecho . . . El momento de la transición es el espacio donde se procesa el olvido, agujero negro que chupa, hace caer y encripta los desechos de nuestro pasado histórico, aquella historia maloliente que todos nos apresuramos a repudiar y que en gran parte todavía seguimos ocultando. (11-12)

The pact of silence left some sectors wondering whether the left wing had sold out to the system, “rendido, se sospechaba, por el plato de lentejas de llegar de la nada a la más absoluta miseria” (Vázquez Montalbán, *Crónica* 190).

the old tyrant, died, people flocked to experience what had been banned for so long (Ponce 9). From this point onwards, every aspect of life will be influenced by and intrinsically linked to them, as well as both will become, almost irrevocably, intertwined. As Jordi Mari has argued, there is a correlation between the political *apertura* and the display of erotic representations in film, press, and the mass media in general (“Umbral” 244).

The process had started, gradually, in the last few stages of the former regime, in the so-called process of *apertura*, the, allegedly, opening up of Spain to new ideas. During late Francoism, tourism—and, naturally, the flood of foreign currency that came along with it—was one of the reasons for the regime to tolerate areas of “moral permissiveness,” in order to profit from the money that came from the other side of the Pyrenees (Ponce 18). But now, with the death of the dictator, the phenomenon known by the Spaniards as *destape* had arrived in full force. It was, as stated previously, a foreseeable consequence, the excess with which a society marked by a tradition of religion-controlled morals tried to heal itself (Altisent 22). According to José María Ponce, the *destape* was a necessity (11). However, I see it more as a reaction—a chain reaction, if you will—to a repressive action: almost four decades of political and sexual repression led to the flagrant (ab)use of both topics. It would be easy to state, from a contemporary perspective, that had the dictatorship not taken place, Spain would have developed culturally like the rest of Western societies. But that would be purely speculative. We can only analyze fact, and so do the experts, although not always in its full essence.

Many critics have only approached the sexual connotation of the term *destape*—i.e., nudity, in reference to, primarily, women taking off their clothes in front of a camera; some have underestimated it and considered it too vulgar to be seriously studied. However, the etymology of the term cannot be overlooked: *destape* as uncovering, unveiling, or taking off the lid; the fact that it represented, at least for some sectors of society, a liberalization, an “uncovering” of new forms of interdisciplinary expression and representation—sexual, political, cultural, and, in a word, social. For another part of society, however, it was not regarded as a positive process, since “modernization did not necessarily mean liberation for women, who, in a Faustian bargain changed one set of limitations under the conformity of dictatorship for the conformity of the consumer culture” (Morcillo 23). *Destape*, when used only in reference to nudity, and not in the global sense of this dissertation, was, primarily, a male prerogative in a, still, patriarchal society; this led, in most cases, to the objectification of the “Second sex”—the term used by Simone de Beauvoir for women, the “Other by the One positing itself as One” (Beauvoir 7). For another group, it was also reason for condemnation, as Mari summarizes in “El Umbral del destape”:

Durante las fases iniciales de la transición, el destape deviene un espacio de intensa confrontación ideológica. Los sectores más recalcitrantes de la derecha neofranquista claman contra “la ola de erotismo que nos invade,” punta de lanza de un discurso apocalíptico en el que las autonomías regionales, pluripartidismo, libertad de expresión e información y otras cuestiones . . . se esgrimen como síntomas inequívocos de disolución espiritual de traición a los principios fundamentales de la Patria. (244-45)

Reactionary sectors of society, in line with the former regime, saw this wave of eroticism, dissolute behavior, and political freedom as evil. During most of the dictatorship, anything considered *not politically correct*—which was, in essence, everything—and nudity, including any hint of erotic innuendo, were deleted from all forms of art or society. The average Spaniard who wanted to experience any kind of *destape*, in the broad sense of the term, or rebel against the norm, must either travel to neighboring Biarritz, as depicted in the comedy *Lo verde empieza en los Pirineos* (1973), or join a clandestine political party, with the subsequent legal consequences. With the democratic restoration, as mentioned, Spain's views changed radically and everything in society became highly political and sexual—once again, the social uncovering of desire. But it was taken, in many cases, to the extreme, because, as an expected reaction to the previous oppression, Franco's death gave way to the *libertine celebration* that comes after the fall of a dictatorship (Altisent 24). Political parties appeared in every corner and the magazines displayed in newsstands echoed the changes. The social and cultural influence of both politics and eroticism was so dramatic that the artistic production of the period cannot be studied without the presence of either or both. Most artistic creations and productions between 1975 and 1982 in the Iberian Peninsula had some kind of political and/or erotic connotation. The historical moment known as the cultural Transition to democracy would not even exist without them. Although (ab)used and flawed, they became part of the Spaniards' daily life and, therefore, had a transcendental role in the process of generating narrative.

The Transition to democracy in Spain has been viewed and analyzed from multiple perspectives, both political and cultural. Well known are the studies conducted



by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Teresa Vilarós, Santos Alonso, Jo Labanyi, Helen Graham, Carlos Ardavín, Jorge Marí, Brad Epps, Paul Julian Smith, Barry Jordan, José Colmeiro, Tatjana Pavlović, Marsha Kinder, or José María Caparrós, among many others. However, while we have been offered a more or less global approach to the cultural Transition—the Transition as a whole—, and some critics have written papers, articles, and books on specific disciplines—e.g., literature or cinema during the Transition, erotic fiction in the 1970s, etc.—, no research to date has surveyed the intermingling of politics and eroticism on every aspect of art and culture, from film to fiction, poetry, theater, music, comics, and mass media—television, radio, newspapers, and magazines—during that period. That is the purpose of my dissertation: to study, in detail and from different perspectives, the importance of both topics as sources of narrative and artistic creation during the cultural Transition to democracy in Spain. Although the academic intelligentsia has often rejected them for being expressions of *mass culture*, we must consider Pierre Bourdieu’s theories—in line with the tradition of classical sociology, that includes science, law, and religion, together with artistic activities—and how those in power, the “dominant class,” define and impose aesthetic concepts such as “taste” within that culture (*Distinction* 310). Likewise, we must take into account the theories of Michel Foucault on sexuality as well as the importance of examining texts and their contexts, as outlined by New Historicism.

In order to appropriately analyze the sway of politics and eroticism on the different discourses, each chapter is dedicated to one aspect of the cultural Transition. Chapter 1 focuses on its influence on the novel. Over fifty works are referenced, from prestigious to not so well-known writers, including both male and female perspective and

style—thus avoiding a unidimensional view and gender bias. A section of the chapter centers on the most important erotic collection during the period: “La sonrisa vertical.” The main part, however, analyzes in depth two novels: Leopoldo Azancot’s *Los amores prohibidos* and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s *Los mares del Sur*. Both epitomize the novelistic production of the period, a time when some decided to take the trend to the extreme and transgress former and reactionary societal rules to unequivocally shock the readers still coming out of cultural limbo.

In Chapter 2 my dissertation focuses on the films of the Transition, especially those that address the amalgamation of eroticism and politics. As a result of the lifting of censorship in 1977, this is the field where the production was taken as far as the legal constraints allowed. If the novel represented, in a sense, what we could call the “blind public image,” pictured only in the minds of the readers—which, in many aspects, could be even more dramatic and transgressive because of the lack of external limitations—, movies were the realization of what many, mainly men, wanted to see: nudity, primarily that of women. Over a hundred films are analyzed in this chapter, including the S-rated movies and those directed by women filmmakers. In addition to this phenomenon, the productions of two directors are studied more closely: José Luís Garci’s *Asignatura pendiente* and Eloy de la Iglesia’s *El diputado*. Both represent, from two different perspectives, the intermingling of politics and eroticism in the period, as well as the consequences endured by those who lived their lives on the fringe of a, once again, reactionary society—whatever that may represent under the microscope of the diverse ideology.

Chapter 3 centers on theater and music. Theater was still heavily censored during the first years of the Transition—as we will see in some of the works presented here—, because of political and erotic content. Close to one hundred plays that premiered during the period are referenced in the chapter, giving preeminence to Els Joglars’s controversial *La torna* and Peter Shaffer’s *Equus* (1975). The productions of women playwrights and directors are also included. In the second section of the chapter the dissertation centers on music. Music was one of the most effective ways to channel political discontent and criticize the lack of freedom during the late Francoism. This trend continued during the Transition, with the *cantautor*—folk singer-songwriters whose lyrics, in the form of protest songs, denounced social and political injustice—as its main representative. Among them, Luis Eduardo Aute was one of the artists that best epitomized the intermingling of politics and eroticism during the period. Together with this figure, other genres, such as rumba, rock, and punk, also showed disenchantment with the political process and were tools for social criticism and the transgression of those societal rules. It was music, to summarize it briefly, with a message. Around fifty composers, singers, and performers are reviewed in this chapter, taking a close look at their highly politicized lyrics and messages—sometimes, with a touch of eroticism. As an end of the process, I reference *la movida*, the epitome of the cultural, social, and political changes the country was undertaking after 1982.

In Chapter 4 I analyze the mass media and their take on politics and eroticism: from television to radio, newspapers, magazines, and, also, the relevance of comics during the process. Mass media played an important role during the Transition. The different approaches chronicled the transformations in an everchanging country full of

hope but, at the same time, discontent; a nation recharged with new ideals of freedom that were clouded by unemployment, financial crisis, political instability, and terrorism. A plethora of newspapers, magazines, and comics were born during the process. For many, they represented *el parlamento de papel*—the paper Parliament—given its relevance in reflecting the events of troubled times. In addition to that, magazines like *Interviú* broke the sociopolitical rules, rebelled against the Establishment, and showed the naked body of a woman—the iconic Pepa Flores, a.k.a. Marisol—in 1976, over a year before the end of censorship, that took place in November 1977.

Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the aftermath of the Transition and today's perspective of the process. Films, literature, music, or television have found a new fascination with the period. Television, for instance, has produced in the last few years more series, miniseries, and documentaries based on the Transition than ever. The best example is, arguably, TVE's *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, a series that started in 2001 and that, in 2011, is still being aired on primetime television. In addition to that, writers like Javier Cercas are lured by events such as the infamous *23-F*, the failed coup in 1981; *Los años desnudos* analyzes the phenomenon of the S-rated movies and the fate of the stars involved when its production ceased; and music from the period is re-mastered today by Rosario Flores.

In conclusion, this dissertation is not the solution to the dilemma of whether the (ab)use of politics and eroticism during the period known as the cultural Transition to democracy in Spain was positive, negative, necessary, or unnecessary. My study argues that the (ab)use was a prolonged chain reaction to a repressive action, to the demise of a regime that lasted almost four decades, and a fact that influenced society and its culture

widely and, in essence, so intrinsically part of it that the process would not be complete without it. What this dissertation adds and contributes to the existing corpus is a study focused on politics and eroticism during the Transition years never done before. This guide, covering all aspects of culture, gives today's reader a better perspective and understanding of the process that re-shaped Spain's cultural view. The Transition, although radical for some, transgressive or disappointing for others, incomplete and full of excesses and flaws for many, was a means to a necessary *learning process*, not an end in itself, that the country needed to undertake and even take to an extreme—logical *consequence* after a long repressive physical and mental state—to be able to complete an almost cathartic journey to reestablish order and find—or, at least, try to find—equilibrium.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE NOVEL IN THE CULTURAL TRANSITION: VERTICAL SMILES AND POLITICAL FLANEURS

#### 1.1. Politics and Eroticism in the Novel of the Spanish Transition. An Overview

Both sociopolitical criticism and narrations involving traces of erotic innuendo have always been part of the production of Peninsular Spanish Literature. From Juan Ruíz's *Libro de buen amor* (1330) to Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* (1499), Francisco Delicado's *La lozana andaluza* (1528), Lope de Vega's and Calderón de la Barca's plays, Mariano José de Larra's *artículos de costumbres*,<sup>4</sup> or the novels written during Realism and Naturalism in the late 1800s,<sup>5</sup> including the so-called *novela galante*,<sup>6</sup> Spain has always been prone to criticize the (mis)behavior of those in power and enjoy the allure of eroticism—*lo verde*, the somewhat dirty, risqué, and racy touch. All this was unilaterally and forcefully changed with Franco's coup d'état, which led to the Civil War and the subsequent imposition of the ideals of National-Catholicism upon the nation and its “subjects”—more than free citizens. The coup marked the beginning of a period when, according to Morcillo, Spain “combines church doctrine of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and pseudoscientific treatises from the nineteenth century to indoctrinate a generation of Spaniards” (14).

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<sup>4</sup> Romantic writer Mariano José de Larra was one of the most caustic critics of nineteenth-century Spanish society, its politics, and its customs. His satirical perspective was depicted in his *artículos de costumbres*, articles where the character of the Spaniards was exposed and ridiculed.

<sup>5</sup> Both Emilia Pardo Bazán and Benito Pérez Galdós, for instance, criticized society in their novels. Some of their topics could be considered, even today, as transgressive as they were then. Examples of this are Pardo Bazán's *Los Pazos de Ulloa* or *La madre naturaleza*, where the innuendo of incest diffuses throughout the narration.

<sup>6</sup> The *novela galante* was the erotic novel that had its splendor in Spain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Eduardo Zamacois was one of its best-known representatives.

Since then, and for almost forty years, authors were forbidden to write about the above-mentioned topics because of the regime's harsh censorship. Regarding sex, "silence became the rule" (Foucault, *Sexuality Vol. 1*: 3). The definition of *what* was tasteful or legitimate in culture was now imposed upon individuals by the dictatorial state and its "unequal power relations . . . embedded in the systems of classification" (Bourdieu, *Field 2*). The only way to allude to these issues would be in a metaphorical sense; this gave way, in some cases, to narrations with a quality that would not be matched by those created without the fear of reprisals during the Transition.

But even with the metaphorical quality of some novels during Francoism, now, after almost four decades of repression, readers were eager for change, the lifting of the *cultural embargo*, the comeback of free criticism and, above all, open sexuality in literature, in the arts, in their daily lives:

No hay duda de que existe una estrecha correspondencia entre el proceso de apertura política y el despliegue de representaciones eróticas en cine, prensa y otros medios de comunicación. . . durante las últimas fases del franquismo y las primeras de la transición el erotismo se convierte repetidamente en un espacio para la negociación de ideas e intereses políticos. (Marí, "Umbral" 244)

From this point on, politics, eroticism, and cultural creation become a cultural tandem. Some critics, like Rafael Conte, however, did not praise the production of the period, arguing that there is no such thing as "novel of the Transition" and that Franco's death did not bring along the creation of masterpieces (qtd. in Martínez Cachero 383). The literary field, for some, faced the same setback as the political situation: disillusionment

as a result of an excess of expectations. Thus, the thought for a section of the critics was that, if the regime had changed and freedom had arrived, a new novel would appear in the process. However, that did not happen, since, in literature, there are no abrupt and sudden changes (Monleón 41).

But, regardless of opinions, it is a fact that many authors embraced this new freedom of speech as an opportunity to dissect and write about our most recent history, from the Republic to the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition itself without fear of reprisals or legal cuts—at least, after November 11, 1977, when censorship officially ended. Readers, and audiences in general, also started to see an advance from the subtle ways to represent sex to the most explicit, using provocation as its basis—incest<sup>7</sup> or fetishism, to name but a few. At this point, sexuality was no longer “carefully confined” (Foucault, *Sexuality Vol. 1*: 3). One of the biggest names in Spanish and world literature, Camilo José Cela, marked the unofficial lifting of the above-mentioned embargo with an encyclopedia devoted to sex terminology, utilizing both medical and colloquial entries. As Chris Perriam et al. note, “The publication by Cela of an *Enciclopedia del erotismo* (*Encyclopedia of Eroticism*) in 1976 signals the growing interest in the recuperation of a suppressed or ignored erotic tradition within Spain” (204). In the encyclopedia, full of artistic—and not so artistic—images of nude female bodies, the author defines a plethora of terms from an erotic perspective. Here are some examples to illustrate the point:

**abajar.** 1. Referido al pene, ponerlo en estado de flaccidez. // 2. Referido a la libido, amansarla por satisfacción de su impulso.

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<sup>7</sup> As Marsha Kinder explained, “Oedipal narrative also has the potential to function subversively as a vehicle for cultural change” (*Blood* 197).



**abierta.** 1. Desvirgada . . . 2. Mujer de vida alegre.

**agotamiento.** En sexología, es término que se aplica para señalar la impotencia momentánea o temporal del varón. (2, 3, 40)

From this point onwards, no matter what the genre of the novel was—historic, detective fiction, comedy, etc.—, most of them wanted to portray some kind of sexual and/or political references. Politics and politicians were satirized constantly. As Inés Arribas stated, politics was one of the topics most targeted by comedians (88).<sup>8</sup> Regarding sex and eroticism in narrations, Gonzalo Navajas argues that in many stories, eroticism was used as a core subject, and the sexual encounters provided a link utilized to advance the plot and give it unity (331-32).

Some novels, as explained earlier, focused on the Republic—such as Manuel Villar Raso’s *Una república sin republicanos* (1977)—, others on the Civil War—Juan Benet’s *Saúl ante Samuel* (1980)—, or on post-war Spain—Elena Santiago’s *La oscuridad entre nosotros* (1977). Even though the previously mentioned pact of silence was in effect, there was a need to know about history from a new and uncensored perspective. Writers tried to fulfill the gap:

Que desde 1976 se hayan escrito novelas sobre la guerra civil o la república, la posguerra y el exilio, tiene una justificación: aunque la mayoría de los españoles prefiera olvidar hechos tan dolorosos para la nación como fue la guerra de 1936, lo cierto es que se percibe una curiosidad por la evocación de estos acontecimientos trascendentales

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<sup>8</sup> Pedro Ruíz or Moncho Alpuente were two of the best examples. For further reading, see Arribas, Inés. *La literatura de humor en la España democrática*. Madrid: Editorial Pliegos, 1997.

desde nuevos puntos de vista que no hicieron posible la censura imperante y la autorrepresión durante el franquismo. (Alonso 23)

In conclusion, the topics of politics and eroticism took over the narrative of the Transition. Even though many critics question the quality of the literature during the period, or if there is such thing as a “novel of the Transition,” there is no doubt that, regardless of genre, many authors, from critically acclaimed to novice, welcomed the new creative possibilities that freedom brought along with it. From still subtle approaches to the (ab)use, the truth of the matter is that both consumers and creators were eager to experiment and experience what had been banned for decades. Let us, then, analyze the literary production of the period.

### **1. 1. 1. The Novel during the Transition and its Political Reference to the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition**

Among the many writers who reviewed the Civil War and/or Francoism in their stories were Luis Alfredo Bejar, Ramiro Pinilla, and Miguel Espinosa. Bejar's *Aquello es lo que llamábamos Berlin* (1978) was an analysis of Franco's Spain (Alonso 27), or the so-called *dos Españas*. Pinilla's *Antonio B... 'El Rojo', ciudadano de tercera, España, España* (1977) was a clear depiction and criticism of Franco's dictatorship and its crimes through the life of its protagonist, a Lazarillo-esque individual who had the misfortune of experiencing, or witnessing, the worst of life and dictatorial society: prison and mental institutions, unknown father, prostitute mother—due to the powers that be—, or incest—a daughter abused by her father. Miguel Espinosa was a writer that, although praised by the critics—among them, Vilarós (84)—, is somewhat unknown by the general public. Right before the Transition he wrote *Escuela de mandarines* (1974), an allegory of Francoism.

Antonio Pereira also explored the topics of the Republic, Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition in *País de los Losadas* (1978). At the same time, he criticized political manipulation in post-Franco Spain. Likewise, Ramón Ayerra, in *La tibia luz de la mañana* (1980) and *Los terroristas* (1981), analyzed democratic Spanish society, including topics such as the life of civil servants and surrealistic senior citizens' terrorism. In *La tibia luz de la mañana* there were also several explicit sexual references. This will be explained later, in the section dedicated to novels whose topics centered, primarily, on a combination of socio-erotic trend, something that became popular during the period.

Even though many of Miguel Delibes's novels dealt with sociopolitical criticism—*Las ratas* (1962), *Cinco horas con Mario* (1966), or *Los santos inocentes* (1981)—, sometimes from a certain conservative standpoint, *El disputado voto del señor Cayo* (1978) centered on the Transition itself. The plot revolved around the clash of two worlds—urban versus rural—, two perspectives—pragmatism versus idealism—, two generations during the first democratic elections in Spain after Franco's death. A group of young politicians visit a small and almost deserted Castilian town to campaign for their party. Cayo Fernández was one of the two residents left—a reference to the rural exodus to the big cities, both within the country and abroad. The novel portrayed the doubts about Spain's future; after forty years of silence, nobody knew what was going to work (29). The younger urban and idealistic generations wanted change, but their rural neighbors—depicted with black beret and patched-up corduroy pants (81)—were not easily convinced or, perhaps, ready for drastic transformations. When the political candidates promised to fix the situation, Cayo's response was: it is not broken (151). *El*

*disputado voto del señor Cayo* reviewed and criticized the Spain of the Transition and the changes that were taking place in the nation, the interest for the individuals as voters, and the change for change's sake. The novel was made into a movie in 1986, directed by Antonio Giménez-Rico and starring Paco Rabal and Juan Luís Galiardo.

Eduardo Mendoza dissected society in April 1975—just a few months before Franco's death—when he published *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*, his first novel, received by the critics as a promising surprise (Giménez Micó 211). The book was a premonition of the new turn the narrative in the Transition was about to take (Alonso 12), a pseudo *novela negra*—hard-boiled detective fiction<sup>9</sup>—centered on the socially convulsed Barcelona of the early twentieth century. As Giménez Micó noted, Barcelona and its society became core subjects in Mendoza's literary universe (49). The same applies to Manuel Vázquez Montalbán or Mercedes Salisachs, among others, given the importance of the Catalan city. In 1979 he wrote *El misterio de la cripta embrujada*. Place and genre were repeated; however, the action takes now place during the late 1970s, in the middle of the Transition, which can be easily identified with some comments the characters make regarding political parties (76). The protagonist of the story is an antihero, a rogue, a former criminal in a mental institution turned amateur private eye at the request of the police that will set him free in exchange for his aid. The novel was, actually, a picaresque parody of hard-boiled detective fiction full of social and political criticism of the period.

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<sup>9</sup> *Novela negra, noire*, and hard-boiled detective fiction will be analyzed in the section entitled “The Political *Flanêur*.”

Communism, nationalism, and terrorism were also the topics for a number of writers. Raúl Guerra Garrido—Basque by choice, not by birth— published in 1977 his *Lectura insólita de “El capital,”* a Nadal-Award winner whose title is a reference to Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867) read by the protagonist, Ignacio Lizarraga, during his captivity by a terrorist group. The story revolves around capitalism, Marxism, the Basque Country, nationalism, and terrorism during the Transition—the latter will also be reviewed by Cristóbal Zaragoza in *Y dios en la ultima playa* (1981), which will be discussed in the “Planeta Award” section. Fernando Vizcaíno Casas, on the other hand, was a writer considered by many close to the former regime and his stories during the period reflected those topics. He wrote six novels during the Transition: *Niñas, al salón* (1976), *De camisa vieja a chaqueta nueva* (1976), *Y al tercer año, resucitó* (1978), *Hijos de papá* (1979), *¡Viva Franco! (con perdón)* (1980), and *Las autonomías* (1981). As their titles indicate, the subjects focused on characters created by the writer reminiscing those of Francoism to elaborate satires full of social and political criticism against the democratic Transition. Most of his books were made into movies by Rafael Gil.

Manuel Vicent also depicted historical facts and political figures along with narrative creations in his most popular book of the period, *El anarquista coronado de adelfas*, that appeared in 1979. Previously, in 1976, he wrote *Hágase demócrata en diez días*; in 1981 he published *Retratos de la transición*. In *El anarquista coronado de adelfas*, fictitious characters—Pelirrojo Machaconses, for instance—coexist with real ones—Felipe González, Santiago Carrillo, or Manuel Fraga—in this part novel, part chronicle of the Transition. As Carlos Ardavín pointed out, this is a book where conversations taste like stories (*Transición* 187). Something similar did Francisco

Umbral and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, perhaps two of the best-known writers of the period, both in their novels and in their articles full of sociopolitical analysis of Spain.

Francisco Umbral was one of the most prolific writers and critics of the Transition. Among others, he wrote: *La guapa gente de derechas*, *España cañí*, *Mortal y rosa*—all three published in 1975—, *Crónicas postfranquistas*, *Mis paraísos artificiales*, *Las ninfas*—from 1976—, and, perhaps, his most famous book of the period, *A la sombra de las muchachas rojas: crónicas marcianas de la transición* (1981). As Alonso explained, this book, more than a novel, was a chronicle of the Transition from the assassination of Carrero Blanco to the failed coup on February 23, 1981 (29). Vázquez Montalbán talked, discussed, and wrote about the Transition through every possible channel—newspapers, magazines, novels, television, lectures, etc. Arguably, his best-known creation was Pepe Carvalho, the pseudo detective used as an excuse for sociopolitical analysis. In 1979 he wrote the Planeta-Award winning novel of the series, *Los mares del Sur*, a perfect combination of eroticism and societal dissection—it will be discussed in depth in “The Political Flâneur” section of this dissertation.

As I have noted, politics became a core theme in the novel of the Transition. Writers explored and criticized the nation’s most recent history, from the Republic to the Transition itself. For decades, in a single-party country, the only clear references to the past allowed were those that glorified the achievements of Francoism. After Franco’s death, and with the lifting of censorship, novels could re-tell history from different perspectives. Thus, narrators included in their stories their own and particular vision of it—regardless of quality—as a symbol of progressivism and to celebrate the new freedom

of speech. But, as stated previously, politics was not the only core subject of the process. Eroticism also became an important and interesting part of the mix.

### **1.1.2. Eroticism and Sociopolitical Criticism in the Novels of the Transition**

Arguably, the novel that most extensively combined political commentary with raw and explicit sex during the Transition years was Leopoldo Azancot's *Los amores prohibidos*, published in 1980 in the erotic collection "La sonrisa vertical." Because of the importance of Azancot's novel regarding the focus of this dissertation, it will be discussed in depth in the section entitled "Political Eroticism." Azancot also wrote, among others, *La novia judía* (1977), *Fátima, la esclava* (1979), *La noche española* (1981), and *El amante perfecto* (1982), all of them brimming with eroticism from Medieval times to present day, becoming one of the leading figures of the period's erotic fiction.

Ramón Ayerra, as explained earlier, also depicted explicit sex in his narrative. *La tibia luz de la mañana* (1980) was full of clear references to the penis and sexual intercourse (9-11). Something similar happened in the above-mentioned novel by Eduardo Mendoza *La cripta embrujada*, where there were also, following the trend, scenes of sexual nature, including the physical relationship between girls in a boarding school (116). Likewise, the idea of women as sexual objects was depicted in the story:

—¿Qué se debe?—preguntó la maestra.

—Ya sabes que puedes pagarme con tu boquita de fresa, cielo—dijo el de la fonda.

.....

— ¿Qué día vamos a hacer lo que tú y yo sabemos, Merceditas?—insistió machacón el rijoso ventero. (93)

It is the perennial and archetypal image of the *macho ibérico* marking his territory, the *droit de seigneur* not only during the Transition, but throughout history; a woman's body always seen as merchandise or a method of payment to satisfy men's desires.

José Manuel Caballero Bonald's *Toda la noche oyeron pasar pájaros*, 1981 Ateneo de Sevilla Award winner, was a mosaic of social disintegration as well as a catalog of perversions (Alonso 49)—deviations or aberrations, as some might call them. Once again, writers during the Transition utilized transgression as a norm, more than as an exception. Incest, for instance, regarded by many Western societies as the ultimate sin and *contra natura*, became, in one way or another, part of great deal of the narrative of the period. Shocking the audiences seemed to be the path to take, and breaking up with conventional terms depicted a clear sample of freedom and rebellion after repression. In Caballero Bonald's book, an English family who owns maritime business in Southern Spain and their local counterparts display all kinds of abnormal—although we could also question what we understand for normal—behavior, from incest (29) to voyeurism and nuns (245), paraphilias such as zoophilia or zoosexuality (163), man to man masturbation (42), physical (81) and sexual violence (53), prostitution (121), or lesbianism (42), all this sprinkled with social criticism of a still cloistered Spain and the political executions that take place (166).

*El frinosomo vino a Babel* (1979) was also Jesús Alviz's way of infringing upon social rules, referring to some of the same topics used by Caballero Bonald. The novel dealt with the obsessive sensual feelings between mother and son, Ana and Juan, repulsed



by the individuals because of moral convictions and society. However, desire tried to prevail (41)—rejection and desire, extreme feelings pulsating unisonously—and was calmed by the boy through masturbation (42) or with maids. Epistolar narration is interspersed in the plot, dealing with lesbianism and the possibility of a foursome—mother, son, and lesbian lovers, Vanessa and Crutch—, because, as one of the protagonist remarks, transgressors unite against order (169).

Both Goytisolo brothers, Luis and Juan, wrote several novels during the 1975-1982 period. Luis published three parts of the tetralogy *Antagonia*—that started in 1973 with *Recuento*—during the Transition: *Los verdes de mayo hasta el mar* (1976), *La cólera de Aquiles* (1979), and *Teoría del conocimiento* (1981). Juan also wrote three: *Juan sin tierra* (1975)—the novel that closed the “Alvaro Mendiola” trilogy, preceded by *Señas de identidad* (1966) and *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (1970)—, *Makbara* (1980), and *Paisajes después de la batalla* (1982). Eroticism was an important factor in Luis Goytisolo’s production. As Alonso explained, it prevailed in these novels, regardless of protagonists (52). Heterosexuality, homosexuality, love triangles, couples, and relationships were some of the topics dissected by the author. *La cólera de Aquiles*, for instance, was a literary exercise written from the perspective of a lesbian, Matilde Moret:

De las mujeres me atrae únicamente el cuerpo. O mejor: determinadas partes del cuerpo. Eso no significa, ni que decir tiene, que prefiera a los hombres: en modo alguno. He tenido amantes masculinos, en ocasiones creí amarlos; hasta llegué a estar casada. Pero el cuerpo del hombre, incluso en el mejor de los casos, cuando se trata de un cuerpo joven y

hermoso, es árido y duro, aspero al tacto, lo menos adecuado para iniciar una caricia o buscar el recogimiento. Cuanto me atrae de los hombres . . . pertenece al dominio del espíritu, no del cuerpo. Exáctamente lo contrario de lo que sucede con la mujer. (9)

For Moret, women offer physical attraction, whereas men, whose bodies lack the level of beauty of their counterparts, appeal to her spirit. Interesting female perspective written from a male view. Social and political criticism could not be avoided in the narration. Thus, the protagonist criticized Francoism and the Spain it created, stating that the dictator turned the country into a convent of which he became despotic and fussy Mother Superior (314).

Juan Goytisolo is the epitome of sociopolitical criticism. As Brad Epps stated, Oppressed by the weight of Spanish history, its dreams of Empire and divinity, Goytisolo wields words with a ferocity virtually unparalleled in Spanish literature. His texts, especially from *Señas de identidad* (1966) on, are essays on the potentially transformative relation between language and the socio-policial order. (1)

Having lived out of the country most of his adult life, since the 1950s—mainly in Paris and Marrakech, where he resides now—, Goytisolo analyzes Spain, and the Western civilization, from the distance. Declared enemy of the Francoist regime, the writer explored myth, obsessions, and the reality of the Iberian Peninsula. Countryless observer, criticized by some, praised by others, he expressed his ideas from afar, meditating about exile and its effect on the individuals who suffer it (*Juan sin Tierra* 63). As a final note on the writer, there is an interesting paragraph from *Makbara* that could

be used as an explanation to the avalanche of sex and eroticism during the Transition. The character is said to have visited night-clubs, sex shops full of sex toys, erotic massage parlors, or watched X-rated movies as a logical reaction against the harsh and monastic regime they had endured which brought along the need to know about the forbidden topics (42). It is, in brief, the idea that permeates throughout this dissertation: the (ab)use of politics/eroticism as a reaction after a prolonged repressive action.

Juan Benet, in addition to the above-mentioned *Samuel ante Samuel*, also wrote *En el estado* (1977), an interest portrait where time and reality do not follow the traditional trend or order—the narration both starts and finishes the same way, with the arrival of Mr. Hervás and Mrs. Somers to La Portada—, and whose plot requires a good dosage of what Julio Cortázar called accomplice reader.<sup>10</sup> Violence and sex become the main topics of the novel:

Dos son los puntos centrales que ocupan un espacio amplio de significado en el texto: la guerra y el sexo. De un modo que conecta con la visión de Foucault, la materialización total del poder (la guerra) y de lo puramente corpóreo (el sexo) se han asentado en el modelo social mitificado donde queda ubicado el libro: el Estado. (Navajas 330)

Raúl Guerra Garrido published, in 1979, *Copenhague no existe*, that dealt with life and individual freedom in post-Franco Spain. He criticized the new democracy and what it represented for many, with allusions to the eroticism of the period, referring to democracy as the display of buttocks on the cover of *Interviú* or Carrillo on *Cuadernos*;

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<sup>10</sup> Julio Cortázar, one of the best-known writers of what the critics labeled Latin American Literary Boom, suggested the need for an “accomplice reader”, *lector cómplice*, an active reader whose task would be to participate in the story, interpreting and assembling parts of non-linear narrations such as his own *Rayuela*. Similar ideas were proposed by Jorge Luis Borges.

in essence, cheap pornography (28). Rodrigo Rubio also wrote in 1979 *Memoria de pecado*, a review of ultracatholic Spain and the awakening of sexual adolescence from the Republic to the dictatorship years. We see the evolution of the protagonist's learning and his incursions into the land of Eros, from the moments of self-satisfaction (11), the first encounter (40), and the realization (89). Honor and morals are seen by the adult conservative characters—above all, female—as the only important treats of the individual, and sex is a sin when not intended for procreation; and, even in those cases, it must be done in moderation. The Judeo-Christian morals that prevailed in the period<sup>11</sup> were clearly depicted in the novel. Something similar, regarding sexual evolution, did Francisco López in *Dicen que Ramón Ardales ha cruzado el Rubicón* (1976) and José María Vaz Soto in *Fabián* (1977). Another author, José María Guelbenzu, also included obsessions, sexual education, evolution, and eroticism in his novels *La noche en casa* (1977) and *El río de la luna* (1981)—the former about Chéspir and his relationships, and the latter with a Fidel Euba traveling from childhood to tragedy.

Gabriel Garcia-Badell's *De rodillas al sol* (1977), a novel where death and sex played an important role, had a *quasi* Donjuan-esque ending, as characters were judged for their sexual behavior—once again, the Judeo-Christian morals and the Catholic Church still rule. Carlos Alfaro's *Crónica sobre César* (1980), XXV Sésamo Award winner, on the other hand, revolved around marginal, grotesque, and physically-deformed characters, like the protagonist, César, with two sexual organs and a third arm (9), or Alciona, the woman with the vast vagina who had endless intercourse with an elephant

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<sup>11</sup> An example of this can be seen in books like *Antes de que te cases*, written by Dr. Clavero in 1946. The manual, directed to women, addressed topics like the purpose of sex, the honeymoon, the risks of contraceptives, and the moral, legal, canonical, and biological implications of abortion.

(35). There are no sexual restrictions, whether the characters are real or phantasmagorical (15). As noted earlier, the important factor was to provoke the reader, regardless of form or way. It was transgression for transgression's sake.

Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's *Fragmentos de Apocalipsis* (1977), a novel with multiple narrators and stories, and *La isla de los jacintos cortados* (1980)—fantasy, fiction, love triangles, and the non-existence of Napoleon—both had some sexual innuendo, as so will other novels he wrote after the Transition—*Filomeno a mi pesar* (1988), for instance. However, in both José Luis Sampedro's *Octubre octubre* (1982), a metafictional story of a writer and his lost love full of transgressive behavior, and Alfonso Grosso's *El correo de Estambul* (1980), the sexual references were intended to shock the audiences. In the latter, Grosso depicted a girl, Angela Alberti, who lost her virginity to her father at 13, had her first homosexual encounter at 16, and an abortion at 17 (23).

*Las ninfas*, 1975 Nadal-Award winner, was Francisco Umbral's review of childhood and adolescence in post-war Spain, with a touch of love, eroticism, and, sometimes, onanism, as corresponds to that period of growth:

En la masturbación, al adolescente le nacía en su carne, le florecía en su cuerpo una mujer que deseaba su virilidad. . . El sitio de las grandes pasiones desencadenadas, pues, era el retrete, el sitio de amarse y odiarse a uno mismo . . . Me pasé muchos años dentro de un retrete. (20-21)

Finally, male homosexuality was a topic treated by some authors—Tusquets's view on lesbianism will be addressed in the “Women Writers” section—, including Jordi Viladrich, with *Anotaciones al diario de un homosexual comunista* (1977), and Vicente

Molina Foix, with *La comunión de los atletas* (1979). Viladrich's book "purports to be the diary of a gay Marxist who sends it to the (safely heterosexual) author in order to have the benefit of his sage commentary" (Smith, *Laws* 148). Molina Foix's story centered on a trial for rape and the reunion of old classmates in order to deal with the problems homosexual couples face (Alonso 103). Other examples can be seen in some of the novels published in "La Sonrisa Vertical"—*Mater amantísima* or *Los amores prohibidos*, to name two of the most popular ones.

As it has been noted, politics and eroticism permeated the novels of numerous writers, both critically acclaimed and virtually unknown by the general public. They were published in several collections and by different publishers. However, there was, and still is, a publishing company whose award has been granted during almost sixty years, and whose winners represent a wide variety of writers and styles: The Planeta Award.

## **1.2. The Planeta Award during the Transition Years**

The Planeta Award<sup>12</sup> has always received mixed reviews by the critics, above all because of its commercial appeal and best-seller format. However, prestigious writers such as Juan Marsé, Ramón J. Sender, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, or Nobel Prize winners Camilo José Cela and Mario Vargas Llosa, among others, have won it since 1952. Most Planeta-Award winners during the years of the Transition included in their stories the topics of politics and eroticism.

The first winner of the Transition, Mercedes Salisachs with *La gangrena* (1975), will be studied in the section on "Women Writers." Jesús Torbado won the award in 1976

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<sup>12</sup> *El Premio Planeta* is a literary award granted every year by Planeta Publishing Company on October 15 and created by José Manuel Lara in 1952. One of the biggest appeals for participants is its prize money. In 2010 the winner took home €601,000.

with *En el día de hoy*. The novel is a *ucronía*, the narration of an alternative history. The premise of the story is that the Republican army has won the Civil War. The cover paraphrases the real communiqué given by Francoist forces, signed now by President Manuel Azaña in April 1939 after their victory over fascism:

En el día de hoy, cautivo y desarmado el ejército faccioso, han alcanzado las tropas republicanas sus últimos objetivos militares. La guerra ha terminado. El presidente de la República, Azaña. Madrid, 1 de abril de 1939.

The coup d'état carried out in 1936 has failed, Franco has lost the war, and Spain, instead of a dictatorship, remains as a Republic. Something similar was done that same year by Fernando Díaz-Plaja in *El desfile de la Victoria*. This was, as Darío Villanueva noted, a significant coincidence (*Letras españolas* 48). In a best-seller type of novel, it is interesting to see the social and political implications had this happened. Franco is an exile in Cuba and Manuel Azaña is the legitimate president of the *Segunda República*. The story covers over a year of this antihistory of Spain, from April 1939 to October 1940. Political criticism of fascism, Franco, and what he represented abound in the novel (13). In this parallel universe, the problem is the opposite of reality, i.e., being a fascist, a fact that would mean incarceration (25). This is a reference to and clear criticism of the post-war actions by the Franco regime, whose opponents were executed, incarcerated, or had to leave the country to avoid one of the other two options. Some, however, formed the *maquis*, an anti-Franco guerilla.

Although in the novel there are some veiled references to sex (11), the Judeo-Christian moral standards, as noted above, still prevail (20). Sexuality is a private matter,

and public displays are not politically correct, even in a “Republican” society. Paid sex, prostitution, is depicted as a woman’s way to survive (17)—*casada, monja... o puta*, i.e., married, a nun, or a hooker were the only alternatives—, and how men take advantage of women in need. Something similar will be proposed by Lidia Falcón in *El juego de la piel* (1983). The novel ends with the German invasion of Spain and left to interpretation of what the future of the Republic may be.

A year after Torbado, 1977, marked the moment for Jorge Semprún, who won the award with *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*. It tells the story of Federico Sánchez—pseudonym and alter ego of the author—, a communist during Francoist Spain and his discrepancies with his party in the 1960s, until he leaves. More than a novel *per se*, it is a collage of memories in no chronological order from 1920s to democracy. Political references with some sexual touch are constant in the novel, including the metaphorical origin of Dolores Ibarruri, offspring of Mother Spain and her people:

Ante nuestros ojos, el padre-pueblo y la madre-España—extraño avatar de la Parejita Reproductora que provoca las irónicas iras iconoclastas de Juan-sin-Tierra-Goytisolo—se hacen el amor y al follarse con “hálito fecundo” y “alma ubérrima” engendran a Dolores.<sup>13</sup> Ésta es, por tanto, la hija del pueblo varonil y la dulce España femenina. Pero es . . . a la vez, hija y madre del pueblo. Hija y madre de sí misma. (356)

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<sup>13</sup> Reference to Dolores Ibárruri, a.k.a. *La Pasionaria*, one of the iconic figures of Spanish communism during the Second Republic, the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition.



Given the communist perspective of the story—and the author's, since the story is autobiographical<sup>14</sup>—, the references to Francoism are always negative. Even though the dictator praised himself for the salvation of Spain, having delivered it from communism, masonry, and all the world evils, the novel notes that the regime, however, never solved the problems that still hinder the cultural and economic development of the country (376). This concept is not new, and authors like, for instance, Benito Pérez Galdós, to name but one, also commented on the *atraso de España*.<sup>15</sup>

Juan Marsé won in 1978 with *La muchacha de las bragas de oro*—title that seems to pay homage to Balzac's *La muchacha de los ojos de oro* (1889) and its pleasures.<sup>16</sup> Marsé's novel is the story of Luys Forest, writer, ex-member of *Falange Española* who, under the excuse of writing his memoirs, is really trying to accommodate the past to the present—or lie about it (21)—, and his niece Mariana, a liberal young woman who is going to change the foundation of the old man's world. In any case, it is the perfect excuse to review Francoist society and the Transition, as well as the, in cases, fine line between reality and fiction. The sexual innuendo comes from the seduction that Mariana carries out. The moral problem is that Mariana is not Luys's niece, but his daughter (199), from a one-night stand with his wife's sister. This fact leads to an incestuous

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<sup>14</sup> Jorge Semprún was one of the main members of the illegal Spanish Communist Party (PCE) during Francoism—before his expulsion in 1964. After the Transition, he was appointed Minister of Culture (1988-1991).

<sup>15</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós criticized Spain and the character of its inhabitants in many of his novels. In *El caballero encantado*, for example, a man under a spell is the perfect excuse to pinpoint the flaws of his fellow countrymen.

<sup>16</sup> *La muchacha de los ojos de oro* (*La fille aux yeux d'or*) is the story of the tragic relationship between a young man and a mysterious young woman with gold eyes and the quest for pleasure and satisfaction in late nineteenth-century Paris. Eroticism, sadism, and transvestism are some of the topics depicted in the short novel.

relationship between the two of them (188), following a trend of the period, as noted above. The novel was made into a movie in 1979, directed by Vicente Aranda and starring Victoria Abril and Lautaro Murua.

In 1979 Manuel Vázquez Montalbán won the award with *Los mares del Sur*. The novel will be discussed in depth in the section on the “Political *Flanêur*.” That same year, the runner-up was Fernando Quiñones’s *Las mil noches de Hortensia Romero*. The story was the tragicomic depiction of the life of a prostitute, Hortensia, from post-Civil War Spain to the Transition—a sort of modern *Moll Flanders*. Narrated in first person and using the resource of “real” recordings by a Sociology student (74), the book radiates sex throughout its almost three hundred pages. Hortensia, a hooker by profession, uneducated but observant, analyzes, firsthand, the vices of society, that are many (227), from her privileged perspective as merchant of lust and hidden desires, the appeal of sex to individuals from all walks of life—even the ultrareligious type who uses a hair shirt as a penance (232)—, and behavior behind closed doors. In a way, something that, among others, Alejo Carpentier did in *El recurso del método* (1974), with the President’s actions with prostitutes.<sup>17</sup> Prostitution is shown as what it really is, despite its social consideration (171). The novel adds epistolar commentaries to criticize the hypocrisy of society—especially those who called themselves liberals during the Transition and are nothing but reactionary (218)—, or the pitiful state of the Andalusian region (217). Hortensia’s narrations expose Francoist Spain, especially the so-called *hunger years* (21)

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<sup>17</sup> Alejo Carpentier’s *El recurso del método* is one of the best-known *novelas del dictador*, dictator novels—together with Ramón del Valle Inclán’s *Tirano Banderas* (1926) or Miguel Ángel Asturias’s *El señor Presidente* (1946), to name but a few. The nameless president engages himself in perverse and transgressive exchanges with prostitutes, sometimes dressed as nuns, in a brothel used as a metaphor for the dictatorship—the power of sex.

and the executions (247), political corruption (204), the unpunished behavior of the rich and famous (114), the double standard of society for men and women when it comes to sex (56), or women's rights and their freedom (73).

Cristóbal Zaragoza received the award in 1981 for *Y Dios en la última playa*, a story about Basque terrorism in Spain and human conflict in the 1970s. After the protagonist's unilateral decision to murder a coronel, ETA leaders feel that his actions could jeopardize the politics of the group and seek punishment. Religion, Existentialism, and political commentary abound in the novel, with references to God and his positioning (519). Sex and erotic comments are also part of the young protagonist's life and are reflected throughout the story during his explicit sexual relationships (520).

In essence, Planeta-Award winners followed the same trend as the writers published by other companies. Eroticism and political references became a must for the narrative of the period and most of the creations wanted to review or explore the topics silenced for such a long time. However, eroticism was realized in full by a collection published by another company, Tusquets Editores. The name decided for it was "La sonrisa vertical."

### **1.3. "La sonrisa vertical." Vertical Smiles and Explicit Sex**

As Marta Altisent argues, in post-Franco's literature, eroticism became a genre in its own right (1). If there is something that best represents Altisent's statement is "La sonrisa vertical"—a reference to the look of the vulva that resembles a "vertical smile." It was, and still is, an erotic collection published by Tusquet Editores since 1977. To date, it comprises over 140 novels. It was an original idea by Spanish filmmaker Luis García Berlanga (*Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, *La escopeta nacional*) and Tusquets's editor Beatriz

de Moura. The collection resurrected the genre in Spanish language, as Pedro López Martínez stated (33). Unlike other publications, limited by moralistic or religious restraints, it is interesting to remark that there are no taboo subjects in the collection; topics such as necrophilia or incest, to name but a few, appear in several novels. Transgression is part of the norm in these novels, as noted earlier. Berlanga himself explained on the publisher's own Web site the purpose of the collection—i.e., a desire to bring back a genre lost in Spain during Francoism:

Queremos dar aire que respirar, porque el deseo es salud, y sobre todo queremos recuperar el culto a la erección, al hedonismo, a las fértiles cosechas que una buena y gozosa literatura puede ofrecernos. Y, a través de nuestros libros, a través de nuestra y vuestra sonrisa vertical, constatar que el escribir sobre lo biológicamente apetecible es algo inmanente a todos los tiempos, a todas las geografías, a todos los hombres.

The collection started with a short story by no other than Spanish Nobel Prize winner Camilo José Cela entitled *La insólita y gloriosa hazaña del cipote de Archidona* (1977). Presented in epistolary form—a resource Cela successfully used in his acclaimed *La familia de Pascual Duarte* (1942)—, it chronicles an incident that, allegedly, took place in the town of Archidona, in the province of Málaga, Spain, in 1971:

Una pareja . . . se encontraba en el cine, deleitándose con la contemplación de un filme musical. La música o las imágenes debían ser un tanto excitantes, porque a ella . . . le dio . . . el volunto de asirle a él la parte más sensible de su físico. El cateto debía ser consentidor, pues nada opuso a los vehementes deseos de su prójima. Déjola hacer complacido, sin

previsión de las consecuencias que habría de tener su regalada conducta.

(13)

As explained in a letter to Cela by fellow academician Alfonso Canales, during the course of a show in a movie theater, a girl uninhibitedly masturbated her boyfriend to the point of ejaculation. The joyful—and powerful—country boy spread his semen with such violent force that it stained some spectators sitting in the row behind them, which resulted in their arrest, court appearance, and the subsequent fine to both masturbator and masturbated (23). Cela uses the literary resource of the epistolar communiqué to mock ultrareligious Spain and the sexual power of his fellow countryman (16). The author expands the sarcastic comments writing a sonnet (17) declaring glory to Archidona and its inhabitants, and requests the building of a granite monolith to commemorate the feat (16).

Cela's book pays ironic homage to such a heroic feat by a specimen of *macho ibérico* that, as proved by the letters included in his story, was worthy of study and research by eminent doctors. The book, in humorous fashion, sings the praises of the Spaniard and, at the same time, alludes to the late Francoist regime and the Transition. Thus, when referring to the young man as a victim of female masturbatory practices, he is said to be as virgin as López Rodó (13), Francoist ex-minister, member of conservative party Alianza Popular and of Parliament during the Transition. Likewise, the denial to publish the sonnet in a magazine is linked to fear of late minister Arias Salgado (20). There are even some traces of intratextuality, when the author refers to his own book *La Enciclopedia del erotismo* (1976), previously mentioned. The story ends with poems praising the heroic deed and even adds graphic documents analyzing the trajectory of the

seminal projectile. In 1979, it was made into a movie directed by Ramón Fernández and starring Paco Algora, Josele Román, and Cela himself.

In September 1978, *La sonrisa vertical* published the first volume of the, by far, longest, most extensive erotic novel in history, *Mi vida secreta I*—whose original title was *My Secret Life* (1894)—, written by an anonymous British author of the late 1800s. The monumental English first version comprised eleven volumes, narrating, in first person, the sexual encounters of the protagonist and writer throughout the course of his life. The second Spanish volume appeared two months later, in November 1978. In 2006, it was published in one single book. Even though this narration obviously has no political references to the Transition, it is nonetheless a study of Victorian society and the behavior of the upper classes. At the same time, the sexual content of the long story follows the trend of that time in Spain. The explicit erotic descriptions start in his childhood and end with his death, including sex as a minor (76), masturbation (87), prostitution (90), incest (599), or homosexual intercourse (417). Although seemingly lacking quality in its writing, the book could be considered a *bildungsroman*, a hybrid of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Moll Flanders*, *Fanny Hill*, or even a pornographic version of *Casanova*. It is, in a certain manner, picaresque, the sexual life of a rogue, Walter, his training in sexual matters, his conquests, and his misery.

Tusquets Editores, together with the collection “La sonrisa vertical,” created in 1977 the *Premios* “La sonrisa vertical”—the collection awards—to, as declared on their Web site, give way to a literary genre previously labeled as accursed and to encourage authors to express themselves freely. The jury was presided over by Berlanga, and, over the years, the jurors have been authors such as Juan Marsé, Terenci Moix, Fernando

Fernán Gómez, or Almudena Grandes. In 2004, however, the company decided to discontinue it. The reason seemed to be the lack of critical acclaim and the fact that eroticism had become mainstream—something that, as we will see later, also happened with erotic cinema. As expressed earlier, eroticism has always been considered second-rate literature, above all by the intelligentsia and the specialized critics. Yet, the collection keeps publishing novels. It is, once again, a matter of taste and distinction, to put it in Bourdieu's terms.

The first winner of the award was declared in 1979. The novel was *La educación sentimental de la Señorita Sonia*, by Argentine exile Susana Constante; Constante's novel will be discussed in the section on "Women Writers" of this study. *Diari de bordell/Diario de burdel* (1978), by Josep Lluís Seguí, was one of the finalists of the first edition of the award. The author, a fan of Georges Bataille's, dedicated the book to him, and, at the same time, paid homage to the famous erotic writer also published in the collection: *Historia del ojo*, with a prologue by Mario Vargas Llosa, originally published in 1928, and in 1978 in "La sonrisa vertical," full of symbology and sexual initiation; *Mi madre* (1966), which appeared in "La sonrisa vertical" in 1980, where incest, manipulation, corruption, and death honor the transgression; *Madama Edwarda* (1956) and *El muerto* (1967), both published here in 1981 in one volume; and *El azul del cielo* (1957), that became part of the collection in 1985. Seguí's novel tells the story of a librarian obsessed with a girl—part naïve, in school uniform (13), part perverse, wearing no panties (33)—and with erotic literature. His life gravitates toward the hookers and

brothels of the *barrio chino*<sup>18</sup> and the library where he works, favorite places of Bataille's, as his dedication declares: "a Georges Bataille, frecuentador de bibliotecas y burdeles" (7).

In 1980, the winner was *Deu pometes té el pomer*, by Ofèlia Dracs, pseudonym of eight male writers—according to the opinion of the writers themselves exposed on Tusquets' Web site, two women were asked to write two of the erotic stories, but declined the offer. The title alludes to a popular Catalan song of the same title, referring to the ten apples of the apple-tree.<sup>19</sup> The use of Catalan language in a non-Catalonian award shows the changes that were taking place in the Spain of the Transition. Prohibited during the Franco regime for public use, after the dictator's death it was recognized as a co-official language in Catalonia. The book contains, as expected by the title, ten short stories. Different sexual topics are presented throughout the narration. "La cadella," one of the shortest stories of the book, is a dialogue, in monologue format, depicting the deals between a street hooker and a possible client, exposing the monetary transaction (13), or the variations of sex such as fellatio (14) or masturbation with the use of female hair (18). In "Xop-suei," we see the criticism of a repressed Roman Catholic society, where women must always maintain their virginity until marriage (29). However, the use of a bottle can be the female subterfuge to circumvent the problem (42), when she can no longer wait to have intercourse. Finally, the transgressive topic comes with "Una gosseta caniche," where a little poodle dog becomes the sexual partner of a marquis:

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<sup>18</sup> *Barrio chino* has a different connotation in Spain. It refers to the area of a city where brothels are situated.

<sup>19</sup> The song goes like this: *Deu pometes té el pomer /de deu una, de deu una/ Deu pometes té el pomer /de deu una ja en caigué.*



La gosseta intentava d'arribar al member amb la llengua, però la roba del batí li ho impedia . . . El marqués se fonia de gust però no podia continuar suportant les destenllades esporádiques . . . agafà la gosseta per les dues potes de darrera i la va penetrar violentament fin que el terrible grinyol de la bestiola es va fondre amb un panteix moribund. (111)

José Jara's *Mater amantissima* was one of the finalists of that edition of the award. Incest and necrophilia are the topics of this provocative novel. A boy, Álvaro, in love with his dead mother, narrates in his diary his feelings of love and lust toward her. While in the shroud, he caresses her body until his penis becomes erect (24). After his mother's burial, his sister María Antonia will take her place (61) in his discovery of sex and female anatomy. The book also adds social and religious criticism of Francoism, depicting a priest's lust for the boy (89) and their homosexual intercourse.

The 1981 winner was *Anacaona*, by Vicente Muñoz Puelles. The title refers to one of the main Jaragua cacique of Hispaniola (14). The beginning of the novel is sexually explicit, with allusions to the penis, the scrotum, and intercourse (9). But, in essence, it is a different kind of erotic narration, reminiscent of the Latin American Literary Boom. A non-linear story, told from different perspectives and times in history, that uses the conventions of the epistolary genre in some sections. The novel cover multiple topics, from a mathematician's sexual life to a voyeuristic girl (46) who writes letters to the brother she loves (24), their incestuous encounters since childhood (25), lesbianism (104), fetishism (143), revisions of history and sexuality over time and cultures—the Discovery and Columbus (18), Cleopatra (164), Africa (73), America (74), Ancient Greece (84)—, and criticism of Franco and his regime—a man who imposed his

will upon his peers, following Louis XVI's idea of *l'état c'est moi*, and punished those who opposed him (42).

Muñoz Puelles was also a finalist in 1979 with *Amor burgués*. The novel, however, was not published until 1982. It is the story of a character we know as R., a young traveler in Greece, who talks about his life and fears. A timid man obsessed with animals, and whose masturbatory practices calmed his physical restlessness (20), struggles to find his initiation in amatory arts. His impotency, with or without women (42), was his curse. In 1982, the winner was *Fritzcollage*, by Pedro Sempere. Fritz is the protagonist of this collage of sexual experiences, full of intertextuality, set in castles (15) and brothels (35), where he is trained in the art of love and perversion. The twist, however, is that Fritz is four years old, grey, a little over two feet and seventy pounds (177). He is, obviously, a dog.

A reputed writer who wrote for the collection, although after the Transition years, was Mario Vargas Llosa. The title of his story was *Elogio de la madrastra*—number 58 and published in 1988. It was an erotic novel with *quasi*-incestuous relationships between a young man and his stepmother. Once again, it goes to prove that there are no longer taboo subjects, as Altisent explained regarding the novel:

En su deliciosa y dieciochesca novela *Elogio de la madrastra* (1988), Mario Vargas Llosa exonera la denostada figura de la madrastra invirtiendo el esquema corruptor. Aquí es el niño precoz, Fonchito, el que seduce a su tía-madrastra logrando apartarla de su enamorado esposo. La exuberante, sensual y cándida doña Lucrecia cataliza los deseos eróticos de tío y sobrino para caer víctima de la sensualidad retorcida del sobrino,

rubicundo querubín de doce años en quien se funden los términos de  
seducido y seductor . . . hipóbole del poder putrefactor de la inocencia.

(202)

Here, the adult woman did not corrupt boy but the other way around—and that is the shocking nature of the story. Similar topic was depicted in *La curvatura del empeine* (1996)—also by Muñoz Puelles, where a young man has sex with both his stepsister and his mother— and, as previously stated, in *Mater amantísima*—where incest and necrophilia are an important part of the narration. Also, women writers such as Almudena Grandes, with *Las edades de Lulú*—IX “La sonrisa vertical” Award and published in 1989—, and Anna Rossetti, with *Alevosías*, “La sonrisa vertical” Award of 1991, published their books in the collection. Both female writers will be later discussed in the “Women Writers” section of this dissertation.

Erotic provocation seemed to be the goal for many of the writers of the collection. Readers wanted to be shocked, and simple erotica was not enough. Perversions flooded the narrations, in some cases as literary experiments. In others, however, it was the realization of the freedom of speech of a new democratic society where everything—or almost everything—was allowed. But, as noted earlier, if there is a novel that best condenses the topics of this study, that one is Leopoldo Azancot’s *Los amores prohibidos*, also published in “La sonrisa vertical” in 1980.

#### **1.4. Political Eroticism. Leopoldo Azancot and *Los amores prohibidos***

*Los amores prohibidos*, written by Leopoldo Azancot in just a month (Ramos 179) and published in “La sonrisa vertical” in 1980, was one of the novels that arguably best represented the mixture of politics and eroticism in the novel of the Transition to

democracy in Spain. It was considered by the critics of a lesser quality than his first novel, *La novia judía*. The author himself addressed the topic in an interview:

Lo fundamental del novelista es el conflicto dialéctico entre él y la realidad no formalizada, y estas novelas (las últimas) ofrecen ese choque dialéctico en su estado puro. Lo que ocurre entonces es que al lector le choca, necesita apoyaturas culturales, necesita que le digan “esto es arte.” Además, el tema de *Los amores prohibidos* era repelente para la mayoría de la gente dada la brutalidad con que las escenas amorosas eran tratadas. Entonces, el lector progre, culto, que no puede admitir que rechaza un libro por cuestiones morales, busca una coartada estética y dice: “estéticamente es pobre . . . *Los amores prohibidos* era la novela típica para ser rechazada por las élites.” (García Moya 41)

For the general public, art is what others, the so-called experts, regard as such. For the elite, on the other hand, the topics that do not conform with their own personal standards—derived, in most cases, from subjective and changing observations—are automatically rejected.

Police persecution for radical left-wing ideals—or terrorism, as it is labeled—, social, political, and ecclesiastical commentary, female versus male perception and perspective, heterosexual and homosexual intercourse, prostitution, transgression, or marginalization, are some of the elements that, essentially, epitomize a few of the tendencies and changes that were taking place in a country under construction. It was a society where everything was *a-changin'*—paraphrasing Bob Dylan’s song—, where provocative behavior was more the norm than the exception in a land that had been

deprived of sexual and political freedom for almost four decades—and deprivation usually leads to binging or excess, in any field.

*Los amores prohibidos* tells the story of Miguel, a young revolutionary—or political extremist—, and Esther, a beautiful prostitute. The novel starts *in medias res* with Miguel being chased down by the police. He is helped out and “granted asylum” by the woman who walks the streets for a living. There is an instant attraction between them. The beginning seems promising for a Hollywood-esque or Jamesian romantic love story, an almost pseudo reversed-role *Casablanca* full of baroque descriptions. However, from this moment on, the development of the plot will entail the collision of two radically opposed worlds, two different ways to see life and metamorphosis, the “Transition” in the broad sense of the word. Gradual versus radical change, bakhtinian dialogue as exposition and contrast of antithetical ideas, imposition versus *laissez faire*. Thus, the story becomes the perfect excuse for sheer and harsh criticism of the political situation of the moment <sup>20</sup> under the umbrella of a sexual relationship that will turn out to be more than either one of them bargained for—let us say, once again, that there are no taboo topics in the Transition.

The novel, from the very beginning, presents its protagonists as outlaws,<sup>21</sup> individuals living on the fringe of society in a country that, although *en route* to change, is still rather conservative and patriarchal. One is a hooker, the other is a political terrorist—i.e., sex and politics. They are both marginalized characters in their quest for

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<sup>20</sup> Manuel Vázquez Montalbán will also use his Carvalho series as an excuse for sociopolitical criticism.

<sup>21</sup> A similar parallel will be established in Eloy de la Iglesia’s film *El diputado* (1978), where left-wing ideals and homosexuality will be both viewed as marginal and socially punishable. *El diputado* will be analyzed in depth in the “Film” section of this dissertation.

understanding. As López Martínez argues, the narration is a good example of how to intermingle “species” that were considered marginal during Francoism, one as a result of sexual orientation and the other for political reasons (109). The male character, Miguel, presents himself—sometimes our own perception differs from reality— as a young revolutionary persecuted because of his ideas (18). As the plot develops, the liberal individual who states to pursue and fight for people’s freedom, becomes critical, intransigent, with radical and sexist attitudes. He tries to impose his ideas upon those he, allegedly, wants to save, appearing more like those he criticizes—a reactionary.

Miguel epitomizes the constant criticism of the political and social situation during the years of the Transition—particularly from left-wing sectors of the political spectrum—, as well as the *desencanto*, the disappointment that the process brought along. He argues that what the country is going through is just a masquerade, and that Spain is far from attaining actual democracy (27). This idea was a reflection of what many people felt at that time. The Transition was a troubled period, both politically and socially speaking. Unemployment, financial crisis, or terrorism were part of the Spaniards’ daily life. The transformation did not bring what many expected and that led to disillusionment, as expressed in Teresa Vilarós’s title *El mono del desencanto* (1998). Gradual change was just an opportunity for members of the former dictatorial regime to maintain control. If those individuals and their structures are not eliminated, the population will still live in a feudalistic and corrupt society (28). The feeling is not new in Spain as noted previously. Feudal society has always been part of the country. Benito Pérez Galdós’s novels address similar themes in late nineteenth century. *El caballero encantado* (1892), for instance, is a clear example of Spanish society where corruption

and favoritism toward upper classes contributed to the decadence of the *Empire*—an empire that Franco tried to resuscitate, unsuccessfully.

Criticism is not directed only toward the Francoist regime and the new democracy in the novel. Socialists and communists are also vilified. Miguel declares that there are no *rojos*—“reds”—in this new state. Everything is a lie and he charges against both right and left of the political spectrum (33-35). President Adolfo Suárez<sup>22</sup> does not escape the axe either. When he sees the picture Esther has framed and hears her opinions on the leader of the UCD,<sup>23</sup> he says Suárez just follows orders as a good *franquista* (36). In Miguel’s radical perspective, Spain is seen as a politically underdeveloped country in the hands of banks and Church (35)—ideas reflected by Galdós and many others. Because of his view, the male protagonist of the novel is considered a terrorist by the police; according to him, he is only in pursuit of freedom.

The revolutionary maintains that he defends free will and liberty. However, he will not be able to accept the fact that Esther, even though born a man—and here is the twist of the novel—, chooses to be a woman, and tricks men into thinking that she is what she is not. That, for him, can only be labeled as plain fraud (79):

[Un]transexual adopta la personalidad femenina hacia la que se siente inclinado, manteniendo el equívoco de sus órganos genitales masculinos ante un amante que se siente cada vez más incapaz de asumir este “fraude

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<sup>22</sup> Adolfo Suárez was the first President elected by voters in the new democracy—the first General Elections that took place in 1977—, although he had been previously appointed by King Juan Carlos I in 1976. One of the most relevant and controversial figures of the Transition, he remained in power until his resignation in 1981. Suárez will be studied in depth in the “Contemporary Review” section of this dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> UCD, acronym for *Unión de Centro Democrático* (1977-83), the political party led by Suárez that included right-wing and centrist factions of the political spectrum.

femenino,” necesitando determinar si su pareja es heterosexual u homosexual. (Altisent 344)

Esther’s behavior and appearance—a transsexual, a transvestite rather— could be regarded as a metaphor for a democratic Spain in transition: someone that is not what it appears to be, but something else going through changes. Democracy is, therefore, not real in Spain yet; the transformation is only an illusion, not a reality. Things have not changed in this *España en transición*. The discovery of reality is also the beginning of the questioning. By the end of the novel, Miguel, the same as the country he criticizes, begins his own metamorphosis, and becomes a transvestite himself, wearing a baby-blue dress (173-74), a wig, heels, bracelets, and lipstick.

Esther—although her birth name is Javier—represents a different point of view, with a more positive perception of the gradual democratic changes in the nation. She thinks change is always possible and for the better. She is an example—born a man, she is now a woman. Her parents and Francoist society of her childhood never accepted him as female; this type of sexual orientation was a crime during Franco’s Spain.<sup>24</sup> This obsession against homosexuality during Francoism betrayed, according to Gema Pérez-Sánchez,

the two key anxieties of the dictatorship. On the one hand, male homosexuality literalized the underlying sexual potential at the heart of fascism’s glorification of male camaraderie. On the other hand,

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<sup>24</sup> The *Ley de peligrosidad y rehabilitación social*—a law regarding social danger and the rehabilitation of individuals—included homosexuals between 1970 and 79. Previously, the *Ley de vagos y maleantes*—similar to the anti-loafing law that included vagrants, idlers, thugs, and crooks—had been modified in 1954 to also include homosexuality. If convicted, the sentence could entail up to five years in prison.



Francoism's particular fixation with containing male homosexuality suggests the regime perceived its own position within the Western international community as one of marginality and deviance. (13)

Despite Esther's setbacks, change for her was just a matter of patience. She epitomizes Mother Nation, the forgiving country in transition, somewhat naïve, who adores those who brought the new democratic state. Hence, she is in love with Adolfo Suárez—that was the case of many women of that time—, and has a picture of him in a silver frame (36). But she also values his political importance in the Transition and the achievement of democracy (36). That, of course, was not the perception of her partner, and of some sectors of Spain, who considered that Suárez, Fraga, and others, were the cubs of Francoist society trying to perpetuate the former regime and avoid change.

And regarding change, when Esther finds out how Miguel feels about the fact that she is only a female *in transition*—just as the nation—, she is willing to have a sex-change operation for him and become a complete woman, for love (80). But, ironically, “liberal” Miguel, the male archetype, cannot forget Esther's ambivalence—the disillusionment felt in the country with the Transition. She, the perennial mother, however, forgives him because she is a woman (94). Esther, unlike Miguel, was in peace with herself—Mother nation happy with the moderate changes—, and had learned to love what and who she is, until the male radical behavior came and upset the *status quo* with the need for abrupt transformation and imposition (164-65).

Criticism in the novel is not only geared toward political institutions. Social commentary is as abundant as the political references. Thus, Police and Church are also attacked in a direct manner. We must remember that Spain has been, except during the

short period of the Second Republic, a Catholic nation for centuries, a confessional state since Recaredo and the *Reconquista*. Separation of Church and state did not occur until 1978, with the new constitution that declared Spain aconfessional. But, if the Institution is criticized in the story as an overimposing entity that controls the state and the lives of its subjects, priests are vilified as its hypocritical earthly representatives. The idea was shared by many, even today, when news about corruption and sexual innuendo plague the media. Esther—in this case, in her role as the marginalized gay man—hates them (30). The reason is that her first homosexual experience was condemned by the priest to whom she turned for help—although he, morbidly, enjoyed her narration. Here is the clear criticism:

Pues has de saber que sus ojos refulgían, allá en el fondo oscuro del confesionario, mientras yo le daba cuenta de lo ocurrido, cambiando sin cesar de postura: nervioso, inquieto. Y que cuando acabé de hablar, arrebolada y hundida en la vergüenza, clavó sus dedos en mis hombros, me zarandó, amenazándome con la muerte, con la corrupción, y jurando que daría cuenta de mi pecado a mi padre y a mi madre, y que me pondría como ejemplo de maldad y vicio a todos los niños que fueran a confesarse. (32-33)

Frustration against Church led to denial of divinity. This moment marks the beginning of her career as a prostitute. Revenge against imposition, against those who tried to oppress her and her own free will, made her who she is now (33).

Police are also targeted from the very beginning of the narration. As in the so-called “dictator novels,” that depict the nature of authoritarian regimes throughout

Hispanic countries, police officers are portrayed as the henchmen of the corrupt state. In the first few pages of the novel, when Miguel has escaped, the detective in charge of the chase tells one of the uniformed policemen to catch him alive, “if they can” (11). Life of those opposed to the dictatorial regime is worth nothing. Later, a police communiqué shown on television regarding Miguel is used as a vehicle to criticize the manipulation of the media by those in power (60).

Along with political and social commentary, sexual references permeate the novel, proving, once again, the tendency to depict the topic in the media during the Transition. From the very beginning, we see traces of subtle eroticism. As they first arrive in the apartment, she changes into a gauze robe and briefly displays one of her breasts (23-24). But, as the novel progresses, sex leaves its subtlety to become more explicit. Esther, in a flashback, narrates her first physical encounter—at this point the reader does not know yet that she was a he— with a classmate and the reason why she hated priests (32).

The discovery of Esther’s identity—i.e., her penis—opens a new avenue for the narration of erotic exchanges (118-19). Sex for money is also depicted in the novel: prostitution and transgression—men who know she is also a man. Her deals with the clients are explained several times during the story. Men come and go to her house, recommended by other clients, or meet her on the streets. We witness different situations and how she refuses penetration with the excuse of “being sick” (44)—the Catholic, or moralistic, reference to the female period as illness, not as a natural process.

The story also portrays different kinds of sexual deviations. Some men enjoy the bloody aspect of sex with a woman who has the period (44). There is also violence, when

they discover she is not a lady (46-48), mentioning that such things did not happen when the *caudillo* was alive (48)—Franco is always a reference. Some clients like being the female during intercourse and being beaten by the prostitute. At this point, we could question whether the author tries to prove that, consciously or not, we are all bisexual individuals, and the only reason that this does not develop is because of social impositions. Catholic morals are also present during physical exchanges. For instance, a young client to whom she offers anal penetration because of her period will turn her down stating that a man must never enter a woman in that fashion (71). Sin and consequences still rule and prevail in the new democratic Spain.

The only heterosexual encounter in the novel takes place between Miguel and the building superintendent's wife, who blackmails him and forces him to have sex with her. The intercourse is explicitly narrated (137-38). However, even though the short episode could fall into the category of what some sectors of society would consider as the norm—i.e., sex between a man and a woman—, the fact that the character is extorted, changes the perspective of what happened and taints it, keeping it in line with the rest of the story where provocation is more a trend than an exception.

The end of the novel is traumatic but necessary for the catharsis and the restoration of the order, the *status quo* lost with Miguel's arrival and the imposition of his radical and, in a way, reactionary male ideas. Esther sees Miguel dressed as a woman and rapes him (183). Now, roles have been reversed. The nation punished the psychological aggression. The prostitute, humiliated, leaves and brings the police with her. She asked them not to hurt him, but they do anyway—once again, the criticism of law enforcement (186). Esther, in shock when they take him away, plays music by Mozart—*Così fan tutte*

(190-91). At this point, we witness the return to balance (195), after the *imbalance* that the presence of the radical male figure had created.

Leopoldo Azancot's *Los amores prohibidos* is a clear example of the narrative tendencies during the Transition to democracy in Spain—with all its extreme situations. Political and sexual references abound in the novel; politics and social criticism together with transgressive behavior, Existentialism, free will, and the quest for our own identity. Transvestism as the metaphor for a country under construction that has to find its own way, gradually, without external imposition—which would only lead to internal failure.

In addition to the use of homosexuality and political extremists as a way to analyze and criticize society, the depiction of a pseudo detective was also a popular literary resource to approach the study of the changes that were taking place in the nation. Even though some have used the technique in different forms of narrative—e.g., *El misterio de la cripta embrujada*—, one of the best examples of this genre was Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and his character Pepe Carvalho.

### **1.5. The Political Flaneur. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's *Los mares del Sur*. Pseudo Detective Fiction as an Excuse for Sociopolitical Criticism**

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán is, as mentioned earlier, one of the best-known writers of the Spanish Transition to democracy. He wrote not only novels, but essays, articles, and studies on the topic. Arguably, one of his most famous characters is Pepe Carvalho. The Carvalho series has been labeled by some critics as *noire*, *novela negra*, or hard-boiled detective fiction. But the cases of the Galician sleuth—an outsider in

Barcelona, which allows what Victor Shklovsky has called estrangement<sup>25</sup>—go beyond such nomenclature, that just constrains it and categorizes it, to become firsthand social, cultural, and political chronicles of the late twentieth-century Spain. The detective investigation is the perfect excuse to walk the readers through the changing city, epitome of the new democratic country, and turn them into first-row spectators of the reality of the Transition. The investigator, and, therefore, his readers, become *flâneurs*—the sidewalk botanist Charles Baudelaire mentioned and whose typology was developed by Walter Benjamin—to break down urban reality at its best, in all its glory, or its worst, in all its misery, depending on the perception or the side of the reality where you find yourself. Seasoning the plot with traces of literary criticism—reproducing *Don Quixote*'s book-burning scenes—, sexual innuendo, and culinary theories, the book becomes an educational-sensorial tour through Spain's most recent history, the Transition, under the umbrella of *pseudo police* investigation.

Detective fiction—*noire*, hard-boiled detective, or mystery fiction, as it is also known—has always been well received by general audiences. However, critics, almost generally, have regarded it as second-rate literature, subliterature, or subgenre. The perception is, obviously, a matter of taste. As Pierre Bourdieu states, “systems of domination find expression in virtually all areas of cultural practice, including such things as preferences in dress, sports, food, music, literature, art, and so on . . .” (*Field* 2). The powers that be, directly or indirectly, impose upon individuals and dictate what the right trends are—or what is considered politically correct. Vázquez Montalbán, a

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<sup>25</sup> Estrangement—also known as defamiliarization or *ostranenie* in Russian—is a concept coined by Victor Shklovsky that refers to the idea of seeing familiar things in an unfamiliar way to avoid automatization. For a better understanding of the term see: Shklovskij, Viktor. “Art as Technique.” *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1998.

critic himself, argues in *Los mares del Sur* (1979) that *novela negra* is a subgenre that happens to be used by great writers, such as Chandler, Hammett, MacDonald, or Chester Himes (Aranda 71). Nonetheless, regardless of the critical standpoint, as Susana Bayó Belenguer writes, “Francisco Umbral noted that Vázquez Montalbán’s decision to adopt this style both helped to establish it as a valid literary form and gave it greater substance, a point supported by Victor Claudín, who praised him as the Spanish author who had brought the highest literariness to the genre” (22).

Detective fiction as a genre appears with American writer Edgar Allan Poe, although some critics find previous examples in different moments in history, including the Bible.<sup>26</sup> David Van Leer, in the “Introduction” to *Edgar Allan Poe. Selected Tales* (1998), argues that: “Although Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* employ some of the suspense techniques associated with contemporary mysteries, Poe wrote the first stories to achieve popularity primarily for their ingenious solutions to puzzles” (xix). Stephen Peithman, writing in reference to the origin of Poe’s character, says that the author “seems to have drawn Dupin’s character partly from Voltaire’s *Zadig*” (195).<sup>27</sup> *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, published in 1841, is, for many, the first mystery or detective fiction in literature. Its protagonist, Auguste Dupin, will be, later on, the model for characters such as Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, who first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). Later, in 1920, Agatha Christie created Hercule Poirot, in her novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*; ten years later, Miss Marple would

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<sup>26</sup> Some critics see in traditional Hebrew tales about Prophet Daniel a certain origin for this type of narration.

<sup>27</sup> *Zadig* is a character created by Voltaire in his novel *Zadig, ou La Destinée* (1747).

come to life in *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930). The defining element of Poe's mystery narrative, and, in the same fashion, British mystery novels, is the development of a case solved by the protagonist at the end of the story—what is known as data hidden in hyperbaton—, showing observation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills at the level of any prestigious scientist.

Mystery and its resolution are, therefore, the main part of the story; it is what we popularly know as *whodunit*. This form of presentation changes with the appearance of the hard-boiled crime fiction,<sup>28</sup> published, originally, in pulp magazines.<sup>29</sup> In Spanish, however, these novels are called *novela negra*. As Vázquez Montalbán argues, the term originates in the invention of a French designer who assigned that color to Gallimard<sup>30</sup> crime fiction series (Aranda 71). Other critics consider that the name comes from the stories published in the American magazine *The Black Mask*,<sup>31</sup> as well as because of the sordid environment and rough neighborhoods where they take place. In those stories, the detective is not the uber-intelligent character. He is nothing but a human being, with his vices and virtues—more the former than the latter—, and the solving of the mystery is no longer the main part of the narration. These stories, at the same time, show features closer to Realism or Naturalism than to detective fiction, criticizing society and its corrupt side. Authors such as Dashiell Hammett, with his detective Sam Spade from *The Maltese Falcon* (1930); Raymond Chandler, creator of Philip Marlowe, who first appeared in

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<sup>28</sup> They are so known due to the toughness and character of its protagonists.

<sup>29</sup> Unexpensive magazines from the 1920s and 1930s in the US, with tough characters who strolled around urban spaces and made in cheap pulp paper, unlike glossies or slicks, made of better quality and more familiar themes.

<sup>30</sup> Gallimard, an independent French publishing company that started in 1911.

<sup>31</sup> One of the first pulp magazines of the 1920s.



1939 in *The Big Sleep*; Chester Himes's Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger, whose first case takes place in *For Love of Imabelle* (1957); or John MacDonald, the father of Travis McGee in *The Deep Blue Good-by* (1964), are some of the best known.

Spanish detective fiction is more influenced by the American School than by the British. Bayó Belenguer argues that:

Although Vázquez Montalbán himself denied that he was (merely) writing detective fiction, he acknowledged their relationship to American “hard-boiled” detective fiction, among whose defining characteristics Renée Craig-Orders notes “a stark social realism and a certain level of social criticism or protest.” (“Passing” 21)

The autor himself declares in his article “No escribo novelas negras” that he rejects the term “policíaco” for his Carvalho series (27). As Mario Santana states, “these novels are not really about detection” (537). His stories, therefore, are not merely detective fiction. He adds to the genre not only a deeper and more detailed study of the city and its society, but also of the political situation of the country, with a certain degree of irony, something that will become the protagonist’s trademark, together with his questioning of life and society. We are therefore in the presence of the *flâneur*, the chronicler, and his cases are “an investigative chronicle, whose raconteur is a detective ideally placed to narrate it” (Bayó Belenguer, “Passing” 23). The sleuth is the thread, the privileged reporter of the country’s reality, and, thus, the label “detective” is something merely circumstantial: “Carvalho repeatedly transgresses cultural and literary boundaries, through his problematic adherence or rejection of the codes of the hard-boiled detective” (Young 314). According to José Colmeiro, the author proposes a novel-

chronicle that critically explores the reality that surrounds it, but far from the naivety of post-Civil War Social Realism (161-63).

Pepe Carvalho, who first appeared in *Yo maté a Kennedy* in 1972, just three years before the beginning of the Transition, or his alter ego, Vázquez Montalbán, review and analyze Spain—or “España,” depending of the point of view of the characters—of late Francoism and the Transition. Critical analysis of societal reality is something common in Spanish-speaking *pseudo* detective fiction, as Ricardo Castells argues.<sup>32</sup> *Los mares del Sur* is the fourth novel of the series and the one that helped establish the author as a novelist, both from the perspective of readers and critics, when he was awarded the Planeta Award in 1979 and the *Prix International de Littérature Policière* in 1981. As Bayó Belenguer mentions, “The novel was in fact to pass the test of time and a later consensus was to place it among the best novels of the Series, to see it as making highly significant contribution to the Spanish Literature of the 1970s and 1980s” (“Passing” 28-29).

To get us situated, it is necessary to relay, although briefly, the plot of this story, the perfect excuse for its author to make incursions into the city. The book is narrated in third person, with an omniscient narrator and a main character who expose, mostly, the author’s existential, political, culinary, and literary theories. *Los mares del Sur* develops

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<sup>32</sup> Two good examples of Latin American Pseudo Detective Fiction writers are Cuban Leonardo Padura and Puertorrican Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, both deconstructing their cities and countries through their investigators. Just as his Catalonian counterpart, Leonardo Padura uses his character Mario Conde—who first appeared in *Pasado Perfecto* (1991), a reference to former Banesto Bank President, now a *guante blanco* or white collar thief—to, as Ricardo Castells argues, carry out the study of Cuba “a partir de 1990, el año en el que comienza el periodo especial en tiempos de paz” (23). Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá creates his character Manolo Pérez Cáceres, Don Manolo or simply Manolo, in *Sol de medianoche* (1995), followed by *Mujer con sombrero panamá* (2005), both a sociopolitical analysis of San Juan under the umbrella of the detective fiction. 2010 Nobel-Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa also tried his hand at the genre with *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986).

the attempt of the search for the self and own identity versus social image, broken dreams—same as in Leonardo Padura—, and escape from reality. A wealthy building contractor and businessman disappears leaving no trace, except for a note that reads “*piú nessuno mi porterá nel sud*”—the author himself translates it as *ya nadie me llevará al sur*, nobody will take me to the South now—, a literary reference to Salvatore Quasimodo and his poem *Lamento per Il Sud*, which is a sample of the constant intertextuality<sup>33</sup> in the novel. The detective is hired to find the industrialist. Yet, what he encounters is a plot of urban and land development speculation in the poorest section of the city; for this reason, the sleuth will have to travel from the wealthy suburbs to the slums and the outskirts, with all their misery—another excuse to analyze the city. Bayó Belenguer argues that “the novel explores the prison of social conformity, whether of the poor or the rich in a three-dimensional picture of time” (“Passing” 28).

Considering what was exposed earlier, we see that both the social and political aspects of the series are very relevant as chronicles of Spain’s reality in a very specific moment in time: the Transition. Many authors and critics have echoed this fact. As Bayó Belenguer explains, “The series is, above all, and despite its frequently lighthearted approach, often an uncomfortable mirror for those who gaze into it” (“Social Critique”

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<sup>33</sup> As Colmeiro argues: “El fenómeno de la intertextualidad, práctica presente en toda la obra poética y narrativa de Vázquez Montalbán, es particularmente ubicuo en la serie Carvalho, constituida como un gran palimpsesto” (167). Carvalho, as mentioned earlier, has the bad habit of burning books, reviewing those about to go up in flames: “Como ciclo que se cierra sobre sí mismo, la desconfianza en la literatura lleva a Carvalho a pasar por el fuego aquel milagro arrebatado a los dioses, ‘el fuego de la cultura’” (171). His piromany is commented by Bayó Belenguer:

In a nod to Cervantes who, in the first part of *El Quijote*, thinks of burning his *Galatea* while critically remarking on it, Vázquez Montalbán has no qualms about allowing Carvalho to burn *Tatuaje*... The detective burns other books from time to time to the accompaniment of a dissection of theories of literature and culture... The author exemplifies Bakhtin’s belief that the novel is not a rarefied artifact, a philosophical abstraction from the vulgar, but a work of art which resonates with the language of everyday life. (“Passing” 25)

302). *Los mares del Sur*, clearly, shows class struggle, the importance of money, wealth, and power at the expense of the underprivileged. Carrying on with the social focus of post-Franco Spain, Rob Rix states that “Without always describing, explaining or analyzing explicitly the events of the transition, the novels examined its features and issues through the interplay of individual lives with institutional and socio-economic realities” (137).

The novel opens showing one of the worst treats of the social situation of the Transition, which will be very well depicted in the films of the period: the so-called petty theft or juvenile-delinquent cinema done by, for instance, Eloy de la Iglesia—*Miedo a salir de noche* (1980) and *El pico* (1980)—or José Antonio de la Loma—*Perros callejeros* (1977). Juvenile delinquency and grand theft auto became a problem for the society of the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the novel, along with traces of orality—*chachi, demasiado* (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 7)—, a group of young men steal and crash a car which will be, not only fun to drive, but also great to have sex in it (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 8)—the first sexual reference of the novel. Social criticism continues with one of Carvalho’s comments, stating that private detectives are the moralistic thermometers in a rotten society (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 13).

Politics is a very important topic for Vázquez Montalbán. Carvalho himself shares ideals and life experiences with the author. Thus, for instance, we know that the Catalan writer:

In 1958 joined the Popular Liberation Front (FLP), one of the most radical university groups. The following year...he became responsible for its reorganization in Madrid. In 1961 he moved to the Unified Socialist Party

of Cataluña, a union of socialist and communists... A protest against the suppression of the miners' strike in Asturias earned him a six-year prison sentence... (Bayó Belenguer, "Passing" 20)

Throughout the book, political references are constant, and the novel itself becomes a chronicle of the Spain of that year, 1979, which, for some, as we have mentioned earlier, marks the end of the Transition process. The new democratic state is viewed—as critics like Teresa Vilarós declare—in a rather negative way, with *desencanto*, due to the victims democracy had left (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 14). The novel alludes to Franco's dictatorship, its decline (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 59), Marxism (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 68), Jordi Pujól (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 79), Comisiones Obreras (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 117), Solé Tura (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 118), Basque terrorist organization ETA (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 141), *Pactos de la Moncloa* (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 159), right-wing party Fuerza Nueva (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 182), among others, as a reflection of the sociopolitical situation of the Iberian Peninsula in the late twentieth century.

The detective plot is, as mentioned earlier, the perfect excuse for the author to grant himself *carte blanche* in his strolls around a city—or a country—that he knows so well, and which, at the end of the reading, thanks to his ability as urban chronicler, so will we. The city, as Colmeiro argues, is memory's stakeholder, and Barcelona becomes here both real and metaphorical space, built in memory and desire (189), a place that becomes alive and everchanging and that evolves with its inhabitants (Aranda 223-25). In any city, bars, restaurants, and cuisine play an important role. In the series they become an intrinsic aspect of culture and society. Vázquez Montalbán's culinary speeches are

recipes worthy of the most exquisite gourmet. Here is an example, narrating the art of cooking egg plant with shrimp:

Puso en una sartén aceite y un ajo que sofrió hasta casi el tueste. Pasó en el mismo aceite unas cabezas de gambas mientras descascarillaba las colas y cortaba dados de jamón. Retiró las cabezas de gambas y las puso a hervir en un caldo corto mientras desalaba las berenjenas con agua y las secaba con un trapo . . . (Aranda 99)

The least important part of this pseudo detective fiction is, as it was started by the American school, the resolution of the mystery. Much more relevant is the analysis of places and characters in their natural habitat—the city—and their behaviors.

Heteroglossia is clearly shown through the use of the voices of different characters and spaces, which makes it a real polyphonic novel. The main Character—with a capital C—of both the novel and the series is, as remarked, Pepe Carvalho. Even though Galician-born, this former communist-party member—which granted him an “invitation” to Franco’s prison system, the same as his creator—resides in Barcelona. From there, he strolls around neighborhoods, studies characters and classes, reviews the current political situation, and, at the same time, becomes a literary critic—with the quixotean habit of burning bad books—and a culinary gourmet.<sup>34</sup>

The rest of the characters roaming around the city become relevant as guides to drive the protagonist toward the solving of the case, as well as, obviously, to show human types and particular individuals with their own jargon and ways of life—heteroglossia again. Besides the mandatory sidekick, Biscuter—a real *Lazarillo* he met in jail—, and

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<sup>34</sup> Vázquez Montalbán wrote his own culinary book entitled *Contra los gourmets* (2005).

the constant appearance of upper classes, working men, literary critics (Sergio Beser, one of the best critics of *La Regenta*), thugs, etc., the character that reflects the Existentialism, or the determinism exposed by Naturalist writers, as well as the transgression, is Carvalho's part-time significant other, Charo, a prostitute by profession who refuses to retire—if she does, other men in society will take advantage of her, for free (Aranda 203). It is interesting to note that in both novels studied in depth in this research, the female counterpart is a prostitute. Once again, it seems like the writers of the Transition always tried to be provocative—at least, from a male perspective—and make relationships reside on the fringe of society, thus breaking conservative and ultracatholic rules. Taking that into account, sexual references are a must in the novel (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 28).

Vázquez Montalbán also transgresses the rules when he has sex with the young daughter of the family who hired him, Yésica (Vázquez Montalbán, *Mares* 76). But the Catalan author, and many others—*Interviú*, for instance—, have been criticized, especially from parts of the female sector and feminists as a whole, for their *macho* approach to eroticism and sexuality and the lack of respect for women (Marí, “Desnudos” 140). However, Montalbán justified the elements of sex and female nudity as a key to the liberalization and democratization process that was taking place in the country during the period (Marí, “Desnudos” 135).

Throughout these pages I have exposed the importance of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's work as chronicler of the social, political, sexual, and cultural reality of the Transition in *Los mares del Sur*, and, in most cases, through the complete Carvalho series, the real *flâneur* disguised as a private eye. Its analysis is, at the same time, the review of, not only *novela negra*, but also Spanish society, highlighting events and

changes, characters, and classes of a very specific period. It is the detective story as an excuse for urban chronicle. The novel amalgamates Realism, Naturalism, and Existencialism together with a sociological study; political, literary, sexual, and culinary reviews combined with mystery. A real mirror of history that, although apparently simple, overwhelms the readers with its richness, and which cannot be labeled simply as “noire.”

This dissertation has, thus far, studied the works written by male writers only. In order to appropriately analyze the narrative during the period, avoiding, at the same time, an unidimensional view and gender bias, I consider necessary, at this point, to approach the novels created by female writers that, although in lesser number, are as important for this study as those published by their male counterparts.

#### **1.6. Women Writers. Sex and Politics from the Female Perspective. Almudena Grandes and Post-Transition Eroticism**

Politics and eroticism have traditionally been “men’s turf”—more even in the case of the latter. Spanish women during the Francoist regime were raised to be mothers and *faithful* wives, educated in the *Sección Femenina*<sup>35</sup> within this ultracatholic and conservative country. That had not always been the case, as María Asunción Gómez argues:

Las guerras, y muy especialmente las guerras civiles, han servido como catalizador del surgimiento o expansión de movimientos feministas, y del cambio en los papeles que la mujer se ve llamada a desempeñar en la

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<sup>35</sup> The *Sección Femenina*—Women’s Section (1934-1977)—was a faction of *Falange* established to indoctrinate women in their role in a patriarchal, conservative, and ultracatholic society, as mothers and wives, at the service of men.



sociedad. Durante la Guerra Civil española se desencadenaron radicales cambios sociales que habrían podido afectar el destino de muchas mujeres españolas si la victoria de la derecha reaccionaria no lo hubiese impedido. (267)

The former regime, once again, shaped individuals, men and women, to fulfill its imperial dreams of purity and greatness, deleting any trace of transgression—in their view, of course. Therefore, sex was only meant for reproduction, not to be talked, written or read about, especially by the female counterpart—there was always a double standard. Women’s sexuality was not important since intercourse was only relevant until men’s ejaculation. Orgasm was just a masculine noun—*el orgasmo*. The Transition started to change the way women experienced their own sexuality, and they became not only givers but also receptors. Free love was here to stay and women wanted not only to feel it, but also to talk about it. Figures such as Shere Hite<sup>36</sup> talked about women’s orgasms through clitoral stimuli. The revolution was here.

Regarding narrative, the question of whether or not there is a so-called “women’s literature” (Nieva de la Paz 124) became a constant subject for women writers, in magazines, lectures, interviews, and debates. As Paul Julian Smith argued in 1989, “the canon of Hispanic texts is overwhelmingly masculine in orientation” (*Body* 205). Thus, according to Carmen Riera, there was a need to create a language connected to the female body, not influenced by words from a literature generated by men (Nieva de la Paz 124). An example could be Esther Tusquets. As the author herself expressed, her books are

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<sup>36</sup> Shere Hite is one of the best known sex educators since the 1970s. A feminist herself, her studies have centered primarily on women’s sexuality.

easily identified as written by a woman (Claudín 1980:50, qtd. in Nieva de la Paz 124). But, in other instances, some critics seem unhappy with the fact that “women’s literature” is labeled as such; they feel it is not considered literature but merely “women’s” literature, something abnormal (Monleón 198). In essence, their complaint is that female writers are all included in the same box, under the same label, because of a classification determined by gender, no matter how diverse they may be.

Regardless of labels, women of the period were part of the different cultural trends of the moment (Nieva de la Paz 125) in their own right. An example was erotic literature. As reviewed earlier, “La sonrisa vertical” is the ultimate symbol of the genre in Spain. Five women have won the award to date, but only one of them during the years of the Transition to democracy: Susana Constante, in 1979, with *La educación sentimental de la señorita Sonia*. The other winners have been Mercedes Abad (1986), with *Ligeros libertinajes sabáticos*; Almudena Grandes (1989), with *Las edades de Lulú*; Ana Rosetti (1991), with *Alevosías*; Irene González Frei (1995), with *Tu nombre escrito en el agua*; and Mayra Montero (2000), with *Púrpura profundo*. Many others—Anne Cumming, Jean de Berg, Marguerite Duras, etc.—have seen their novels published in the collection.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps, the best known is the author of the book that, eventually, made Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger famous in theaters around the world: Elizabeth McNeill, the literary mother of *9 ½ Weeks*, published in the collection right at the end of the Transition, in 1982. This fact shows that women are also capable of talking and writing about sex, and that the Transition opened new avenues of expression that would have been impossible for them just a few years earlier.

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<sup>37</sup> For further reading, go to [www.tusquetseditores.com/coleccion/la-sonrisa-vertical](http://www.tusquetseditores.com/coleccion/la-sonrisa-vertical)

*La educación sentimental de la Señorita Sonia* is Constante's first novel. It is a story of bucolic passion and unrequited love in what seems to be nineteenth-century Russia—although it is never stated. Eroticism surrounds the novel from the very beginning, with explicit explanation of love-making and a fellatio on a train (24-25). A flashback is the resource for the first depiction of the transgression, telling Susana's life with innuendo of incestuous relationship between the girl and her father (40). Susana, Captain Alexei, the little man known as Nicolás, fifteen-year-old abbé Sebastián, and Countess Luisa are the protagonists. Eroticism and sex on a train is its beginning. Pleasure within a villa is next. But explicit sex develops, as mentioned, into unrequited love. All the characters are enamored with someone who does not reciprocate their feelings. There is passion and more references to incestuous relationships (68). The countess, who had been introduced as the abbé's aunt, reveals that she is, actually, his mother, the person *he* loves. The abbé will go back to the seminary, the countess will turn down the Captain's marriage proposal, and Eden will remain the same.

Esther Tusquets, coincidentally, the sister of Óscar Tusquets, owner of Tusquets Editores—as mentioned earlier, the publisher of “La sonrisa vertical”—, and the director of Editorial Lumen herself, is probably, in her generation of women writers, its best contemporary Spanish representative (Nieva de la Paz 130). She published a trilogy between 1978 and 1980: *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978), *El amor es un juego solitario* (1979), and *Varada tras el último naufragio* (1980); “a trilogy in which bisexuality and lesbianism are central preoccupations” (Jordan 215).

*El mismo mar de todos los veranos* won the Ciudad de Barcelona Award in 1979 and some critics consider it an amoral novel or, as its back cover declares, the first one

written on the fringe of the Judeo-Christian morals that still rule our society. It is a story of a bourgeois Catalan woman in need of love in a world where, even though it is hers, she is an outsider. It is a return to childhood and initiation, a revision of class prejudices and appearances, and how the individual succumbs under social pressure. It is criticism of the bourgeois society of Barcelona, the upper classes, and racism, where being blonde and white is still the canon (23). No chapters, no dialogues, a *quasi* stream of consciousness-like novel with a similar style to Goytisolo's and full of intertextuality—*Tristán e Isolda*, *Teseo y Ariadna*, or *Rey Arturo*, among others. It is also an intense novel of search for inner desires, full of subtle lesbian eroticism between an older woman and a girl (154-55).

Following the trend of the moment, the novel also depicts political references and reviews the importance of being part of the winners of the Civil War (12), something very important in post-war Spain, where fear and envy could send any individual to jail, even if accused of something fictitious—it did not need to be proved. Criticism of the last and repressive years of the Franco regime can also be noted, referencing the rebellion of university students and the violent behavior of police, always trying to subdue any attempt of uprising against the state machinery (61). The second novel, *El amor es un juego solitario*, also deals with loneliness and desires. It is the story of a triangle of impossible love, two adolescents and a mature woman, initiation, and new sensations. *Varada tras el último naufragio* insists on the same topics, with two couples in their forties, the need of affection and happiness, unrequited love, infidelity, social pressure, frustration in life, and the search for youth, along with subtle eroticism.

Ana Rosetti, as mentioned earlier, won with *Alevosías* the 1991 “La sonrisa vertical” Award. This novel will not be discussed here, since it was published almost ten years after the Transition. However, it goes to prove that the changes Spain underwent helped women become more independent and be able to talk and write about topics considered impossible earlier. But, many years before that story, Rosetti was regarded as one of the best contemporary poets in Spain, with a different type of erotic poetry that makes the male and female poles of seduction reversible, building a strong poetic voice that is difficult to classify within the men’s code of sexuality (Ferradáns 184). Her poetry has sometimes been erroneously read, which has led, in many cases, to clichés (*Ordenación* 10). The poet published in 1980 *Los devaneos de Erato*—in reference to muse Erato and Eratism.<sup>38</sup> It is comprised by twenty-seven poems that narrate things she knows (*Ordenación* 11), experiences and anecdotes, a mixture of fantasy and reality, and that are full of parody and irony (*Ordenación* 18).

The book starts with “Paris,” where we are introduced to the first sexual references (*Ordenación* 49). In “Advertencias de abuela a Carlota y Ana,” we see an allusion to homosexual relationships between sisters:

Y en el juego, la introducida mano,  
desabrochando escotes,  
indaga, sin malicia, en la lisa  
axila fraternal  
el cosquilleo  
¡Oh hermanas!, no en vano se retiran

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<sup>38</sup> Erato, the lovely, a goddess in Greek mythology, was the muse of erotic poetry.

de la alcoba los floreros.

.....

Muy pronto, el diablo adolescente  
mostrará turbadoras diversiones  
que os precipitarán temblando  
a la ávida penumbra de los pubis  
y algo desconocido os punzará en el vientre  
y hasta el desmayo apretareis las piernas.  
Hermanas, tened cuidado  
con los solitarios juegos  
bajo bordados doseles (*Ordenación* 59-60)

.....

In “Inconfesiones de Gilles a Rais,” Rosetti writes about perverting behaviors. It describes how adorable it is to seduce a boy and take him to the point of ejaculation, a metaphor for a form of death (*Ordenación* 61). All over her poetry, there are constant references to mythology (Lesbia, Eros, Cupido), masturbation, ejaculation, inexperienced lovers, or virginity. In essence, a different kind of poems in line with the changes the Transition brought, where no subject was taboo and barriers are there to be eliminated, even by women.

As mentioned earlier, many of the Planeta Award winners did, in one way or another, address both the political or erotic aspect of literature. The 1975 award-winner Mercedes Salisachs did so with *La gangrena*. Her book is the story of Carlos Hondero, a man who, in flashbacks, tells his life story. But the protagonist’s existence is the perfect

excuse to unfold the history of Spain, of Barcelona, from the 1920s to the late 1960s, right before Franco's death, from a perspective that was both conservative and critical, denouncing moral, financial, and political corruption in post-war Spain (Nieva de la Paz 128). Each chapter is named after a woman. Erotic references are all around the novel, but, taking into account the date when it was published—Franco is about to die a month later—, and still the regime's censorship, they are always very subtle. Here is an example, symbolically reminiscing old Hollywood movies and its use of tides and waves in reference to intercourse:

Su cuerpo ceñido al mío me transportaba más allá de los tejados y de aquel pedazo de cielo . . . Estrella cogió mi rostro entre sus manos: ¿Qué falta te hace comprender? ¿No me tienes a tu lado? Después vino el oleaje; aquel que nos había mantenido entrelazados una mañana de septiembre, con sus bramidos y sus golpetazos. La vida entera se trenzaba y destrenzaba en aquel continuo fluir de instantes. Y los ojos ya no veía: sentían. Y el tacto no rozaba: veía. Y los rumores se mezclaban al palpitar, y la eternidad podía asirse, volverse propia. (149)

In the novel we find political comments about the Civil War, but, still, as liberation (264). However, the criticism of the country and its Catholicism and moral ideals is more direct, alluding to the sixth commandment and the obsession with it during Francoist Spain (418). The sixth commandment in Spanish Catholic Church centered on “actos impuros,” a reference to any kind of sexual satisfaction, including onanism, without the intent of procreation. Sex, once again, was repressed by the state machinery,

which, after the death of the dictator led to the (ab)use—repression always gives way to excess, once the ties are broken.

A strange visit and an even stranger character dressed in black were Carmen Martín Gaité's excuses for introspection, self-interview, and a walk down memory lane in *El cuarto de atrás* (1979), which, at the same time, served its purpose to review the Republic, the Civil War, and Francoist Spain (69). The novel, in a sense, instead of clarifying memories, upsets them through the use of multi-color pills the man in black takes out of a box (Gómez-Montero 130). First experiences—including love—and life are intertwined in an analytical novel of self-discovery, full of intertextuality and literary criticism.

Rosa Montero, a well-known journalist writing for Spanish newspaper *El País*, published in 1979 *Crónica del desamor*. The protagonist is Ana, a journalist. But the book comprises fourteen stories that revolve around the lives of different characters, their tedious routine, their frustrations, their rebellion and attempts to escape the lack of love, all written from a feminine standpoint. It portrays the different kinds of women that started to emerge during the period, from the independent and professional to the single mother. Montero “confronted many topical issues which were still taboo or politically sensitive at that time” (Perriam et al. 193). Homosexuality, drug addiction, gender violence, or abortion, are some of the topics depicted in the novel. The book also chronicles 1970s Spain, the end of Francoism and the beginning of the Transition, along with the disillusionment of the characters—of the country—with the new freedom. In 1983, she published the more sexually explicit *Te trataré como a una reina*, where women are entitled to do what only men had been able to do for centuries: have sexual



relationships with younger individuals of the opposite sex. Rosa Montero, in her books, “not only critiques the sexual objectification of women but also addresses the issue of agency for women by depicting them as sexual objects (Perriam et al. 193). Montserrat Roig followed a similar feminist trend in *La hora violeta* (1980), reflecting, at the same time, the social changes that were taking place during the period. Another writer, Consuelo García, offered a satire about women and their role in the support of the sexism of the Spanish Don Juan (Nieva de la Paz 126) in *Luis en el país de las maravillas* (1982).

One of the best-known feminists in Spain is lawyer, politician, and writer Lidia Falcón. In 1979, she founded the *Partido Feminista de España*. A year after the end of the Transition period, in 1983, she wrote *El juego de la piel*. It is the story of upper-class Elisenda Verdiell in search of her feminine identity. Trying to escape from an ultraconservative and Catholic Spain during the Francoism, she embraced fraternity, equality, and free love (10), until she found out that equality did not refer to women, and that love was something men took from them, to the point of exploitation (196). In the novel we find comments regarding religious repression, beginning in the school years, and the punishment it brought along (54). The protagonist’s first sexual experience, her first coitus, or her homosexual relationships with Rosaura are also depicted. Considering the feminist perspective of the writer, men are always viewed as selfish, taking care of their own satisfaction and neglecting women’s (65). In essence, a different kind or erotic and critical novel from the point of view of a feminist author.

Lola Salvador Maldonado wrote in 1979 *El crimen de Cuenca*. Pilar Miro’s homonymous movie was based on Maldonado’s book—the adaptation will be discussed

in the film section of this dissertation. Two women were also runners-up in the *Primer Premio de Relatos Eróticos* organized by *Lui* magazine in 1979: Hortensia Valdés and Dolores Vega. Valdés, at the time a professor in Las Vegas, Nevada, wrote “Fanterosando,” a story narrated in first person, in the form of a monologue with indirect dialogues. It unfolds the sexual awakening of a teenage girl—masturbation, affairs with boys, etc.—, filled with the doubts in a patriarchal society and a religious education, leading up to the disillusionment of marriage, the separation and the return to freedom. Dolores Vega, a young journalist, participated with her first story, “Juego de niñas,” a narration with Italian comic characters—Valentina and Anita—, their author, Guido Crepax, Lewis Carroll, a nurse, Laura, and the writer herself. The story deals with lesbianism, obsessions, and suicide.

Finally, Almudena Grandes, as stated above, won with *Las edades de Lulú* “La sonrisa vertical” Award a few years after the Transition, in 1989. Her work will not be discussed in this study in depth because of its date of publication. As a brief note, it will be mentioned that the story of María Luisa, Lulú—Nabokov revisited—, and her sexual encounters over the years, her desire, and her love with no barriers, is the best-selling novel of “La sonrisa vertical” of all times. Madrid and the Transition, transgression, incest, kinky love, homosexuality, and explicit sex, abound in a story where, however, the female protagonist is the creator of her own discourse, subverting traditional sexual models (Moreiras 41-42). The novel put her on the map and made her a famous writer. Cherished by some, criticized by others, the book was made into a movie in 1990, directed by Bigas Luna and starring Francesca Neri and Oscar Ladoire.

In a sense, the Transition represented the beginning of the change for women. From a patriarchal and ultraconservative society, where the female sector was subjected to men's desires—both erotically and legally—, the advent of democracy opened new avenues for the up-until-now so-called weaker sex in a world that “has always belonged to males, and none of the reasons given for this have ever seem sufficient” (Beauvoir 71). Although the process was slow and difficult,<sup>39</sup> women, gradually, began to gain access to what, previously, was only men's turf. That included sex, the possibility to enjoy it, and to be able to talk and write about it from their own perspective.

As I have shown throughout the pages of this first chapter, eroticism and politics became core subjects in the Spanish narrative during the period known as the Transition. Over fifty novels have been analyzed and the references to the above-mentioned topics are constant and clear. Even though the intelligentsia labels them as part of a low culture, they have been used by both critically acclaimed authors—from Nobel-Prize winners Camilo José Cela and Mario Vargas Llosa to the Goytisolo brothers and Miguel Delibes, to name a few—and by those whose first novels appeared during the period. As it was also alluded, women became part of the trends almost as much as men—although in a smaller number—, which proved the changes Spain was undertaking. In general, many of the narrations aimed to shock the readers with fields that had been taboo for decades—i.e., homosexuality, both male and female—or considered *pecados contra natura*—incest, for example. They were just living testaments of the reaction to the new freedom after the lifting of censorship in November 1977 that, sometimes, led matters to the level

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<sup>39</sup> I will analyze some of the adversities women had to endure during Francoism and early Transition in the section dedicated to the TV series *Cuéntame*, where some of the protagonists, including Lidia Falcón and Rosa Montero, will share their views and personal experiences on the issue.

of provocation; of the willingness from the creators to transgress previous societal rules, to explore turfs, and to take them to the extreme—in some cases, just for commercial reasons—as part of a learning and, in a sense, cathartic process; and of the complicity of the readers in the journey, also as a reaction to the years of repression when the possibility to read certain novels was just reserved to an elite. Now those previously banned and “subversive” works, together with the new creations, were here to stay and the public in general was ready for the cultural binge before reaching social balance.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FILMS DURING THE TRANSITION YEARS. “SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL,” AND POLITICS

*“Sex and drugs and rock and roll*

*Is all my brain and body need*

*Sex and drugs and rock and roll*

*Are very good indeed”*

Ian Dury and The Blockheads

#### **2.1. Politics and Eroticism in the Films of the Spanish Transition. An Overview**

If the novel in the Transition years saw a pivotal change toward extreme topics, films during this period felt the need to break—at least, from a commercial standpoint and as a way to attract audiences—all kinds of taboos and shock the audiences, exposing the public to raw scenes instead of the innuendo they had been accustomed to for decades due to political and erotic censorship. As Javier Hernández explained in *Arrebato ... 25 años después*, the sinful trilogy—sex, drugs, and rock and roll—had been hounding Francoism since Spain entered its developmental process (47). Now it was time to carry them to the big screen, a fact that marked the decline of metaphorical cinema (Monterde 150) and the triumph of explicitness, which did not necessarily result in better quality productions.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Metaphorical films, trying to find ways to circumvent censorship, spurred creativity and led, in cases, to critically acclaimed works. Two examples of this are Victor Erice’s *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) or José Luis Borau’s *Furtivos* (1975). These productions were able to outwit the censors—who, oftentimes, were not prepared for the job—resorting to veiled allusions to the regime. In order to accomplish their goal, filmmakers created very aesthetic productions, masterpieces full of profound metaphors and symbolism that went completely unnoticed by the state machinery: the barren land as a metaphor for Francoist Spain, isolated from the rest of the world, in *El espíritu de la colmena*, or the castrating mother as an allusion to the dictator in *Furtivos*.

Regarding eroticism, from an outside perspective, it was almost like a return to that early seventeenth-century laxity Foucault referred to when “Sexual practices had little need of secrecy. . . It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will” (*Sexuality Vol. 1:3*). Likewise, in the realm of political opinion, individuals did not fall into the category of those who “‘abstained’ from answering questions on politics” (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 398). People, in general, had a desire to voice their opinions, particularly about the two topics studied in this dissertation. In essence, as Hopewell noted, “After Franco’s death the key draw for audiences was still sex, with politics as a close second” (108).

Spain, trying to show a sign of modernity—at least, on the surface, as happened during late Francoism with the film version of *La Celestina*<sup>41</sup>—, wanted to extrapolate what was being done in Europe and in the United States.<sup>42</sup> As in the case of the written word, transgression became a goal in itself; nunsplotation, women in prison and lesbianism, homosexuality and politics, terrorism, incest,<sup>43</sup> or drug addiction were some

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<sup>41</sup> César Ardavín’s 1969 adaptation of Fernando de Rojas’s *La Celestina* was the first time Spanish audiences were allowed to see, although briefly and insinuated under a veil, the silhouette of female breasts.

<sup>42</sup> During the late 1960s and most of the 1970s, Europe and the USA—and, in some cases, even Japan—were flooded with movies that explored all avenues of eroticism and sexuality. Filmmakers like Bernardo Bertolucci and his *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), with Marlon Brando’s infamous butter scene, or *Luna* (1979), where he immersed his characters in the world of drug addiction and incest; Louis Malle’s *Murmur of the Heart* (1971), repeating the incest theme; Russ Meyer and his *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), with its overabundance of flesh; Michael Sarne’s *Myra Breckinridge*, a transgender Raquel Welch raping a man with a dildo; Gerard Damiano’s *Deep Throat* (1972), with Linda Lovelace’s clitoridian throat; Just Jaeckin’s *Emmanuelle* (1974), displaying Sylvia Kristel at the height of her career; or Nagisa Oshima’s *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), were some of the best-known examples that became mainstream.

<sup>43</sup> Mother-son incest has been repeated in many movies by directors like Bertolucci or Malle. “From a poststructuralist perspective, the story of Oedipus is one of the most powerful master narratives in Western Civilization because, through its successful proliferation and compulsive repetition, it helps the dominant patriarchal culture reproduce itself” (Kinder, *Blood* 197). However, as Kinder adds, in Spain, “Oedipal conflicts within the family were used to speak about political issues and historical events that were repressed from filmic representation during the Francoist era and the way they continued to be used

of the recurrent topics. Regardless of genre—thriller, horror, comedy, drama, etc.—or theme, allusions and representations of politics and eroticism became staples during those years in Spanish cinema. So much so, these references turned out to be, for many, an obsession, a sign of liberalization, and, as explained earlier, of modernity. For others, however, this new freedom was nothing but an excuse to objectify women and to use them to gratify the oversexed minds of repressed men eager to see and hear what had been taboo for almost forty years. As Morcillo explained,

Women's bodies represent the symbolic site of the political and social tension that Spain endured in the three years that lapsed between the death of the dictator and the proclamation of a new democratic constitution in December 1978. A number of actresses would pose naked in front of the camera in film or print media. The bodies of these "public" women became the allegorical incarnations of the nation in the given political juncture. Democratic Spain was symbolically incarnated in the naked vulnerable body of a woman. (269)

Eroticism and political commentary in the Spanish cinema were treated both tastefully and with an array of vulgar references. In either case, with the lifting of censorship in 1977, it was open season for the creation of productions where nudity and/or sociopolitical opinion were a must:

“Ese destape fue un gran ejercicio de libertad, erótica si se quiere, y significó la entrada de gran número de películas extranjeras que no habían

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with even greater flamboyance in the post-Franco period after censorship and repression had been abolished” (197-98).

podido verse,” explica el catedrático Román Gubern. Aunque con problemas, *Saló*, de Passolini, se exhibía en la Semana de Cine de Barcelona de 1977 y fue secuestrada por escandalosa, y *El imperio de los sentidos*, de Oshima, no se pudo estrenar al ser clasificada X, cuando estas salas aún no existían. “La censura—dice Gubern—desapareció en noviembre de 1977, pero seguía vigente el delito de escándalo en el Código Penal.” Lo arregló Pilar Miró en 1982. (“Foro por la memoria”)

What Gubern was referring to is Royal Decree 3071: “Only with Royal Decree 3071, signed on 11 November 1977, did the newly elected government of Adolfo Suárez formally abolish all forms of censorship” (Kowalski 188).

Films by directors like Pedro Almodóvar, Fernando Trueba, or Fernando Colomo, among many others, were full of eroticism and sociopolitical commentary. Likewise, the phenomenon known as *comedia sexy-celtibérica* (Bugallo 12), productions giving a clichéd, stereotypical image of Spain; the “petty thief” cinema, which raised the teen rebel or juvenile delinquent to the status of legend, trying to emulate classic movies such as Nicholas Ray’s *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955); and films directed by Jorge Grau, Jesús Franco, José Luis Garci, Bigas Luna, Vicente Aranda, or José Luis Berlanga, abounded in the same topics. It was the end of Francoist movies like *Raza* (1941), produced from a script written by Franco (Medina Domínguez 45), or *Alba de América* (1951),<sup>44</sup> the last

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<sup>44</sup> *Alba de América* was, as Santiago Juan-Navarro argues, uno de los ejemplos más destacados del cine de propaganda del franquismo. Producida a instancias de las altas esferas del régimen (se barajan los nombres del Almirante Carrero Blanco y Alfredo Sánchez Belia como sus promotores), la película de Juan de Orduña sobre el Descubrimiento concentra el mensaje ideológico del franquismo en una delicada coyuntura política: los comienzos de la década de los cincuenta, caracterizados por el



stages of the so-called *landismo*,<sup>45</sup> and the height of Mariano Ozores's highly commercial and man-centered movies, with brother Antonio and fellow comedians Andrés Pajares and Fernando Esteso as seedy representations of the average Spaniard. But, against what many critics have stated, regarding the existence of only low-quality and commercial productions during the period, it was also a time when Spanish filmmakers received accolades worldwide, succeeding in film festivals around the globe:

El cine español alcanza un cierto prestigio internacional al ganar abundantes premios en festivales internacionales y, lo que resulta más espectacular, difundirse sus películas en los más diversos países. En Cannes-77 se premia *Elisa, vida mía* de Carlos Saura, en Berlín-77 *Camada negra* de Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, en San Sebastián-77 *A un dios desconocido* de Jaime Chávarri, en Berlín-78 *Las palabras de Max* de Emilio Martínez-Lázaro y *Las truchas* de José Luis García Sánchez, en Moscú-77 *El puente* de Juan Antonio Bardém, en San Sebastián-77 *Sonámbulos* de Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón y *Un hombre llamado "Flor de Otoño"* de Pedro Olea, en Moscú-79 *Siete días de enero* de Juan Antonio Bardém. (Pilar Miró, qtd. in Amell 28)

Even though Spanish cinema has been regarded by many critics as “second rate,” and although the intelligentsia considered most of the production of the Transition as commercial products, not worthy of study, numerous films and directors of the time were

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paso de una autarquía de inclinaciones fascistas a un régimen corporativista ideológicamente dominado por los sectores más conservadores de la Iglesia Católica. (79)

<sup>45</sup> The phenomenon known as *landismo*—named after actor Alfredo Landa—represented a type of film produced in Spain during the late 1960s and mid-1970s that satirized both the society and the Spaniards of the period, primarily the men—short, ugly, and overly repressed.

awarded prizes. But, despite the critical acclaim, or the lack thereof, filmmakers, both prestigious and novice, in most instances, followed the trend of the moment and included political and erotic references in their movies.

### **2.1.1. The Filmmakers and the Movies of the Spanish Transition**

Politics and sexuality, as previously mentioned and in the broad sense of the terms, were portrayed in all kinds of movies during the Transition, from the utterly erotic to the ones that were not, and by all types of filmmakers, from the highly acclaimed to the ones who would never stand the test of time and just jumped on the bandwagon of the new trend. In a way, “Film-makers found themselves in an unsupervised candy store of previously forbidden treats, and either stood there gawping at all the bare flesh and blasphemy or gorged themselves sick with the new permissiveness” (Stone 110).

However, in a, still, patriarchal society, the objects of desire were primarily women. For many actresses, the dilemma appeared clear from the beginning: no nudity, no work. Thus, audiences, mainly male, were treated to the exhibition of the naked bodies of the so-called *musas del destape* who, because of script demands—“por exigencias del guión,” as they used to say—, exposed their anatomy for the viewing pleasure of the voyeuristic (male) audiences. Among the most famous, we could include Ágata Lys, María José Cantudo, Susana and Blanca Estrada, Bárbara Rey, Nadiuska, Sara Mora, Beatriz Escudero, Azucena Hernández, Norma Duval, or Amparo Muñoz, to name but a few. In an attempt to have a more “equal-opportunity” exposure, some men were depicted in semi-naked fashion—“buttocks, mainly—, although the number compared with their female counterparts was laughable. Patxi Andión, David Rocha, or Emilio Linder were some of the examples. In addition to this, we could add the prison penis

scene in *El diputado*, where a young Nes (Ángel Pardo) is the object of desire for socialist lawyer Roberto Orbea (José Sacristán). Regardless of protagonists, films centered on politics, erotism, or in a combination of both, something we will see in the following sections of this dissertation.

### **2.1.2. Politics and the Films: Francoism, the Civil War, Terrorism, and the Transition**

The topics of Francoism, the Civil War, the Transition, and their consequences have been reviewed by a number of directors over the years—I will analyze some of the most recent creations in the Contemporary Revision section of this dissertation. Spain's past, its present, and the close analysis of both became important parts of the political discourses—although the so-called *pacto de silencio* prevailed until, as Colmeiro explained, Almodovar's *La flor de mi secreto* (1995) (qtd. in Pavlović 93). Most of the period marks the phase of highest politicization in Spanish cinema (Monterde 309). One of the best-known approaches to the Civil War was Jaime Camino's *Las largas vacaciones del 36* (1976), centered on the two sections of Spain—again, *las dos Españas*—after the partially-failed coup d'état. A similar topic would be presented in a movie that premiered right after the Transition, in 1984, based on a play by Fernando Fernán Gómez and directed by Jaime Chávarri: *Las bicicletas son para el verano*. But Camino's film was also a critique of the Catalan bourgeoisie, their apathy and conservative perspective, and a story about coming of age in troubled times. *Retrato de familia* (1976) was the only movie of the period by director Antonio Giménez-Rico,

based on a novel by Miguel Delibes.<sup>46</sup> The film was a social portrait of the Spanish society between the Republic and the Civil War, depicting love, sex, passion, and politics. In 1986, four years after the end of the Transition, he directed *El disputado voto del señor Cayo*, also based on the previously studied novel by Miguel Delibes and starring Paco Rabal in the role of Cayo. With similar topics, and adding the erotic touch, were two movies: Pedro Lazaga's *Vota a Gundisalvo* (1977)—full of criticism of the first General Elections in Spain, with naked girls trying to get votes—and Carles Mira's *Con el culo al aire* (1980), a grotesque chronicle of the Transition (Ponce 72).

Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo centered his 1979 Spanish-Italian coproduction *Operacion ogro*<sup>47</sup> on the depiction of terrorism during late Francoism. The film, inspired by a true story, narrated ETA's plot to murder Admiral Carrero Blanco in 1973. Basilio Martín Patino directed two documentaries during the period, also mainly with political references: *Caudillo* (1977), about Franco, and *Queridísimos verdugos* (1977), the life of executioners and the dictatorship. Likewise, ex-Senator Pere Portabella focused his films on stories that revolved around politics and those involved in them. An example was *El sopar* (1974), with Franco still alive, his documentary about political prisoner anarchist Salvador Puig Antich,<sup>48</sup> who was executed. *El proceso de Burgos* (1979) also had terrorism as its background. The film, a documentary directed by Imanol Uribe, depicts the trial for the murder of Guipuzcoa Police Commissioner Melitón Manzananas in an ETA

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<sup>46</sup> *Mi idolatrado hijo Sisí* (1953), a social satire.

<sup>47</sup> Carrero Blanco, “hombre de cejas pobladas y gesto huraño, se lo conocía entre la oposición como ‘el ogro’, apodo que dio nombre a la operación que acabaría con su vida” (Ponce 13).

<sup>48</sup> Salvador Puig Antich's case will be reviewed in the “Theater” section of this dissertation, in the space centered on Els Joglars and their controversial play *La torna*.

terrorist attack on August 2, 1968. Juan Antonio Bardem's *Siete días de enero* (1979) was a *quasi* documentary film of a more political nature that chronicles the massacre of Atocha in 1977.<sup>49</sup>

Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's films during the Transition focused on political topics in different stories. Thus, *Camada negra* (1976) dealt with right-wing extremists and their violence; *Sonámbulos* (1978), starring Ana Belén, a movie about real-imaginary life, left-wing politics, and ethics; or *El corazón del bosque* (1978), the life of a *maquis* in post-Civil War Spain. With *Maravillas* (1980) he centered the story on the topic of Judaism, adolescence, surrealism, eroticism, and a certain mystery—the infamous *Pirri*,<sup>50</sup> of *El pico* fame, had one of the best performances of his short career in this film. *Demonios en el jardín* (1982) was his movie about family, hunger and black market, sex, and political criticism of Francoism. Alfonso Ungria directed two movies during the late Francoism that dealt with individuals that opposed the regime: *El hombre oculto* and *Tirarse al monte*—both were censored in 1971. In 1976 he directed *Gulliver*, which also had problems with the censors because of its political content—a reflection on the dictatorship. In 1977 he directed *Soldados* (1977), loosely based on Max Aub's *Las buenas intenciones*, and depicting the topic of the Civil War. He also participated in *Cuentos eróticos*, with the segment “El amor es algo maravilloso.”

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<sup>49</sup> The massacre on Madrid's Atocha street on 24 January 1977 was a terrorist attack carried out by extreme right-wing individuals—who, allegedly, belonged to neo-fascist group Triple A—at a law office that took the lives of five members of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and trade union *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO). The murderers gunned down the five victims and wounded four more.

<sup>50</sup> José Luis Fernández Eguia, also known as “El Pirri,” was a juvenile delinquent who appeared in several movies of the period. Trying to bring realism to this type of production—known colloquially in Spain as “Cine Quinqui”—, directors like Eloy de la Iglesia and José Antonio de la Loma used street thugs to portray themselves in the films. In addition to “El Pirri,” Ángel Fernández Franco, a.k.a. “El Torete,” and Santiago Corella, a.k.a. “El Nani,” had roles in highly naturalistic movies like *El Pico*, *Perros callejeros*, or *Matar al Nani*.

Cecilia and José Bartolomé directed a documentary, filmed between 1979 and 1980, that centered on the Transition: *Después de...*, divided in two parts: *No se os puede dejar solos* and *Atado y bien atado*. The film features average Spaniards and personalities of the moment and reviews the political changes that took place in the nation after Franco's death and people's opinions of the process, both from those who were expecting a social transformation to those who still lived in the past and wanted Franco back.

In the previous section, I covered a number of films whose focus was to portray some sort of political situation, from mere references to a close study of the topic. The Republic, the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition—with all the changes the latter brought with it, namely democracy, terrorism, and *desencanto*, among others—were some of the main sources of narrative. But in no time, audiences began to experience the addition of *destape*, in the broad sense of the word—physical and political—to the social criticism of society.

### **2.1.3. *El destape*. Eroticism and Social Criticism Onscreen**

Mariano Ozores's productions were, arguably, the epitome of *destape* films—and, even before that, of *landismo*. Most of his “low-budget fast-shooting” (Jordan 65) movies depicted the infamous trio Antonio Ozores, Andrés Pajares, and Fernando Esteso as the unattractive Spaniards always surrounded by statuesque actresses in comedic erotic situations. This combination of eroticism and comedy was commercially profitable, since “Sex and sexuality have long figured prominently as vehicles for humour in Spanish film comedy” (Jordan 64). The plots, usually irrelevant, portrayed the above-mentioned actors in a thousand grotesque stories, all of them with sarcastic references to the political and

social situation of the moment and an endless list of sensual women who lusted after the *macho ibérico*, regardless of his lack of sex-appeal. As Ana Bugallo argued, the double standard is noticeable in the films, where the usufruct of sexual freedom is in the hands of men (45).

The decision to portray these ordinary, plain men together with *quasi* flawless women made sense from a social and commercial perspective, considering the still patriarchal society in which these films were produced. The director, as well as others in the profession, wanted male audiences to identify themselves with the protagonists of these comedies, regular or below-average folks, and believe the impossible dream—thus turning their movies into box-office hits, as most of them were. Had the male characters been on the Redford-esque side of the spectrum, this would have been impossible. Examples of his movies were *Alcalde por elección* (1976), *El apolítico* (1977), *Los liantes* (1981), *Brujas mágicas* (1981), *Qué gozada de divorcio* (1981), *Los bingueros* (1979), *Todos al suelo* (1982), or *Cristóbal Colón, de oficio descubridor* (1982), parodies of reality in a quasi-surreal world.

As mentioned above, directors of all levels felt, in a sense, either compelled or attracted to follow what became the trend of the period. One of the most relevant examples was Luis Buñuel. Even though not residing in the country, Buñuel was one of the best Spanish filmmakers of the twentieth century. Always fascinated by sex and obsessions—*Viridiana* (1961), *Belle de Jour*, (1967), *Tristana* (1970), or *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie* (*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*) (1972) —, he shot in 1977 his last film, *Cet obscur objet du désir* (*That Obscure Object of Desire*, nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign language film of the year). It was loosely based

on *La Femme et le pantin* (*The Woman and the Puppet*), a novel written by Pierre Louÿs in 1889.<sup>51</sup> The production depicted the unfulfilled sexual obsession of Mathieu's, a French wealthy gentleman—actor Fernando Rey—, with a young Spanish woman—played, alternately, by both Ángela Molina and Carol Bouquet—who, even though acting teasingly during the film, never engaged him in sexual intercourse, enraging the *macho* inside. Political terrorism was referred to several times in the story—something that also happened in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*—, both in France and in Spain. Audiences even witness a car blown out by a bomb in Seville, Spain, not a typical venue for terrorist attacks to take place. The movie was also full of social and religious criticism—the proud Spaniard who had rather pray than work below his or her class—and surrealistic touches, through the use of two actresses to play the same character or the pig with the gypsy women, to name a few.

One of the most controversial<sup>52</sup> films of the early Transition was José Luis Borau's *Furtivos* (1975). The movie was a depiction of the lowest instincts with a double reading—political or sociological. It presents, in a naturalistic and brutal form, human limits and the effects of violence, isolation, sex, incest, conflicting passion, animal territoriality, and the loss of status/power on the individuals. Its violence was not only physical, but also psychological, with a process of personal degeneration whose only outlet was death. But the abuse reached its height when it was implicit—incest, for instance, is never shown, but the mind of the audiences can imagine more than what can

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<sup>51</sup> Pierre Louis, a.k.a. Pierre Louÿs, was a French writer who produced a series of erotic poetry and novels between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among them, *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (1894)—a story that centered on lesbianism.

<sup>52</sup> As Peter Besas explained, “the censors asked Borau to make over 40 cuts in the film” (137).



be portrayed. The movie was also an example of metaphorical cinema, full of symbology, above all if we take the course of the political reading: the patriarchal and violent mother, the castrating female, a representation of what Julia Kristeva called the abject as a metaphor for the dictator in a regime that killed even when it was starting to rot (Gubern 358); the woods as the isolated Spain; or the constant contrast between the law, the governor, versus the outlaw, the poacher, the sempiternal topic of *las dos Españas*. Regarding the latter, as Besas noted, in the film we notice that “The contrasts between the high official, whose only thoughts seem to run along gastronomical lines and whose only challenge seems to be the shooting of a beautiful buck, and the miserable inhabitants of the farm house, are constant and poignant” (136). The only thing that seemed out of place in this story full of allusions was Vainica Doble’s soundtrack. In such a sordid movie, that candid pop of the 1970s made no sense. The only explanation was the idea to make the film like a children’s story. In 1979 Borau directed *La sabina* (1979), a mythological drama about the man-eating female monster in nineteenth-century Andalusia. The film, just as *Furtivos*, is full of symbology and contrasts—male versus female and Spanish versus Anglosaxon in this case—together with the presence of a young Ángela Molina and the music of Paco de Lucía.

As stated previously, Pedro Almodóvar, Fernando Colomo, and Fernando Trueba were three of the most recognizable filmmakers of the period, and were included in the so-called *comedia madrileña*.<sup>53</sup> Pedro Almodóvar is, arguably, the best-known director outside his native Spain, having elevated himself “from the countercultural margins of his

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<sup>53</sup> The *comedia madrileña* represented a type of urban comedy that took place in Madrid and dealt with the problems of young people in the period—namely sex, work, obsessions, and life itself.

native Spain to an international mainstream” (Epps, *Almodóvar* 1). Winner of an Academy Award for *All About My Mother* (1999), his movies are also filled with obsessions and transgressions of the repressive taboos during Francoism.

Almodóvar’s first movie, *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980)—called by the director himself “his ‘dirtiest’ film” (Vernon 26)—, centered, as most of them, on women, his staple, and a catalog of sexual “oddities” (Monterde 167)—namely sadism, masochism, lesbianism, fetishism, etc.—, as well as drugs, rape, police corruption, violence, revenge, and the importance of penis size; all in the context of the *Movida* in early 1980s Madrid. In 1982 he filmed *Laberinto de pasiones*, where, following the trend, the topics were nymphomania, homosexuality, sexual repression, and incest, together with the politics and corruption of fictitious Tirán, also set in 1980s Madrid with its urban *fauna* in all its splendor.

Fernando Colomo started his filmography with *Tigres de papel* (1977) and *¿Qué hace una chica como tú en un sitio como éste?* (1978). In *Tigres de papel* we re-live the first General Elections in Spain hand in hand with a separated couple. *¿Qué hace una chica como tú en un sitio como éste?* was a movie where actress Carmen Maura, a middle-aged fish-out-of-water divorcee, roams post-Franco Madrid with a rocker boyfriend. The landscape, however, is the upside-down world of the Transition, where marginal characters have values and law and order are still under the spell of dictatorial Spain—here is the social and political criticism. In 1980 he shot *La mano negra*, dealing with the life of a loser and his alter ego in a pseudo detective fiction film. His last movie of the period was *Estoy en crisis* (1982), starring the ubiquitous José Sacristán, a story

where sexuality and philosophy lead the life of a forty-year-old cheater in a midlife crisis in transition and times of change.

Academy-award winner Fernando Trueba made his debut in 1980. Honoring the fact that it was his first work, or, ironically, referring to the love interest of the protagonist—a young female cousin, his *prima*, who lives in *Ópera*, a neighborhood in Madrid—, it was entitled *Ópera prima*. Antonio Resines and Óscar Ladoire<sup>54</sup>—two of the most recognizable actors of the *comedia madrileña*—starred in this movie about sexual relationships, with a touch of incest, and obsessions. The film is a reflection on Spain’s changes from Francoism to the 1980s, disenchantment, and the battle of the sexes, together with a Marisa Paredes as the epitome of the perversions—as her character states in the movie, “sex is everywhere.” In José María Caparrós’s words, the story was a chronicle of the Spain of the period focused on youth and their lost sense of direction (188). In 1982 he directed a documentary featuring the life, music, and ideas of a singer-songwriter—*cantautor* Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio—whose title was *Mientras el cuerpo aguante*. Sánchez Ferlosio will be reviewed in the section on the music in the Transition.

If there was a movie that became iconic, almost legendary, during the early Transition, that was Jorge Grau’s *La trastienda* (1975). It made history for being the film where audiences were treated to the first female *full frontal* in Spanish cinematography—actress María José Cantudo showed her anatomy reflected in a the mirror—even before the lifting of censorship in 1977. Shot against the backdrop of the *San Fermín* festivities in Pamplona, the movie was much more than just an erotic story, with a clear criticism of

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<sup>54</sup> Resines and Ladoire, in an archetypical sense, replace actors like Landa, Sacristán, or López Vázquez (Trenzado 322).

ultracatholic Spain and *Opus Dei*—*trastienda* refers to the back room where secrets are hidden in a hypocritical society. Later, he filmed *El secreto inconfesable de un chico bien* (1975)—a young man’s impotency, a Francoist father who forced his wife, and a pseudo freudian film—, *La siesta* (1976)—where Ovidi Montllor is an antenna repair-service worker required to sexually console the urges of bored burgeoise wives—, and *Cartas de amor de una monja* (1978)—depicting a sexual relationship between a chaplain and a Mother Superior, actress Analía Gadé, in a convent in seventeenth-century Spain, trying, once again, to transgress the rules of Catholic Church during the Inquisition. Jesús Franco also did a version of this film—*Cartas de amor a una monja portuguesa* (1978). But if Grau shocked the audiences with the first images of a vagina in a Spanish film, Enrique Martí Maqueda did something similar when he portrayed the first lesbian encounter onscreen in *Me siento extraña* (1977). He even took things to an extreme when he used Rocío Dúrcal—another icon of Francoism, the same as Marisol—as one of the women engaged in the homosexual scene; the other actress was Bárbara Rey.

One of the most criticized directors of the Transition was Eloy de la Iglesia. During the period he shot, among others, *Juego de amor prohibido* (1975), *Los placeres prohibidos* (1976), *La otra alcoba* (1976), *El diputado* (1978), *La mujer del ministro* (1981), *Navajeros* (1981), *Colegas* (1982), and *El pico* (1983). His movies followed the trend of the moment, dealing with politics, sex—with an almost obsessive (ab)use of homosexuality—, drugs, petty thieves, and juvenile delinquents. De la Iglesia’s stories were the epitome of Realism and Naturalism, as well as being full of raw social criticism. The filmmaker, who also became a drug addict after *El pico*, was attacked by

many critics—Fernando Trueba did so in his article appeared in *El País* in 1979<sup>55</sup>—, mainly due to the *tremendismo*<sup>56</sup> in his movies, his lack of quality, and the attempt to shock audiences with a commercial and Manichaeic/demagogic purpose. Some, however, consider him the Spanish Fassbinder.<sup>57</sup> *El diputado* will be analyzed in depth in the section on this film. Homosexuality was also reviewed by director Pedro Olea in a movie—based on a play by Jose María Rodríguez Méndez and starring José Sacristán—entitled *Un hombre llamado “Flor de Otoño”* (1978). Gay prostitution was also the topic of his previous movie, *La Corea* (1976). Ventura Pons focused on similar topics too in *Ocaña, retrato intermitente* (1978), a documentary about gay painter Jose María Ocaña.

*La escopeta nacional* (1977), *Patrimonio nacional* (1981), and *Nacional III* (1982) were Luis García Berlanga’s contributions to the films of the Transition, as part of the Leguineche family trilogy. The films were an *esperpéntica*, a grotesque satire about the remnants of Francoism, the bourgeoisie, the upper classes, aristocracy, and Church—

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<sup>55</sup> “Sexo y política, un cóctel que vende.” *El País*, January 27, 1979. In the article, Trueba criticizes De la Iglesia stating that “Ningún director español ofrece tanta carnaza en sus películas, sexo, política, homosexualidad, bestialismo, cualquier cosa con tal de atraer al público, aunque sólo sea a base de un más difícil todavía. De la Iglesia no teme incurrir en todos los excesos, no le importa ser grotesco y ridículo, de hecho siempre lo es; lo único que le importa es vender su producto y poner en él aquello que, hoy por hoy, vende: sexo y política . . . Eloy de la Iglesia no es un buen director; en su extensa bibliografía no encontramos una sola buena película, pero, además, ni siquiera es un buen tramposo.”

<sup>56</sup> The term *tremendismo* appeared with Camilo Jose Cela’s *La familia de Pascual Duarte* (1942). The genre—which could be considered a radical Naturalism—depicts the lowest and worst aspects of society and its individuals: crime, violence, sordid environments, and marginal characters, in many cases physically or psychologically disturbed.

<sup>57</sup> Rainer Fassbinder was an openly homosexual German director born in 1945. Many of his films reflect human conflict, isolation, and homosexuality—e.g., *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) or *Querelle* (1982).

“Lo que yo he unido en la tierra no lo separa ni dios en el cielo,”<sup>58</sup> blurted out the priest played by actor Agustín González—in post-Franco Spain. Sex, adultery and mistresses, appearances, politics and manipulation, money and power, corruption, religion, selfishness, and extravagant and fetishistic hobbies—the marquis collects female pubic hair—mixed in this caustic comedic collage of Spain and its most decadent dwellers of the period.

Harsh censorship was still present during the first stages of the Transition. One of the directors who endured it was Jaime Chávarri, due to the comments regarding sexual encounters in his black-and-white depiction of *Falange* poet Leopoldo Panero’s dysfunctional family in *El desencanto* (1976).<sup>59</sup> The documentary was a chronicle of the upper classes, culture, and the fall of dictatorship, with uninhibited comments on family relationships, decadence, political views—some against Franco—, alcoholism, drugs, suicide attempts, and madness. As Gubern explained, the director dissects with his knife the pustules, the fetidness, the immobilism of the Francoist ideology (359). There are two references to incest in the film. One of the sons, Leopoldo María, stated that he would like to sleep with his mother, which would be the negation of Oedipus. Previously, the older brother, Juan Luis, had commented the excitement he felt when a waiter thought he was his own mother’s gigolo. In 1977 Chávarri directed *A un dios desconocido*, a drama about homosexuality, family, memories, and Francoism. He also participated in *Cuentos*

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<sup>58</sup> The character was paraphrasing Matthew’s “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” In this case, what he, the priest, has joined together on Earth, let no God put asunder in Heaven.

<sup>59</sup> The movie gave name to the feeling of many after post-Franco’s death euphoria: disillusionment. The title of one of Teresa Vilarós’s books, *El mono del desencanto*, is an allusion to the issue.

*eróticos* (1980), along with other directors, with his segment “Pequeño planeta.”

*Dedicatoria* was directed in 1980, starring sensual Miss Universe Amparo Muñoz and dealing with complicated sexual relationships. *Bearn o la sala de las muñecas*, a chronicle of aristocracy, and *Las bicicletas son para el verano*, and adaptation of Fernán Gómez’s play about life against the backdrop of the Civil War, were both produced right after the period studied in this dissertation (1983).

Carlos Saura directed six movies during the Transition, totally in line—some more than others<sup>60</sup>—with the trend of the period: *Cría cuervos* (1975)—family, history, life and death, Ana Torrent’s eyes, Florinda Chico’s breasts, and Jeanette—, *Elisa, vida mía* (1977)—a complex film about the relationship between a father, actor Fernando Rey, and his daughter, actress Geraldine Chaplin, in a film full of intertextuality—, *Los ojos ventados* (1978)—torture, politics and dictatorship, love and adultery—, *Mamá cumple cien años* (1979)—the sequel of *Ana y los lobos* (1972) and the changes of life in post-Franco Spain—, *Deprisa, deprisa* (1980)—jumping on the bandwagon of street hustlers, petty thieves, drugs, and grand theft auto, like Eloy de la Iglesia and José Antonio de la Loma—, and *Bodas de sangre* (1981)—the *flamenco* adaption of Federico García Lorca’s tragedy.

Arguably, one of the most well-rounded Spanish artists of all time was Fernando Fernán Gómez—actor, director, writer. In 1976 he directed *La querida*, a movie starring Spanish song diva Rocio Jurado. Because Jurado appeared slightly naked and in the role

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<sup>60</sup> In 1974, Saura’s *La prima Angélica*, a story centered on Spanish Civil War, had some run-ins with censorship. The problem arose with the depiction of a *Falange* member, “un falangista—que interpretaba Fernando Delgado—con el brazo en alto en posición fija, escayolado debido a las heridas recibidas en el frente. Este detalle fue interpretado como un insulto gravísimo, no como una broma, intolerable contra el Movimiento” (Sinova 30).

of a mistress, the production faced problems with censorship. That same year he shot *Bruja, más que bruja*, a grotesque pseudo zarzuela based on a true story, a rural drama dealing with greed, crime, justice, lust, sex, adultery, religion, and social criticism. In 1977 he filmed *Mi hija Hildegart*. It was a drama based upon the book *Aurora de sangre*, by Eduardo Guzmán, depicting a real-life story about extreme feminism, The Women's Liberation Movement, socialism, politics, parental control, and crime that took place in 1930s Spain. The story revolves around Aurora Rodríguez Carbelleira, played by actress Amparo Soler Leal, a woman who tried, in a sense, to create and manipulate life. She “resolves to use her inheritance to realize a scheme to produce a daughter who, in the guise of some type of revolutionary heroine, will deliver woman from her state of oppression” (Evans 147). However, when such perfect daughter seems to—at least, in the mother's psychotic mind—stray from Aurora's plan, death will be the only solution. *Cinco tenedores* (1990) was an acid comedy about bourgeoisie, adultery, sex, and pseudo incest with actress Concha Velasco as a bored woman who cheated on her boring husband, played by actor Saza, with their godchild.

Sexual awakenings and initiations were treated by a number of directors. An example was Manuel Summers,<sup>61</sup> who directed in 1977 *Mi primer pecado*, a story about teenage sex and coming of age—the relationship between a 14-year-old and a prostitute. Miguel Picazo, who had won awards for his adaptation of Miguel de Unamuno's *La tía tula*, directed in 1964, filmed in 1977 *Los claros motivos del deseo*, another movie about sex and adolescence, following the trend of other directors. Angelino Fons's *De profesión*

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<sup>61</sup> In 1978, Summers also directed *El sexo ataca*, a satire on eroticism written by comedic duo Tip y Coll.



*polígamo* (1975) presented the previously mentioned filmmaker, Summers, as a polygamist obsessed with women's virginity—he marries them and leaves them after wedding night. In 1976 Fons also directed actress-singer Ana Belén in *Emilia, parada y fonda*, a drama about women, their life in a patriarchal and conservative society, and their societal liberation. It was an adaption of Carmen Martín Gaité's short story "Un alto en el camino."

José María Forqué filmed four movies during the period: *Madrid Costa Fleming* (1976), based on the novel by Ángel Palomino about life in a new apartment building in Madrid, corruption, prostitution and aristocracy, politics, drugs, and social criticism; *La mujer de la tierra caliente* (1977), full of love and sex in the Tropics with Laura Gemser, of *Emmanuelle* fame;<sup>62</sup> *Qué verde era mi duque* (1979), paraphrasing John Ford's movie,<sup>63</sup> a story with actor José Luis López Vázquez as a duke, eroticism, and the depiction of a selfish society; and *El canto de la cigarra* (1980), a film about love, couples, and freedom.

Television was Antonio Mercero's field for many years, where he wrote and directed a number of series. During Francoism he created titles such as *Crónicas de un pueblo* (1971) or the award-winning short *La cabina* (1972); during the Transition, he did *Este señor de negro* (1975-76) and *Verano azul* (1981-82). They will be analyzed in the media section of this dissertation. He also directed films for the big screen in the late 1970s and early 1980s; among them, *Las delicias de los verdes años* (1976), derived from

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<sup>62</sup> Laura Gemser is an Indonesian-born Dutch actress who reached fame as the masseuse in one of the iconic films of the 1970s, *Emmanuelle II*—starring Sylvia Kristel. In 1975, she started her own new series, *Black Emmanuelle*.

<sup>63</sup> *How Green Was My Valley* (1941).

Juán José Alonso Millán's play with its touch of eroticism and social review; *La guerra de papá* (1977), Miguel Delibes's novel<sup>64</sup> and a portrait of 1960s Spain through the eyes of a boy; and *Tobi* (1978), a fantasy about childhood and a little boy with wings in the society of the Transition.

Pedro Masó was a well-known TV director, producer, and scriptwriter as well. During the process he directed five movies. In 1975 he shot the controversial *Las adolescentes*. It was a story about underage female students attending a boarding school in England. They ended up involved in a porno sting with ruthless men photographing the minors to publish their pictures in erotic magazines. It was a somewhat moralistic warning to parents sending their daughter off to foreign lands with the music of Mocedades<sup>65</sup> in the background. A year later he filmed *La menor* (1976), with a minor mixed up in a murder plot. *La coquito* (1977), based on a book by Joaquín Belda,<sup>66</sup> was an erotic story about Cuban variety singer Adela Portales and covert prostitution. In 1979 he directed a sensual Jane Birkin in *La miel*, a story about a young man, his old teacher, and his mother, a prostitute. *El divorcio que viene* (1980) was a comedy of errors, lovers, and divorce, not legal in Spain until almost the end of the Transition—June 22, 1981. José Luis García Sánchez was another prolific scriptwriter and director. Right before Franco's death, in summer 1975, he directed *El love feroz*, a film about generation conflict, sex, and rebellion against the past. 1976 was the year for *Colorín Colorado*, dealing with a couple living together without being married in a Catholic and

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<sup>64</sup> *El príncipe destronado* (1973).

<sup>65</sup> The song was "La gaviota."

<sup>66</sup> Erotic-novel writer from the early twentieth century.

conservative society. *Las truchas* (1978) was a social satire dealing with a conflictive luncheon. Jaime de Armiñán also combined TV and the big screen. Since the early 1970s, he directed movies that focused on controversial topics—for instance, *Mi querida señorita* (1971), about a woman raised as a man. Later, during the Transition, he did films like *Jo, papá* (1975), a production that had problems with censorship due to its references to Civil War, Francoism, and the conflict between past and present; *Nunca es tarde* (1977), a story about pregnancy at an advanced age; *Al servicio de la mujer española* (1978), focused on the world of radio phone-in shows and personal problems; or *El nido* (1980), *Lolita* revisited. Pedro Lazaga was, just like the above-mentioned filmmakers, a prolific Spanish director. He died in 1979, right in the middle of the Transition. However, he left titles like *Yo soy fulana de tal* (1975), with Concha Velasco playing the role of a prostitute; *La amante perfecta* (1976), where erotic actress Nadiuska was involved in a jewel robbery scheme; or the afore-mentioned *Vota a Gundisalvo*.

Arguably, Francisco Lara Polop, Ignacio Iquino, Enrique Guevara, and Jesús Franco were four of the most controversial directors of the period. Lara Polop's provocative films revolved around eroticism and *destape*—naked bodies in every scene and little more—, as his titles indicate: *Obsesión* (1975), the debut of Victoria Abril; *Las desarraigadas* (1976); *Virilidad a la española* (1977), with one of the most typical actors of the period, Fernando Esteso, playing, as in many others, the role of super *macho ibérico*; *Climax* (1977); *Secretos de alcoba* (1977); *Historia de "S"* (1979), with the epitome of *landismo* himself, actor Alfredo Landa; *Adiós, querida mamá* (1980), a drama about incest between mother and son, played by actress Charo López and actor Juan Carlos Naya; *La masajista vocacional* (1981); or *Adulterio nacional* (1982), among

others in the same line. Ignacio Iquino followed the same trend as Lara Polop in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with titles such as *Los violadores del amanecer* (1978), depicting rape; *Las que empiezan a los quince años* (1978), about fifteen-year-old prostitutes; and *La caliente niña Julieta* (1981), regarding sex, lovers, and lesbian scenes. He immersed himself in political criticism too when he directed *El asalto al Castillo de la Moncloa* (1978). The grotesque film used the Italian-Spanish production *Los amantes del desierto* (1957) as a foundation. The original soundtrack was deleted and replaced by the voiceover narration of the comedic duo Tip y Coll in order to criticize the political situation of the Transition. The movie poster showed President Adolfo Suárez together with Felipe González, both dressed as Moors and Christians in a classic play, with the former telling the latter: “You will never have the power.”

Some of Enrique Guevara’s movies paraphrase famous titles of national and international cinematography. Thus, *El último pecado de la burguesía* (1978), referencing Buñuel’s film, or *En busca del polvo perdido* (1982)—*Raiders of the Lost Ark*, known in Spain as *En busca del arca perdida*. He also directed, among others, *Jill* (1977), with Emma Cohen and Máximo Valverde, and *Orgasmo caliente* (1981). The titles, above all the last one mentioned, speak for themselves. Franco, also known by his alias, Jess Franco, among others he used over the years,<sup>67</sup> is, arguably, the name of horror movies in Spain and in other countries, with over two hundred films, many of them rated “S” or “X” as a result of their raw content. Regardless of the subject or genre, his stories

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<sup>67</sup> The names used by the director went from Jesús Franco, Jess Franco, or Jesse Franco to Rosa María Almirall, Clifford Brown Jr., Betty Carter, or Candy Coster, to name but a few.

of the period were full of eroticism, including, in many of them, his muse and partner Lina Romay.

For most movie-goers, the name Jacinto Molina will not probably ring a bell. But if we mention Paul Naschy, many fans will probably think of frightening scenes. The star of Spanish and international horror also directed in 1979 *Madrid al desnudo*, with an actress who prostitutes herself. Armando de Ossorio is another well-known horror-movie director. However, in 1980 he worked on *Pasión prohibida*, one of the most transgressive S-rated films of the year, depicting Susana Estrada in an explicit incestuous relationship with her brother and referencing her love for her father. Argentinian-born León Klimovsky was, as some of the previous directors studied, one who combined his work both on TV and the big screen, where he directed mostly horror movies. For television, he did the adaptation of Vicente Blasco Ibañez's *La barraca* (1979). His résumé, other than horror, includes titles like *Muerte de un quinqu* (1975), a *film noire* full of eroticism and Oedipal references with horror-movie star Paul Naschy as a *supermacho*; *Y ahora qué, señor fiscal* (1977), with a Romeo and Juliet revisited adding sexual content and robbery; or *Trauma (Violación fatal)* (1978), with erotic diva of the time Ágata Lys in a plot of sex and murders. Another Franco, this time Ricardo, Jesús's nephew, filmed in 1975 the adaptation of one of the best-known novels by Nobel-Prize winner Camilo José Cela: *Pascual Duarte*.

José Ramón Larraz followed a similar trend as Franco and the likes. He visited and revisited all the topics of the so-called exploitation films, and joined the sex-and-horror combo. Lesbian relationships, together with threesomes and tragic end, were the themes for *La visita del vicio* (1978), where an older woman starts a sexual affair with an

adolescent girl. In 1979 he filmed *Polvos mágicos*, a parody starring Alfredo Landa and full of jokes and references to the Transition. That same year, he did *El periscopio*, where a young man spies on his lesbian nurses, who will, eventually, “treat” him. In 1981 Larraz shot *La momia nacional*, another combination of pseudo monsters and sex with some of the stars of the period. Right after the end of the Transition he included one of Spain’s most famous *tonadilleras* and members of the so-called *canción española*: Lola Flores in *Juana la loca...de vez en cuando* (1983), a parody of Queen Isabella I of Castile and her daughter Joanna the Mad in this spoof of the Spanish monarchy with references to the present period. But if there was a transgressive film of 1980, that was José Antonio Salot’s *Mater amatisima*. Autistic child, obsessive mother, extreme love, the shadow of incest, and murder—or, if you will, euthanasia and suicide—are some of the complex topics Salot’s movie included. Claustrophobic story with an all-out Victoria Abril playing the role of a mother whose care for her son turned pathological. Another provocative director was José Antonio Bigas Luna. Even though he adapted one of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s novels, *Tatuaje* (1976), Luna’s fame came with more controversial and sexually explicit movies: *Bilbao* (1977), the life of a deranged man obsessed with a prostitute, or *Caniche* (1978), the story of a brother and a sister, sexual deviations of different kinds, and the decadence of ruined upper classes. After the Transition he adapted the controversial novel written by Almudena Grandes, *Las edades de Lulú* (1989), starring Italian actress Francesca Neri as Lulú.

*Interviú* was not the only medium that used Marisol in revealing pictures. Juan Antonio Bardem did something similar in *El poder del deseo* (1975), where he portrayed the seminaked body of a multi-wigged Pepa Flores, a.k.a. Marisol, in an erotic police

drama about a sensual woman who entangles a young man in a murder plot—hence the title, the power of desire. In 1977 he directed Alfredo Landa in *El puente*, with one of the topics of the time: unattractive Spaniard flirting with sensual foreign women who visit Spain. *Lo verde empieza en los Pirineos* (1973), directed by Vicente Escrivá, also became an icon as previously mentioned, depicting Franco's Spain and the difficulty to watch erotic movies in the Iberian Peninsula at the time, thus having to travel to neighboring countries to fulfill inner (male) voyeuristic desires. During the period, however, Escrivá filmed movies like *Zorrita Martinez* (1975), presenting the ubiquitous Nadiuska as a cabaret singer who needs a husband in order to get a green card; *La lozana andaluza* (1976), the adaptation of Francisco Delicado's 1528 novel and other icon of its time, with a sensual Maria Rosaria Omaggio playing the role of *la lozana* in one of the longest nude scenes of the time; or *Esperando a papá* (1980), with actor Arturo Fernández in his habitual Donjuan-esque role. Another iconic film was the one Victor Erice directed in 1973, two years before the death of the *caudillo*: *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973), one of the best films of its time. During the Transition he did *El sur* (1982), a beautiful movie that deals with the relationship between a father and his daughter, politics and ideals, the Civil War, and the myth of the south.

Francesc Bellmunt directed *La nova cançó* (1975) and *La torna* (1977), focused on music and theater, respectively—they will be analyzed in their respective sections. However, in 1978, he filmed *La orgia*, with Juanjo Puigcorbé and Assumpta Serna, a story involving young people in a house, an analysis of society and life, and, obviously,

sex. One year later, he did *Salut y força al canut* (1979).<sup>68</sup> *La quinta del porro*, whose title is an explicit enough reference to joint-smoking soldiers, generational conflict, and drugs, was released in 1980. Another Catalanian director, Juan Bosch, filmed in 1979 a movie that comprised different independent stories and with a title that summarized the situation of the country regarding the lack of sex during the dictatorship: *Cuarenta años sin sexo*. Previously, in 1977, he shot *La dudosa virilidad de Cristóbal*, dealing with a couple who cannot have a baby due to alleged male problems—although the protagonist showed the necessary energy to make an employee pregnant.

José Luis Garci is, perhaps, one of the best-known directors in Spain. His screenplay for the short movie *La cabina* (1972) put him on the map—together with director Antonio Mercero. The fact that he won an Academy Award in 1988 for *Volver a empezar* catapulted the director to stardom. In 1977 he directed *Asignatura pendiente*, arguably one of the films that best reflected the combination of politics and sexuality during the Transition years; it will be discussed in depth in the section on the movie. In 1978 he filmed *Solos en la madrugada*, with some of the same topics portrayed in *Asignatura pendiente* and the same actors—José Sacristán and Fiorella Faltoyano—, a generational and social reflection of Spain and its inhabitants.

In 1980, a large group of Spanish directors combined their efforts in *Cuentos eróticos*. The list was as follows: Enrique Brasó (“La vida cotidiana”), Jaime Chávarri (“Pequeño planeta”), Emma Cohen (“Sueños rotos”), Fernando Colomo (“Koñensonaten”), Jesús García de Dueñas (“El vil metal”), Augusto Martínez Torres

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<sup>68</sup> The Spanish version was entitled *Cuernos a la catalana*.



(“Frac”), Josefina Molina (“La tilita”), Juan Tébar (“Hierbabuena”), and Alfonso Ungría (“El amor es algo maravilloso”).

I cannot end this section without mentioning *Arrebato*. Iván Zulueta filmed in 1979 an interesting, visual, and sensorial story about filmmaking, the creative fit—hence the title—, obsessions, distorted reality, sex, and drugs; the director himself had serious problems with controlled substances at the time. A different kind of movie and, according to Román Gubern, one of the most complex creations in the history of Spanish filmmaking (392). Even though original and intense, it was not very well received by the critics during the period; however, it has become a cult movie today. As an anecdote, filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar dubbed the voice of actress Helena Fernán Gómez and singer-actress Olvido Gara, a.k.a. Alaska, made an uncredited cameo in the movie.

I have analyzed in the previous pages the Spanish film productions whose topics referenced politics and eroticism. As I have shown, there were numerous movies that used both themes intermingled as part of their stories. The number of directors who did so was considerable, ranging from Academy-Award winners—García, Trueba, or Almodóvar—to those completely unknown by audiences and critics. Some did it tastefully and with a purpose, narrating stories where the use of nudity or political references was relevant. Others, however, used the subjects as a way to provoke, to take matters to an extreme, to transgress the rules imposed by the former regime, and to make a profit. Many of those did not stand the test of time; they, merely, filled a niche that years of repression had created. Together with this avalanche of new movies, filmmakers turned to books as foundations for their stories. In the next section I will analyze the books and novels that were adapted for the big screen and its influence.

#### 2.1.4. Book Adaptations and the Topics of the Transition.

Good stories have always fascinated directors. During this period, the same fact was true and many of them felt compelled to adapt novels for the big screen, both classic quality narrations and commercial best-sellers. Writer Fernando Vizcaíno Casas, previously studied, saw many of his novels adapted by director Rafael Gil. Among them, *Hijos de papá* (1980), *Y al tercer año resucitó* (1980), and *De camisa vieja a chaqueta nueva* (1982). The topics, as in the novels, were social criticism, Francoism, the Transition, and the hypocritical politics and politicians. He also directed other films, such as *Dos hombres... y, en medio, dos mujeres* (1977), where actress Nadiuska was, as the title indicates, involved with two men, father and son. Ramón “Tito” Fernández’s *La insólita y gloriosa hazaña del cipote de Archidona* (1979) was also the director’s interpretation of Camilo José Cela’s homonymous novel previously studied. The movie went beyond the book and became a collage of naked bodies and lustful men in 1970s Andalusia. He also directed, among others, *El adúltero* (1975) and *Gay Club* (1981), reflecting many of the topics and problems of the Spaniards during the period. Tomás Aznar directed in 1975 the adaptation of *El libro de buen amor*, loosely based on Juan Ruiz’s fourteenth-century book, with actor Patxi Andión naked in some scenes and looking for ideal love in a movie full of many of the erotic divas of the time—Blanca Estrada, Susana Estrada, Mabel Escaño, or Didi Sherman. The movie had a sequel in 1976, directed by Jaime Bayarri and starring Manolo Otero, Esperanza Roy, and Beatriz Escudero, among others—including future Almodovarian diva Carmen Maura.

Francesc Betriú adapted several novels—Mercé Rodoreda’s *La plaza del diamante* (1982) or Ramón J. Sender’s *Requiem por un campesino español* (1985),

among others. Following the trend of the period, he filmed *La viuda andaluza* (1976), with erotic star Bárbara Rey as a seductive widow who uses men; *Los fieles sirvientes* (1979); and *Playas y piscinas* (1981). Mario Camus is also well known for his novel adaptations. In 1979 he adapted Benito Pérez Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1979) and in 1982 Camilo José Cela's *La colmena*, both with excellent *mise-en-scène* and well received by audiences. In 1984, right after the end of the period, he did the same with Miguel Delibes's *Los santos inocentes*. Gonzalo Suárez also dedicated part of his productions to scripts based on novels. In 1974 he shot his version of Leopoldo Alas Clarín's *La Regenta*.

In conclusion, both classic novels and new creations were adapted for the big screen during the Transition years. As with the original screenplays, taste and commercial success played an important role in the way they were produced. Sometimes, a story was re-told so that nudity or political references could be incorporated and attract audiences—e.g., Juan Ruíz's tale. In other cases, however, the adaptation was in line with the writer's idea and maintained its quality, even when erotic images were added—for instance, Mario Camus's *La colmena*, where Camilo José Cela himself had a cameo appearance. Those are, still today, classic works of Spanish cinema. And an almost classic director of the period, as mentioned previously, was José Luis Garci. In the next section I will analyze in depth his film *Asignatura pendiente*, one of the clear examples of politics and eroticism intertwined in a story.

## 2.2. José Luis Garci's *Asignatura pendiente*. The “Sex-and-Politics” Course We Should Have Never Failed

José Luis Garci's *Asignatura pendiente* (1977) was one of the movies that best represented the so-called *tercera vía*<sup>69</sup> and the Transition to democracy in Spain. It is a story about the generational need to make up for lost time; the longing for the new democracy, for freedom of speech; the desire to talk about and, above all, experience sex and politics firsthand in the average Spaniard's daily life—including the subsequent disillusionment the outcome of the process would bring in later years. As many other films of the period, it encountered problems with censorship, which was still in effect.<sup>70</sup> A clear metaphor—or even allegory—for the very last stage of Francoism and the first steps into post-Franco Spain, *Unfinished business*, as it was translated, is a sometimes nostalgic, sometimes naïve, and somewhat critical look at the Spain of 1975-1976. It was a period when the country expected to “pass” all those “courses” on life failed during the dictatorship—hence the title—even when reality proved that some things, sometimes, remained unchanged. Political and sexual innuendo abound in the film, becoming the thread that permeates the entire story. Caparrós observed that the movie analyzed the entire society of the Transition, with a good dosage of humor, criticism, and the addition of nudity:

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<sup>69</sup> As Jordan and Morgan Tamosunas explain, *tercera vía* (third way) films “sought to confront similar issues to those exploited in the low-budget sex comedies aimed at a mass market. However, in doing so, they left to one side the crude gender stereotyping, the tasteless, toilet humour and the reactionary moralizing of the sex comedies and dealt with issues more seriously and conscientiously and with rather more critical bite” (67).

<sup>70</sup> As Gómez B. explained, the film “ha sufrido la prohibición de que el cartel anunciador tenga una silueta de Franco sobre la que se recorta la imagen de los protagonistas” (61).

Todo el estatus actual es puesto en la picota—amnistía, abogados laboristas, actividad y contradirecciones de miembros de partidos o sindicatos, referéndum, etc.—con enorme sentido del humor, no exento de “colmillo” y cierto “mal café,” junto a las concesiones de poco gusto habituales en esta época de “sarampión destapista.” (139)

*Asignatura pendiente* could be labeled, at first glance, as the narration of an adulterous relationship. But stating that would be like analyzing both Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856) and Clarín’s *La Regenta* (1884-1885) from the unidimensional perspective of the affair carried out by unfaithful wives. The same as the novel from *Vetusta* depicted the Spanish society of the late 1800s, Garci’s story likewise chronicled that of the late 1970s. The film presents the story of José (José Sacristán) and Elena (Fiorella Faltoyano), two individuals who dated as teenagers during Franco’s Spain. In 1975, however, they are both married to other individuals and have children. He is a labor lawyer, a direct reference to the political changes that were taking place during the “period of ‘soft dictatorship’ (or *dictablanda*)” (Kinder, *Blood* 5). She, on the other hand, is, as most women of the time, a housemaker—this is still more the Spain of the *Sección Femenina* than Lidia Falcón’s. They reconnect and feel the need to “pass” that course they could not even take during Francoism: sex. But sexual education is not the only class the couple—and, therefore, Spain—had to make up, since the Spaniards of the time, as Garci himself shows at the end of the movie, “had arrived late to everything.”

The film opens with Gloria Lasso's *Luna de miel*,<sup>71</sup> the romantic representation of the still idealistic and hopeful Spain, playing in the background. The beginning of the story is presented through voice-over comments, with both protagonists giving their account of their first encounter in their teenage years as some of the other characters—wife Ana (Silvia Tortosa), husband Paco (Simón Andreu), and the children—are introduced onscreen in a clear cinematic parallelism. Relationships in the respective households seem cordially cold, as that of marriages that have been together for a number of years and routine and boredom have taken over their lives. We notice here another subtle reference to the Spain of late Francoism, where people had given up hope and simply put up with the Establishment. Change was necessary, but still impossible, as the “significant other”—the symbol of the dictator—was still alive and “divorce” could not be granted.<sup>72</sup>

The loneliness of the female character in a rental apartment—with the unequivocal *muebles castellanos*<sup>73</sup>—in disarray is used in Garci's production also as a metaphor. An unmade bed and an ashtray full of cigarette butts present the symbology of a life that does not matter anymore. The moment of solitude shows the somewhat antithetical premise of the story and mimics, almost literally, the end, with the addition of the character of José on the screen. From here, the whole movie becomes a long flashback of the adulterous

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<sup>71</sup> Gloria Lasso—born Rosa María Coscolin i Figueras—was a prolific Catalanian and international singer. Even though she recorded hundreds of albums that went gold and platinum, she will always be remembered for her rendition of the song composed by Mikis Theodorakis and written by poet and actor Rafael de Penagos, “Luna de miel,” a romantic story of eternal honeymoon.

<sup>72</sup> Divorce did not become legal in Spain until 1981.

<sup>73</sup> Rental apartments in Spain are, in most cases, fully furnished. Before the appearance of Ikea, sturdy and inexpensive furniture—Rustic/Castilian style or *muebles castellanos*—were very common.

relationship of the protagonists—or, from a political perspective, the image of a country “in transition.”

The first onscreen political reference in the film is after the communication to the audience of the date: October 1, 1975. Franco’s death is only a month and twenty days away. However, some sectors of society fight to maintain the status quo of the former regime. The film depicts here a scene where cars with Spanish flags flood the screen; their passengers are yelling, among other things, *rojos al paredón*—“Reds” up against the wall—and distributing flyers. In this highly politicized scenario, Elena and José meet on the street for the first time in eighteen years. Time has gone by but Franco, although on his deathbed, is still Head-of-State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. In the course of their conversation, José references his stay in jail “por rojo”—because of his left-wing ideals. During this first meeting we notice “a speech by the dictator that can be heard in the background” (Pereira 160). Something similar will take place in the course of a conversation at José’s home, where we hear “news about Franco’s illness and the existing provisions for succession of the head of state” (Pereira 160).

As the rest of the cast is introduced, we keep noting the political innuendo almost in every scene. José’s partner is Antonio Rebolledo, a.k.a. Trotsky.<sup>74</sup> The first time he appears onscreen he is wearing a red sweater—symbolic reference to his ideals. Likewise, his significant other is “la Pepa”—unequivocal allusion to the 1812 Spanish Liberal Constitution.<sup>75</sup> Continuing with the references, the characters are portrayed

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<sup>74</sup> A clear reference to Leon Trotsky, the Russian Marxist theorist.

<sup>75</sup> *La Pepa*—Spanish nickname for *Josefa*, Josephine—was the colloquial name given to the Spanish Constitution of 1812, the founding document of Liberalism in the country, promulgated in Cádiz on March 19—St. Joseph’s and Father’s Day Spain.

working on the case of a client charged with illegal association—Meana, a member of communist trade union *Comisiones Obreras*. Their conversation reflects the political situation in a Spain where, even though the *caudillo* was dying, the dictatorial state machinery still imposed its law upon its subjects. The dictatorship has become, in a sense, less oppressive; however, political prisoners are still kept in jail—*los presos políticos*.

The protagonists start, with their adulterous behavior, a clandestine relationship which could also be considered “illegal association”—the same as the left-wing political parties during Franco’s Spain—and the image of rebellion against the regime and transgression in the ultra Catholic Iberian Peninsula; adultery is, in the eyes of the Church, a sin. It marks the beginning of the above-mentioned metaphor for their underground love story as the Spain of late Francoism and the Transition. Political references give way to sexual innuendo as they remember their first erotic encounters, which never went beyond a kiss or the fondling of breasts. Thus, they have to recover the stolen past and build a new future—both the relationship and the country. José’s proposal is an “erotic-sentimental tour” over the places they knew as adolescents. In order to carry out their plan and meet with each other, as any member of a clandestine party, they have to lie to the “authorities”—in this case, their spouses. Lying becomes a way to survive against the stream.

The nostalgic tour begins with El Dúo Dinámico’s background score<sup>76</sup> and walks hand in hand in their somewhat shabby return to 1960s Spain. Everything seemed to be

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<sup>76</sup> El Dúo Dinámico—Manolo de la Calva and Ramón Arcusa—was one of the most famous musical duos of the 1960s in Spain, with hit songs like “Quince años tiene mi amor” or “El final del verano.”



new—even though the characters are going down memory lane—, naïve, inviting, with exultant behaviors that do not reflect reality. Elena, as symbolic Spain, expresses loneliness and boredom—a country fed up with an everlasting marriage to the imposing figure of the *caudillo*. Epitome of *macho ibérico*, José will not take long to utter the sex question: “I would love to sleep with you,” he will say. They must sleep together to take care of their *asignatura pendiente*, their “unfinished business,” to recover what the past and Francoism took, stole from them, from the nation:

Nos han robado tantas cosas. Las veces que tú y yo debimos hacer el amor y no lo hicimos, los libros que debimos leer, las cosas que debimos pensar, que sé yo...pues eso, todo eso es lo que no les puedo perdonar. No sé, pero me parece que es como si nos hubiera quedado algo colgado, como aquellos asignaturas que quedaban pendientes de un curso para otro...como si no huiesemos acabado la carrera...y además se que nos vamos a morir sin acabarla.

Their affair begins with Trotsky’s comment regarding how José’s actions are beginning to resemble right-wing individuals’—he has a mistress. Under Rebolledo’s sempiternal communist perspective, having a lover is just another aspect of a capitalistic society. Their clandestine meeting place is, in the first encounters, Trotsky’s apartment. The *locus* is a constant political reference and a socialist shrine: a poster of “la Pepa” as Miss *Mundo Obrero*<sup>77</sup> 1975, a doorbell that used to be *The Internationale* hymn, or a picture of Lenin and revolutionary posters, among others, filling up the walls. But politics

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<sup>77</sup> *Mundo Obrero* is the newspaper published by the Communist Party of Spain (PCE). It will be analyzed in the “Media” section of this dissertation.

without eroticism is never the case during the film, although moralistic Spain almost prevented that from happening. Elena's socially learned guilty conscience bars her, at least at first, from the fulfillment of her desires. She is a woman in, still, Francoist Spain, and female treacherous behaviors are always evaluated with a negative connotation. The double standard mentioned earlier has a different regard for the adulterous. For a man, to have an extramarital affair is, sometimes, a reason for praise; never so for a woman.

Sexual intercourse is very subtle in this scene, considering the period, and love-making is completely omitted onscreen. However, as most female actresses during the first years of the Transition, Faltoyano had to show part of her anatomy—namely breasts and buttocks—following the trend. As Ana Burgallo stated, Spain dressed up in democratic clothes while women got undressed (198). Political references continue their parade after the non-explicit erotic encounter. José, at Elena's request, translates a Russian poster from the wall: "Destroying capitalism, the proletariat will also destroy prostitution . . . Workers, honor and respect working women!" The messages are allusions to women and their rights in the former USSR. Even though the first International Women's Day (IWD) was observed in the USA on February 28, 1909, it was the American Socialist Party the one that designated that day "in honour of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested against working conditions." ("International Women's Day"). Today, International Women's Day is observed on March 8 worldwide.

The ultraconservative society keeps imposing its rules, although we see an evolution in the way women start to think. Given the fact that she is naked in bed with someone not "approved" by the Catholic Church—she just made love to a man who is

not her husband and with no intent to procreate—, she is not ashamed of herself. And José gives us, once again, the title and reason for their relationship: their unfinished business. After that, another reference to the fallacy of Francoism, a system that fooled Spaniards in mass, and its oppressive methods—the commentary mentions the use of a towel as a symbol of censorship in a movie.

Jail and political prisoners were inherent in repressive Francoism, in any authoritarian state. Amnesty did not take place until October 1977. To show the situation in which the dissidents lived during the period, José visits, in Carabanchel,<sup>78</sup> the member of *Comisiones Obreras* they referred to at the beginning of the film—played by a dubbed Hector Alterio. He was the “*obrero de acero inoxidable*,” the stainless-steel worker, an allusion to his ideals that never rust or deteriorate, regardless of the harsh and endless circumstances. The scene is tense, as the hopes of those waiting for a change were waning. Franco’s death was imminent, but did not happen. And even when it finally did, almost two more years would be required for the law to free those whose ideals were not in line with the regime.

The relationship continues and becomes more open—just like the Spain of the *apertura*. Elena visits José in his office—the mistress appears in public—and there is a veiled reference to divorce, which would not be possible in Spain until 1981, six years after Franco’s death. The moments of illegal association expand in time. They are still in the honeymoon stage of the affair, although, as the symbolic and rebellious alliance against Francoism, its days are numbered. José, having been asked by Elena about the

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<sup>78</sup> Carabanchel was the name of a prison in the homonymous district of Madrid. It was shut down in 1998.

possible duration of their relationship, will quote Miguel Primo de Rivera and a reference to dictatorships as bicycles; when they stop moving, they fall—something similar happens to love, he will explain. This, according to Pereira, is “A dubious statement, not confirmed by historical experience though well in keeping with the conservative ideology of the film” (161). Thus, as the title of Gabriel García Márquez’s novel, their affair is nothing but the *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, the chronicle of a death foretold. It will last as long as there is repression and it maintains its status as rebellion; then, it will be pointless, as life must go on and create new relationships—the new state. As John Hopewell noted, in the end, “Like John Wayne leaving his girl behind as he rides out to war, José rides off to rejoin the democratic advance guard. He never asks Elena to be part of the transition with him” (111). But for now, as the hopes exist, as Franco is alive, the relationship will continue, clandestinely.

November 20, 1975, marked the date of Franco’s death. The movie uses a real radio communiqué broadcast by the Minister of Information and Tourism León Herrera y Esteban relaying the news. That also signals the beginning of the end for the affair, even though, the same as with Franco’s death, the changes in their association will be gradual. The movie shows the first Christmas of the transitional period and gifts are to be exchanged. The use of the presents will be symbolic. José’s comments regarding the possibility of losing his—a fancy lighter—symbolizes the loss of the interest in the relationship and the subsequent break-up in post-Franco Spain. It is the moment of the *desencanto*, the disenchantment or disillusionment that will affect both the affair and transitional Spain. Political references keep filling the plot. When she talks about the possibility of winning in games of chance, José will respond that “reds do not win the

lottery.” At this point, more than references to the process, the director uses real footage of 1976, the “año de la apertura,” as it is indicated. Censorship, amnesty, unemployment, demonstrations and police repression, Suárez, or Fraga, are some of the topics shown onscreen as a reflection of the situation of Spain that year. The images are seen while we hear El Dúo Dinámico’s *Como ayer*.

The protagonists’ second return to the town of their teenage summers, but this time in post-Franco Spain and in a new car—symbol of the new times—, signals the official end of the period. Franco is dead and the illegal association that needed to take care of the unfinished business and make up for lost time is about to take the same course. Back in the office, they learn that Meana gets four years for his illegal membership—still a harsh punishment for his alleged crime. Trotsky, on the other hand, is getting married, in Church, and wants to have children—a total change from his political and personal views as a communist and rebel against the system. There is a sarcastic reference to Catholicism and the fact that they have the “other life,” the hereafter. On the night out on the town, José will lose his lighter. That, as explained earlier, marks the symbolic end of the relationship. As the characters roam Madrid, political images keep flashing in the background. A *pintada*, a political graffiti on the wall, reads that, with Franco, we lived better, a reference to the way some sectors of society and the political spectrum felt when democracy brought undesired changes. Sex and politics keep being intermingled in the plot. As their conversation continues, and as good examples of *machos ibéricos*, women and sex are always topics of the dialogue.

The end of the flashback brings the movie back to the same scene where it started, to close the circle and obliterate itself. Elena is alone in the apartment. José comes in late

and, ironically, with a copy of Lasso's *Luna de miel*, which references eternal love. The loss of the lighter is mentioned and presented publicly—as explained earlier, the symbolic end of the relationship and the clandestine affair which is now pointless in post-Franco Spain. The bicycle has stopped running and has fallen. Feelings of “capitalistic guilt” flood the lawyer's mind, who feels a traitor to his own ideals—having a mistress as those right-wing individuals he criticizes. The relationship fulfilled its goal, passing the failed course, recovering the past, and rebelling against repressive Francoism. Franco's death signals the beginning of the future, the new hopes, and the need to leave the past, including Elena, behind. The female perspective is exposed as it was at the beginning of the story. Women are always the ones “stained” after an affair, the ones who lose in the public eye. But the future is here and they, the nation, must fight for it. The movie wraps up the same way it started, with *Luna the miel* in the background, this time not in reference to their love story but to the new and hopeful country. Yet, history will prove that change will also bring disillusionment for many. As the film comes to an end, Garci will list in the credits all his regrets and all the things the country lost with Francoism, together with those who made us the way we are:

A nosotros que hemos ido llegando tarde a todo, a la infancia, a la adolescencia, al sexo, al amor, a la política...nos quitaron el significado de cuanto nos rodeaba...y a los que nos hicieron así . . . a Luis Mariano, que nunca le dejaron en paz con eso de si era marica...y a Miguel Hernández que se murió sin que supiésemos que existía.

*Asignatura pendiente* represents a nostalgic and somewhat critical look at the Spain of the late Francoism and the Transition. Using an adulterous relationship as a

symbol of rebellion and transgression against the dictatorship, José Luis Garci indulges himself in a romantic, sexual, and political journey throughout the last year of the Franco regime and the first of the new democratic Spain. Sex is exposed as the *asignatura pendiente*, the unfinished business, the failed course that needed to be made up to pass and graduate. The relationship, as a bicycle and as the dictatorship will, eventually, stop and fall. The future is promising, even only in theory. Change will have to be gradual and disappointing, but will come and there is no time to look back. Full of political and sexual references, the film is a first step in the type of movies that were to come, less nostalgic, and much more explicit. The lifting of censorship in November 1977 marked the beginning of the race of the flesh until it, as a binge, will eventually level once the order is reestablished. The film, considered by Óscar Pereira “a pastiche—the result of lumping together, in the form of a film, a heterogeneous set of cinematic, visual, and sonic fragments—all highly stereotyped and therefore devoid of depth” (158-59), also represents a collage of moments in our recent history. But, unlike movies like *Forrest Gump* (1994), that, in a comedic way, covered almost thirty years of American history, Garci resolves his story in less than two, arguably two of the most important ones of the process due to the significant changes the country was about to experience.

If Garci explored the topics of politics and eroticism in a film full of nostalgia, director Eloy de la Iglesia immerses himself in the same issues but from a more complex perspective. Sex and political commentary come now, hand in hand, with homosexuality and political corruption—especially from reactionary sectors of society—in a film that establishes a correlation between both as symbols of a degenerate society.

### **2.3. Eloy de la Iglesia's *El diputado*. Left-Wing Politics and Homosexuality as Symbols of Transgression in Francoism and the Early Transition**

Homosexuality and left-wing ideals were, according to the political apparatus of Franco's dictatorship, crimes. The "Ley de vagos y maleantes," and later the "Ley de peligrosidad y rehabilitación social," included both, as previously explained. Likewise, for the ultracatholic society of the former regime, homosexual tendencies were an aberration. Transitional Spain, still under the influence of a repressive ideology, will regard sexual orientations other than heterosexual as an anomaly. Eloy de la Iglesia, the sempiternal transgressive filmmaker—or just a commercial opportunist for some critics—will go beyond conservative societal rules in *El diputado* (1977), where, following the trend of the period, the topics of sex and politics rule the plot of the story. But, unlike the previously examined narration in José Luis Garci's *Asignatura pendiente*, centered on an adulterous *heterosexual* couple, De la Iglesia's focuses on homosexuality in an extramarital relationship and establishes a parallel and a correlation between individuals with socialist ideals and homosexuals as marginal, clandestine, and criminal during Francoism and the early Transition. As Smith explains, "both kinds of people will be described in similar terms throughout the film . . . the object of sexual and political interest is identical" (*Laws* 144-45). Full of traces of Naturalism, Realism, and social denunciation, *El diputado* is a crude review of a reactionary and judgemental society against freedom of choice and the consequences of the transgression of its rules.

Eloy de la Iglesia's films, considered by part of the critics as low quality and simply commercial products or manifestos (Smith, *Laws* 150), are, however, a reflection of the society of the time:



The cinema of Eloy de la Iglesia is by no means academically respectable. One standard reference work rehearses the majority view that the criteria motivating his films are wholly commercial: sensationalism, crude topicality, melodrama. Yet de la Iglesia's films of the middle 70s and early 80s not only mark the first extended representation of gay men in Spanish cinema, they also stage an explicit and complex examination of the interplay between homosexuality, Marxism, and separatism. (Smith, "Homosexuality" 216)

*El diputado* depicts the story of Roberto Orbea—played, once again, by the ubiquitous José Sacristán—, a married lawyer and leftist politician with a homosexual orientation. Homosexuality, still seen as a sin, will end up in tragedy as right-wing pro-Franco radicals concoct a scheme to discredit the up-and-coming figure that involves the death of a *chapero*, a young gay prostitute. Sexual and political tendencies are interwoven in the film to an extreme. Movie credits are its first visual channel. As we read those, we are treated to Michelangelo's *David's* anatomy, which would be a simple artistic reference to the sixteenth-century work of art if most of the shots were not centered on the statue's close-up buttocks. Along with the Italian masterpiece, we are shown pictures of Lenin and the revolution, while the opening bars of the song "Canto a la libertad"<sup>79</sup> are playing in the background. The last image we see is the statue's penis. The parallelism is already established.

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<sup>79</sup> "Canto a la libertad" is one of the most famous songs by singer-songwriter José Antonio Labordeta. It will be analyzed in the "Music" section of this dissertation.

Most of the movie is a long flashback confession with sporadic moments of present voice-over narration depicting the protagonist's political and sexual tendencies connecting both as criminal actions. Furthermore, in a mock trial, Orbea defends ETA terrorists during the Burgos trial as well as himself accused of being homosexual, furthering the similarity of the crimes and the lack of freedom while Franco was in power. During the early years of the Transition, ETA will be seen as a consequence of the dictatorial regime. Once the process is over, and given the fact that their terrorist actions will continue, its members will be viewed as criminals and not as politicians.

Police brutality is depicted in the film from the beginning. The director reflects the actions of Francoist police toward leftist individuals as the protagonist develops his story. Interrogation tactics include the use of force—the individuals had committed “crimes” against the repressive state, lacking, therefore, any rights. However, criticism will go beyond the years of the regime, since police behavior towards the legalized socialist politicians follows the pattern exhibited during the dictatorship. After an attack by right-wingers, *los grises*—colloquial name for the police due to the gray color of their uniform— will also harass left-wingers who protested the abuse and detain Orbea and his wife Carmen. Police attitude has not changed in the first moments of democracy.

Homosexuality is exposed at the very beginning of the movie with a sense of guilt. Orbea says to have discovered it at fifteen. The fact made him suffer a crisis, since it was regarded, by others, as monstrous and against nature. Because of socially learned behavior, his choice is seen by himself as an aberration, not just a sexual preference, as an addiction the subject must repress. Heterosexual relationships are interpreted as the

only way out of marginalization—a marginal individual, both for his political ideas and his inner desires.

As in Garci's film, prison for political crimes plays an important role in the movie reflecting late Francoism and early Transition, before the amnesty that took place in November 1977. In De la Iglesia's production, the *locus* bears a double function, to agglomerate both sex and politics as crimes. In jail, political references abound, as the hopes of the end of repression are high while Fraga was a "ministro de gobernación." Allusions to other prisoners from real life, such as Marcelino Camacho and Ramón Tamames,<sup>80</sup> make the story more realistic—communist director Juan Antonio Bardem has a cameo appearance as well.

But prison is also the place where Orbea's repressed homosexual tendencies resurface—once again the parallelism of both as crimes—when he meets Nes, a young convict, a petty thief and part-time male prostitute for gay men charged with "peligrosidad social." The topic of homosexuality as something punishable permeates the movie. The *chapero* states, however, to do it only for money. The fact needs to be clarified and the "macho" outlaw feels the need to justify his behavior, in the pursuit of funds, never for pleasure. Being a criminal is not reprehensible in his eyes; being gay is. Even though sexual explicit scenes are not frequent in De la Iglesia's film, jail is also the confined space where parts of the male form appear for the first time. This is something unusual in the Spanish films of the Transition, where audiences, predominantly male, were more attracted to displays of female anatomy. In this movie, however, there is only

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<sup>80</sup> Marcelino Camacho and Ramón Tamames were two of the best-known communists during Francoism. The former was the founder of *Comisiones Obreras*.

one scene with a naked woman and explicit heterosexual sexual intercourse, being the rest homosexual. The depiction of the young man's penis gives course to Orbea's arousal and the lifting of the self-imposed repression of his homosexual tendencies, both in prison and outside when both are released. Following the trend, political references are depicted here too. The young prostitute comments on his presence in jail when the last execution of the regime took place—the five members of terrorist groups ETA and FRAP executed on September 27, 1975.

Out of jail, Orbea will analyze his behavior while in confinement. Once again, we are exposed to the “continuing parallel between political and (homo)sexual corruption” (Smith, *Laws* 147), homosexuality and marginality. During the confession to his wife, the protagonist will declare that in prison he re-discovered that sordid and marginalized environment. For him, homosexuality has always represented that inferior form of life, perpetuating the societal voice of criticism against diverse orientations. As a persecuted drug addict looking for his daily dosage, his inner self will entangle the public individual in the underworld of clandestine gay prostitution, the realm of *chaperos*, marginal youngsters who satisfy the desires of older men for money, a circle of dark allies and quick deals in cars. His behavior could cost him his prestige as a public an up-and-coming politician. And this will be the tool used by right-wing radicals to destroy his image and his life.

The depiction of the former regime's antidemocratic violence is shown in the character of Carrés, played by actor Agustín González. As explained above, right-wingers plot a scheme to destroy Orbea's political career using one of the young male prostitutes to pose as his lover. The inclusion of the street hustlers will be a channel to expose

extremist ideas regarding the democratic process, blamed for the changes in the new state. According to their theory, democracy and change have brought corruption and dissolute behavior to the once pure and Catholic country. It annihilated their dreams of rebuilding their Spain, a place where a gay thug can be “reformed” into a real man and a real Spaniard—an obsessive appeal to manhood and patriotism. The violence of right-wing extremists is portrayed in an encounter with young individuals glueing political posters on the walls prior to the “Primeras Elecciones Generales” in 1977—they are savagely attacked. The action is also utilized by the director to criticize the behavior of law enforcement. After the brutal incident, police will take no action. Likewise, in a similar scene, both violence and police permissiveness along with double standards will be exposed in *El Rastro*,<sup>81</sup> as communists stands are also raided by followers of the former regime—with no consequence for the aggressors.

Political aggressions by right-wing extremists became usual during the Transition years. The problem was taken to Congress. Mixing movie scenes with file footage—Santiago Carrillo, Dolores Ibarruri, and future president Felipe González are shown onscreen—, Orbea will allude to the “bandas de incontrolados” linked to legal parties who use Spain as an excuse<sup>82</sup> to kill, as was seen in the Atocha Massacre or Montejurra.<sup>83</sup> The country needs to control them to solidify democracy. He also refers

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<sup>81</sup> *El Rastro* is a popular outdoors flea market in Madrid.

<sup>82</sup> Spanish flags were the symbol used by the radical political groups as an example of patriotism.

<sup>83</sup> The Montejurra terrorist attack was carried out by Francoist and neo-fascist individuals on May 9, 1976, in the homonymous mountain against members of the Carlist Party. As a result, two men were gunned down and several were injured.

actions by, allegedly, left-wing individuals but actually carried out by right-wingers to incite and instigate a new coup d'état.

Another relevant *locus* in the film is the clandestine apartment Orbea owns. For years, the place was used for illegal political meetings. Now it becomes the place for his illicit encounters with Juanito, the prostitute with whom he will fall in love. Following the same decor trends as Garci's, the walls are full of images of Marx, Lenin, or Che, among others. Orbea, the political outlaw, becomes now the sexual outlaw, depicting, once again, the parallel between both actions. The same as in *Asignatura pendiente*, the left-wing individual has an apartment with a lover, just like those criticized by him. But the transgression is double in De la Iglesia's film, as the lover is a boy and a minor.

Also as in Garci's film, the illicit relationship will become more open, with public outings, used as an excuse to expose sexual and political tendencies. Juanito, like his counterpart Nes, sees his erotic rendezvous as business transactions. A boy *from the hood*, a hustler, and a petty thief cannot accept homosexuality. In an aggressive environment, that would show weakness. When the dialogue addresses Orbea's political ideals, Juanito states that he has never seen a "rojo" like him, gay and with money. Further conversations will address revolution and a fair society. Drugs will also be brought into the equation as a new form of transgression—socialism, adultery, homosexuality, and drugs.

Political talks are mixed with personal confessions and the negation of determinism. According to Juanito, determinism can be overcome. He should have been a manual worker; however, he is not. As it is often said, *little did he know* that determinism, in most cases, is inexorable and its only way out is death. The character is a

clear example of nineteenth-century Naturalism: a victim of society, poor, no known father, corrupted since childhood, a young man in an old man's world, doomed to fail, destined to prostitution and theft as a way of survival, and to the use of drugs as societal escape. In a way, Orbea is another victim of society. Even though not from a marginal upbringing, his political and sexual orientation will be cause for marginalization, the hiding of truth, and the questioning of his ideals.

Part of its Naturalism also involves the attempt of the salvation of the individual—although in this case, the social “salvation” involves sexual corruption. We witness the evolution of the relationship and Juanito's, as well as Orbea's wife's open approach and, allegedly, acceptance. With the feminine consent, the duo becomes a trio—metaphorically at first—and Orbea a pseudo Socialist Professor Higgins.<sup>84</sup> Juanito, following the change, becomes a “relative” who is introduced to art, politics, and a new socialist democratic life. Proximity turns the above-mentioned metaphorical trio into a tangible one. Under the influence of music, Ana Belén's *Abre la muralla*,<sup>85</sup> and drugs, uninhibited behaviors lead to the real *ménage a trois*—poorly done, but it, once again, contributes to the provocative trend of the film.

Juanito's education comes with a change of heart and his pseudo coming out of the closet. The fact that his relationship with Orbea is not just for money could lead to the possibility of his own homosexuality or, at least, acceptance of bisexuality. The confession will eventually include also the right-wing plot to frame Roberto, the combination of lover and father-figure he never had. But his education will not be able to

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<sup>84</sup> Professor Henry Higgins, the famous phoneticist from the 1956 musical *My Fair Lady*—based on George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

<sup>85</sup> Based on poet Nicolás Guillén's poem “La muralla.”

stop the political machinery, depicting the ugliest face of Francoism. A buzzing fly becomes the symbolism for the constant threat of radical sections of society and Nes the symbol for the power of money and corruption; as he himself explains when Orbea asks for his reasons to betray him: “It was easy for you to buy me off; so was for them.”

The pending death of Juanito and inner conscience are used to analyze the behavior of socialism and communism towards homosexuality. De la Iglesia himself criticized communist tendencies regarding same-sex relationships and his films in an interview in *El Mundo*:

Mira, en realidad había un juego no del todo sincero. En aquella época el Partido quería ser tolerante, emerger como un grupo abierto donde no existían dogmatismos. Quería ser moderno, en el peor sentido de la palabra. Y yo lo que trataba era..., bueno, pues de llevarles contra las tablas de eso. De hecho, logré que Santiago Carrillo y todo el Comité Ejecutivo, ya muerto Franco, claro, fueran al estreno de una de mis películas más polémicas, *El diputado*, donde la política y la homosexualidad jugaban a partes iguales. Ya te digo, lo de ellos era un juego para buscar votos. Luego el Partido se dio cuenta de que los votos estaban realmente en las masas conservadoras, es decir, no yendo a ver *El diputado*, sino asistiendo a misa o a alguna procesión. Mirando atrás te das cuenta de que fueron muy crueles. No hay que olvidar que durante muchos años llevaron una política de represión y tiro en la nuca. (“Eloy de la Iglesia”)



As Ryan Proust noted, “De la Iglesia uses Orbea—a party-political Orpheus—to force the well-meaning Marxist’s class-consciousness into the world where his political theory resides in the abstract but rarely travels for real” (qtd. in Mira 160).

Transgression of societal Francoist rules implies death. In a gory scene, we see a dead Juanito with a full-blooded face as part of the political plot to frame the socialist politician. It is the punishment for a behavior against nature in a, still, ultraconservative and reactionary society ruled by neo-fascist ideals. Those not in line with the regime are criminals and must perish. The Transition still had a long way to go to accept the Otherness. From there, the movie, following the same technique as Garci’s, comes back to the present to close the circle as Orbea heads to the party’s congress to end the long confession depicted in the flashback. The song “Cantaremos a la libertad” and a tear close the film.

Eloy de la Iglesia’s *El diputado* is a naturalistic analysis of the society of late Francoism and the early years of the Transition. Using the parallelism and correlation between homosexuality and left-wing ideals as crimes under reactionary societies, De la Iglesia constructs a story where the characters are determined by birth. In the case of Roberto, by a sexual orientation that he has been taught to regard as monstrous; for Juanito, the hoodlum who never knew his father, because the lack of means lead him to delinquency. Political manipulation and corruption are depicted as part of the Transition, where radical individuals and Franco followers intended the return of the dictatorial schemes. A movie considered commercial and provocative, was, at the same time, the study of a period in Spain’s most recent history.

As in the “novel” section of this dissertation, my study would not be complete without the analysis of the cinematic works produced by women, something that will contribute to expand the perspective of this research and, likewise, avoid a biased approach. Female directors, just like their male counterparts, immersed themselves, although in a lesser numbers, in the same topics that flooded the period.

#### **2.4. Women Directors: Pilar Miró, Josefina Molina, Emma Cohen, and Lina Romay**

Even though women played an important part in the cinema of the Transition, and actresses became the soul of the period, the process was reversed in directorial tasks, as well as in many other capacities in society. To put it simply, at the beginning of the historical moment, women were still the foundation of the family (Bugallo 2), as wives and as mothers, but not as leaders. In a patriarchal society, leading roles were men’s turf—the world, as expressed previously by Beauvoir, still belonged to men. The number of women behind the lens was scarce—and, oddly enough, still is, although not just in Spain. Only a few were granted access to decision-making positions and to be able to write their own story, from their unique perspective. With the exception of Ana Mariscal—who did not direct any films during the Transition—, arguably, the one who best represented the group was Pilar Miró:

La vida profesional de Pilar Miró ha transcurrido por cauces no convencionales, incluso si se la compara con mujeres profesionales. La “palabra clave” (si utilizáramos un lenguaje informático) más abundante en su *curriculum* profesional es “la primera.” La primera mujer realizadora de TVE, la primera mujer que ocupa un cargo político como el

de Directora General de Radiotelevision Espanola, la primera, . . . incluso la primera mujer sometida a un consejo de guerra. (García de León 166)

Miró, who after the Transition became the Director General of Cinematography and the head of Spanish public radio and TV, during the period went against the rules and opposed the Establishment; the result was a court-martial for her representation of *El crimen de Cuenca* (1979), a film based on a true story that criticized the role of the *Guardia Civil* in a murder case. The movie was rated “S,” even though eroticism was not its goal—there is only brief nudity in the breast-feeding scene in jail. This happened to a number of films that, even though had nothing to do with sex, “were deemed potentially offensive on account of extreme violence or incendiary politics—the most notable example was *El crimen de Cuenca* (Pilar Miró, 1979) . . .” (Kowalski 188-89).

The crime that the movie depicted took place in the province of Cuenca, Spain, in 1910. Two men were charged with the murder of José María Grimaldos. The individuals, after being severely tortured by the *Guardia Civil*, confessed to the crime and were condemned by a judge, even though the body of the victim was never found. They were sentenced to eighteen years in prison, but they were incarcerated for eleven. In 1926, the allegedly dead Grimaldos reappeared. He was alive and living in a nearby town. The *Guardia Civil*—except one of them, who did not join the torture—had punished, brutally and mercilessly, two innocent men. The movie denounced the crime, i.e., the one committed by the authorities and the society in general—family, police, and politicians with their false accusations. Because of its explicit content, a detailed depiction of police aggression, it was censored and sequestered during the Transition. The film, eventually, opened in 1981. Before the controversial *El crimen de Cuenca*, Miró directed in 1976 *La*

*petición*—based on the Emile Zola’s short story “Por una noche de amor”—, about an evil, ambitious, and manipulative young woman in 1900s Spain that portrayed a seminaked Ana Belén; this nudity granted the film “twenty amputations” (Monterde 33) by the censors.

Josefina Molina is, the same as Miró, one of the very few women directors in Spain. She combined her work both on TV and cinema. For television, during the period, she directed in 1978 an adaption of Miguel Delibes’s *El camino*—childhood memories in a little Castillian town and a social chronicle of Franco’s Spain. In 1980, Molina was one of the directors who took part in the movie *Cuentos eróticos*, previously mentioned, with the segment “La tilita.” Her last film of the Transition was *Función de noche* (1981), her most important production according to Gubern, depicting the life of a stage actress (Gubern 393).

Emma Cohen, a well-known Spanish actress and life partner of actor-director Fernando Fernán Gómez, starred in a number of films during the Transition, such as *Tigres de papel*, *Bruja más que bruja*, or *Solos en la madrugada*, in addition to some of Mariano Ozores’s films—*Mayordomo para todo* (1976) or *El apolítico* (1977). As a director, the same as Josefina Molina, she directed a segment of *Cuentos eróticos*—the one entitled “Hierbabuena.” Lina Romay is one of the best-known actresses of the horror and S-rated movie scene. Life partner of director Jesús Franco’s, she starred in a great number of his films—*Shining Sex* (1977) or *Aberraciones sexuales de una mujer casada* (1981), to name a few. As a director, and using different aliases—Candy Coster or Lulú Laverne, among many others over the years—, she worked on films like *El huésped en la niebla* (1980) or *Confesiones íntimas de una exhibicionista* (1983). After the Transition

she followed the same trend, directing *Una rajita para dos* (1984), *Un pito para tres* (1985), or *Las chuponas* (1986)—the titles leave no room for imagination—either alone or sharing co-directorial tasks with Franco.

Finally, the previously mentioned Cecilia Bartolomé directed in 1977 her first feminist film. It was *Vámonos Bárbara*, the story of a 40-year-old married woman who questioned the conservative social and religious rules of Francoism and patriarchal society. She left her husband, together with her daughter Bárbara—hence the title—, and went on trip to explore life, freedom, democracy, women’s role in society, or sexual relationships, among others, in this new Spain of the Transition.

In conclusion, as I have reviewed in this section, the number of women who were able to find a place behind the lens during the Transition was small compared to their male counterparts. This is a trend that, even though sad to say, is still the rule in 2011, not only in Spain but throughout the world. With the exception of the successful productions previously mentioned—many of which were only for a minority, like those by Romay—, the role in the movie industry for women seemed to be reserved in front of the camera, not behind. During the period, however, those who accepted directorial tasks, dared to deal with topics as controversial as those tackled by men. The inclusion of those granted them the infamous “S” rating. These will be analyzed in the following section.

### **5. The S-rated Movies: When Transgression Pays Off**

If, as stated above, transgression and/or provocation were the names of the game during the period, S-rated movies were the epitome of such trend in order benefit financially from it. The films, in most cases, will not be remembered for their quality or their plots, but for their role against previously established rules. Their stories, however,

filled a niche. They were generally horror movies and sexually explicit situations that could surprise some individuals in the still repressed society of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Those movies that, according to the Establishment, stepped beyond the line of what was considered the norm, and could offend the audience—*herir la sensibilidad del espectador*—were automatically granted the “S” sign. The number was high. As Kowalsky noted:

Between 1977 and 1982, the Spanish Ministry of Culture classified some 424 pictures with the S rating. Just under 300 of these films were of foreign provenance, while Spanish productions or coproductions accounted for approximately 130. (188-89)

Most of these films were just an excuse to overflow the screen with flesh, primarily feminine, and oversatiate the inner desires and fetiches of the repressed *españolitos*, deprived of its visualization for almost four decades. According to Ponce, they were also a way for the government to prevent real pornographic movies from arriving in the country, as well as to commercialize films banned by the former censors (102). Script quality was never an issue—even though some of its directors claimed their artistic component—, as long as female bodies were up to par and breasts abounded. Along with nudity, the goal was to shock audiences and resurface the darkest instincts. Thus, female naked bodies will be shown, not only in bedroom scenes, but also in convents, women’s prisons, boarding schools, and sinister contexts, with films full of nuns, monster victims, naïve students, or lonely housewives eager to engage in sexual intercourse with service men—the plumber, the electrician, or the TV repair guy were some of the best choices. In most cases, actresses had no option and they had to strip

down if they wanted to work. According to a section of society—namely men—, that was freedom. For female sectors, it meant objectification of their gender and humiliation.

The first S-rated movie in Spanish history was *Una loca extravagancia sexy* (1977), directed by Enrique Guevara (Gómez B. de Castro 79). Jesús Franco was one of the best representatives of the period. Pavlović noted that, “as an exploitation filmmaker, he actually explores the extremes of cinematic medium himself. . . pornography that frequently combines with other genres (mostly horror)” (108, 116). Prolific as no other, he directed hundreds of movies during the Transition, using his name or a great number of aliases. In addition to Franco’s works, iconic titles of the subgenre were Carlos Aured’s *El fontanero, su mujer y otras cosas de meter* (1981)—starring the aforementioned Lina Romay— or *Holocausto canibal* (1980)—a gore pseudo documentary on cannibalism produced in Italy. However, movies like *El crimen de Cuenca*, as explained previously, were also marked with the tainted “S.”

But 1982 marked the beginning of the end for this type of movies:

La nueva legislación “X,” unida al agotamiento de los espectadores y de ciertas salas cinematográficas, darán como consecuencia que el cine “S” ya es historia. En 1983, de una producción de 99 largometrajes, sólo 9, un diez por ciento, obtendrán la calificación de “S,” “X,” o “salas especiales” (Gómez B. 79-80).

The S-rated movies represented, like the period during which they were produced, a product “en transición,” a middle point between light erotic comedies and hard-core porn. They filled a gap and fulfilled its pupose: break conservative rules, shock audiences, and profit from it. However, both the boredom of the audiences with this soft version of more

radical productions and the advent of real pornographic movies consigned them to oblivion; just as DVDs and, currently, the Internet, condemned X-rated movie theaters to disappearance.

I do not want to finish this chapter without a reference to one of the most interesting group of artists in the Spanish film industry that appeared in the 1960s and whose members—at least some of them—are still active. I am referring to *La Escuela de Barcelona*, the Barcelona School of Film, a place that produced filmmakers as well known as Vicente Aranda or Gonzalo Suárez.

## **2. 6. *La Escuela de Barcelona***

*La Escuela de Barcelona* was a movement born in Catalonia and influenced, in part, by French *nouvelle vague*. However, their goal was to create their own style, away from the rest of the cinema created in Spain. Among its most important representatives were Vicente Aranda, Jaime Camino, Pere Portabella, Jorge Grau, Gonzalo Suárez, or Román Gubern, to name a few. Teresa Gimpera, on the other side of the lens, was the acting muse.

Vicente Aranda was, arguably, the best-known representative of the Barcelona School of Film. In 1976 he depicted the topic of transsexuality in *Cambio de sexo* (1976), starring Victoria Abril and, perhaps, the most famous transsexual in Spain, Bibi Andersen, showing her penis. *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1979) was Aranda's adaptation of Juan Marsé's Planeta-Award winning novel previously studied, starring, once again, Victoria Abril and Chilean actor Lautaro Murúa. With the movie, as Antoine Jaime explained, the director decided to take Marsé's complex prose to the big screen, a difficult task since it had to show the ambiguous game presented by reality, the



fabrication of truth, and deceiving appearances (139). *Asesinato en el comité central* (1982) was also an adaptation of a novel, in this case one of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's Pepe Carvalho's series stories. Jaime Camino was reviewed in the section dedicated to movies centered on the Civil War and Francoism with his film *Las largas vacaciones del 36*. Gonzalo Suárez, as stated, directed *La Regenta* for TVE in 1974, starring Emma Penella and Adolfo Marsillach. During the Transition he filmed *Beatriz* (1976), based on Valle-Inclán's short stories "Beatriz" and "Mi hermana Antonia," with a possessed and sensual Nadiuska. In 1977, however, he directed *Parranda*, a drama centered on violence, sex, and the effects of alcohol. Jorge Grau gained fame through the controversial *La trastienda*. Pere Portabella shot in 1977 the political documentary *Informe general sobre algunas cuestiones de interés para una proyección pública*. Santiago Juan-Navarro argued that the film depicted the essence of the preconstitutional debate, giving the floor to the future protagonists of the political and intellectual scene and becoming a synthesis of Portabella's clandestine political movies ("Spanish Cinema").

In conclusion, the Spanish films of the Transition represented a radical change in relation to the productions commercialized prior to the death of Franco. Even though during the last years of the dictatorship the regime tried to extrapolate and mimic what other Western societies were experiencing—mainly regarding eroticism and as a false symbol of modernization—, the reality is that, with the advent of the new democratic state, and due to the almost forty years of political and sexual repression, Spaniards saw an avalanche of films centered on the two topics considered taboo. Some were done with quality and were critically acclaimed productions; others, however, were just cheap commercial products looking for easy profit and to fulfill the fantasies of oversexed

males. Many filmmakers reviewed the country's most recent history—namely the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition—, now with new freedom, which gave way to harsh criticism. For some critics, this marked the end of metaphorical cinema—which had added, in many cases, quality to their creations, such as in *Furtivos*—and the beginning of explicitness. Regarding sexual content, and taking into account that the country was, still, a primarily patriarchal society, nudity was reserved for female actresses, who, for many, were objectified and “lowered to the rank of a thing” (Beauvoir 89). For others, however, nudity represented rebellion against the decades of constraint. In any case, the (ab)use of these themes was a clear reaction to an excessive repression that felt the need to go, in cases, and as mentioned earlier, to the extreme as part of an almost cathartic procedure. Completed the process, eroticism and political references became mainstream and found more subtle ways to reach the audiences who no longer needed to be shocked.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEATER AND MUSIC IN TRANSITION

#### **3.1. The Theater during the Transition. Sex and Politics Onstage**

If novels and films during the Transition years were loaded with erotic and political references, theater, the live representation of a subjective reality, followed the same trend. Spain, as we explained earlier, had been a harshly repressed country for almost four decades regarding sexual matters. So much so that, during the dictatorship, “the history of sexuality must be seen first of all as the chronicle of an increasing repression” (Foucault, *Sexuality Vol. 1:5*); something similar applies to the expression of political ideology that differed from that of the regime. Now that the severity of the laws had somewhat loosened—although, as we will see later, some plays endured the last stages of incomprehensible puritanism—, writers, playwrights, and stage directors enjoyed this new-found freedom to create. Some did it, as in other cultural fields, with taste and with a message to convey. Others, however, simply jumped on the bandwagon and found that any excuse was justifiable to literally undress their characters and criticize coarsely, either the former regime or the recent democratic state—depending on the ideals of the authors—, in many of the works that premiered during the period. They were more commercial products with the intent to sell. After all, as Bourdieu states, “the fields of cultural production are universes of belief which can only function in so far as they succeed in simultaneously producing products and the need for those products” (*Field* 82).

During the Transition, audiences attended the premiere of a few hundreds of plays by one hundred and forty playwrights and almost forty groups (Pérez ix). It was

also the period of the so-called rescue operation, the *operación rescate*.<sup>86</sup> However, it was a time not exempt of problems, mainly financial, because, as director José Tamayo expressed in late 1976, it was more difficult for authors to see their plays onstage during Monarchy than it had been during Franco's Minister Arias Salgado's term, due to budget cuts and the suppression of state aid to private companies (qtd. in Amell 104). In any case, and considering the adversities, numerous plays debuted over the period. A high number of them had references to the political situation of the moment and the dictatorship, or, simply, wanted to unveil the human body in an attempt to break boundaries and shock the audiences with something—female nudity—that was such a taboo under authoritarian premises.

### **3.1. 1. Eroticism and the Plays of the Transition**

There were many examples during the period where the only important feature of a play was nudity—sometimes in racy situations—, with no other artistic contribution than the beauty of the female body itself. As Andrés Amorós explained, during the period, “porn theater” multiplied (150). Audiences in attendance were aware of that and, in a sense, that is all some wanted; or that was what producers were giving them.<sup>87</sup> They were simple stories with a touch of eroticism. Some were done with taste and a good comedic tempo; others, not so much so, were just looking for the pointless display of flesh. Enrique Bariego's *Camas separadas* (1975) was a clear example of eroticism for

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<sup>86</sup> *Operación rescate* references the attempt to recover the plays that could not be shown onstage during Francoism. As Amorós explained, we had the opportunity “tan largamente esperada, de ver *Los cuernos de don Friolera*, de Valle-Inclán . . . la versión de Ángel Facio de *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, de García Lorca . . . la versión de *Divinas palabras* dirigida por Víctor García . . .” (149).

<sup>87</sup> Plays, the same as films and any other artistic manifestation, are ruled by trends and markets. Many writers need to follow them in order to have commercially successful works.

eroticism's sake. His play was nothing but an excuse to strip characters—*el destape* at its height. Following the same trend was Manuel Baz—or Santos, his real name—and *El lío nuestro de cada día* (1978), a comedy with racy love affairs, ladies in lingerie, and political references (Santiago Castelo, qtd. in Pérez 60). In the same fashion was *La loca tentación* (1976), a musical by Victor Andrés Catena that, as its title pointed out, was full of temptations and risqué scenes.

Victor Fernández Antuña's plays centered, mostly, on eroticism, as some of his titles show—e.g., *La sexy cateta* (1976) or *Una cateta sexy en Madrid* (1980). His last work of the period, *Lady Mariposa* (1980), followed the same trend. It was a story about an English couple where she was a transsexual, he was gay, and together they killed their lovers (Eduardo Haro Tecglen, qtd. in Pérez 145). Homosexuality was also the topic of Ángel Fernández Montesinos's *Lo mío es de nacimiento* (1978), a story full of stereotypes. Francisco Ors abounded in the same topics, but with a twist, in *Contradanza* (1980). The author depicted the hypothesis of Queen Elizabeth I as a gay man and the actions it implied, including a hypocritical Lord Henry willing to marry her. José María Bellido's *Esquina a Velázquez* (1975) dealt, among others, with two topics in line with those previously studied: homosexuality—a young actor who pretends to be gay thinking that will help him in his career—and prostitution, with a lady opening a brothel in her own house.

Sex and eroticism were also, mainly, the topics in Manuel Pozón's plays: *Caliénteme usted...el pijama* (1978) or *Ande yo caliente...y desnúdese la gente* (1979). Something similar applied to Enrique Barreiro and his plays *Satán azul* (1978)—a cabaret-type show, more than a classic play, full of naked bodies and touches of Satanic

innuendo—and *Muñecas* (1979), an S-rated musical. Once again, sex, careless lives, alcohol, and drugs were some of the topics proposed by Teodoro López Lara in *Ana o en la urbe se muere uno de risa* (1979). It was the story of a group of *pasotas*<sup>88</sup> who made no effort and could not care less about anything. Nudity and eroticism were the main parts of *Una gata en mi cama* (1977), by Rafael Richart, a comedy of errors about a cheating young woman with a tendency to display her anatomy onstage.

Santiago Moncada's plays focused on couples and their troubles, in many cases due to sex—frustration, adultery, ménage a trois, etc. Thus, *Violines y trompetas* (1977), *Siempre no es toda la vida* (1979), *Salvar a los delfines* (1979), *Las orejas del lobo* (1980), or *Las tormentas no vuelven* (1982). Couples—but, this time, famous—and their wedding nights were also visited by Jaime Portillar in *Las cien y una noches de bodas* (1978), a happy satire on *destape* (“Estreno de las cien y una noches de bodas”).

Critically acclaimed playwright Alfonso Paso talked about the battle of the sexes and the eternal Casanova in *Enseñar a un sinvergüenza*, a light comedy—with more insinuation than explicit eroticism—that first opened in 1968 and was onstage for over fifteen years, starring Pepe Rubio. It was made into a movie in 1970, directed by Agustín Navarro and also starring Rubio with the addition of actress-singer Carmen Sevilla in the part of the teacher. Something similar to *Enseñar a un sinvergüenza* was depicted by Roberto Romero in *Joven, rico y...caradura* (1978), a play that repeated the character and even the lead actor, Pepe Rubio. In *Los derechos de la mujer* (1975), Paso wrote about a man that will do whatever necessary to seduce a woman—including pretending to

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<sup>88</sup> Even though, as explained earlier, most people became involved in the political changes of the period, a sector of society chose the opposite direction. They were known as *pasotas*—derived from the verb *pasar*, to pass, in the sense of declining, letting something go by. The hippy-like individuals showed an indifferent, careless, and effortless attitude towards life, displaying hostility against society.

be gay. *La zorra y el escorpión* (1977) also portrayed constant and obsessive references to homosexuality and sadomasochism (Manuel Gómez Ortiz, qtd. in Pérez 347). Finally, classics were revisited during the period too. An example was Salvador Espriu's *Fedra* (1979), with Nuria Espert in the main role. But, needless to say that, following the trend of the period, the author was more interested in the almost incestuous erotic matter between Fedra and her stepson than anything else (Manuel Gómez Ortiz, qtd. in Pérez 134).

Many authors found excuses to bring nudity onstage, regardless of plot or quality of the play, as a response to decades of repression. For some audiences, mainly male, that was enough, since all they wanted was to see what had been banned for decades; and, the more, the better. Others, however, used the naked body as an addition to their creations in situations where nudity was appropriate. Another group of writers, free of political constraints in the new democratic state, felt the need to criticize society, both Francoist and post-Francoist. Those plays will be analyzed in the following section.

#### **4.1.2. Sociopolitical Criticism Onstage. Francoism and the Transition Revisited**

Numerous plays of the period, unlike the previous ones studied, centered on the social and political commentary of the period and the former regime, in different kinds of formats. During the period, audiences could see criticism of Francoism and, at the same time, a “right-wing theater” within what Ángel Berenguer labeled as “Tendencia Restauradora.”<sup>89</sup> Examples were Eloy Herrera's *Un cero a la izquierda* or Antonio D.

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<sup>89</sup> Berenguer considers three trends in the theater of the period:

A. *Tendencia Restauradora*—in line with the Francoist ideology. Examples are Antonio D. Olano, Eloy Herrera, Emilio Romero, or Pablo Villamar.

Olano's *Cara al sol con la chaqueta nueva*—both will be analyzed later. On the other side of the spectrum, authors like Alfonso Sastre talked about revolutionary theater (García Lorenzo 103). Whatever the trend, authors were eager to elaborate their ideals onstage. An example of this was the trio Manuel Vicent, Carlos Luis Álvarez “Cándido,” and Francisco Umbral, whose play *Cabaret político* premiered in 1978. The story was comprised by three sketches—*Don Tancredo*, *La Bella Otero*,<sup>90</sup> and *Los felices cuarenta*—, written by the different authors. According to José Monleón, the playwrights denounce the grotesque and impolite Spain throughout history (qtd. in Pérez 33). Miguel Signes's *Antonio Ramos, 1963* (1977) was a drama centered on the accident suffered by a worker. It was a social denunciation story well received by the critics:

Por fin . . . texto político, social y moral, un texto de denuncia, no panfletario, no primario, no mimético. Por fin un texto adulto, reflexivo, integrador de los factores humanos en su entorno social, técnicamente maduro, dramáticamente redondo, éticamente grave . . . *Antonio Ramos, 1963* constituye una de las requisitorias sociales más duras de cuantas yo he visto sobre un escenario. (“Antonio Ramos, 1963”, drama redondo y grave”)

Fernando Arrabal is one of the most prolific and well-known Spanish writers.

Among his works are novels, poetry, plays, and filmscripts. A declared anti-Francoist—

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B. *Tendencia Innovadora*—intending only an “innovación formal de las fórmulas teatrales propias de los escenarios comerciales, fundamentalment la comedia.” Authors in this trend are Antonio Gala, Santiago Moncada, Juan José Alonso Millán, Julio Mathias, or Alfonso Paso.

C. *Tendencia Renovadora*—the writers advocate for the need for change “en todos los planos de la vida española.” Alfonso Sastre, Fernando Arrabal, Fernando Fernán Gómez, Rafael Alberti, or Els Joglars, are some of the authors in this trend (39-40).

<sup>90</sup> Agustina Otero Iglesias was a famous Spanish-born dancer, singer, actress, and courtesan who resided in France until her death in 1965.



he was labeled *persona non grata* by the former regime—, Arrabal moved to France during the 1950s. His writings are full of political innuendo. An example was *Oye, Patria, mi aflicción*, that premiered in Spain in 1978. A clear criticism of Francoism, the play was banned in the country on 13 June 1975 (Lorenzo López Sánchez, qtd. in Pérez 47). It opened in Belgium over a year later, on 22 October 1976. It narrated the story of a blind and deaf duchess, a castle in ruins, and a land full of enemies, metaphors used by the author to criticize the state of Spain during the dictatorial regime and its values. The same as Arrabal, Rafael Alberti was also a well-known anti-Francoist poet, one of the best of the *Generación del 27*. He also wrote plays. In 1978, his political *Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado* premiered in Spain—although it was written in 1956 and first shown in 1973 in Rome. It was considered by some critics his best political drama (“Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales”). It also established the correlation between 1936, the beginning of the Civil War, and 1808, the invasion of Napoleonic troops, with Goya’s characters coming to life to fight for freedom and to defend Madrid, and the country, against oppression. Previously, in 1976, his play *El adefesio* premiered in the country. Life and death, freedom, and family repression—a woman acting as a man, dictating rules—are some of the topics of Alberti’s work that first opened in Buenos Aires in 1944.

Juan Benet, previously studied in the “Novel” section of this dissertation, also wrote, in 1958, *Anastas o el origen de la Constitución*. The play was revisited in 1980, with a new and updated production. The title could not be any more in agreement with my study, since it is a political farce that tries to explain Spain’s democratic Constitution (José Monleón, qtd. in Pérez 65). Another Benet, Josep María, wrote *Motín de brujas*

(1980), a drama that dealt with feminism, politics, and religion, as we follow the misadventures of six cleaning ladies who rebel against a corporation—personified by a man. It was directed by Josefina Molina, previously studied in the section on “Films of the Transition”. Francoism was also chronicled by Antonio Martínez Ballesteros in *Los comediantes* (1982). The play reviews a decade in the history of Spain, the one between 1959 and 1968, that marked “twenty-five years of peace” in the country (“Los comediantes”). Manuel Martínez Mediero also criticized Francoism and the dictatorship in *El último gallinero* (1982). Likewise, Luis Matilla in *Ejercicios para equilibristas* (1980), where, in its first exercise, we witness the citizens under surveillance by the oppressive regime. Fascism was reviewed by Luis Riaza in *Retrato de dama con perro* (1979). The story revolved around the birth of *il fascio* and those in power.

Highly acclaimed playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo talked about political torture in *La doble historia del doctor Valmy*. The play was previously censored in 1963 and opened in the UK. Finally, in 1976, it premiered in Spain. Political and social criticism was also tangible in *La detonación* (1977), establishing a parallel between Mariano José de Larra’s Spain and that of the Transition; in *Jueces en la noche* (1979), with a protagonist who was a former minister under Franco who evolves and is haunted by remorse (“Aplazado”); and, to some extent, in *El caimán* (1981), with an alligator as a symbol of evil power against the poor.

Children’s stories can also be re-told with a political twist. Thus, Jesús Campos García wrote in 1978 *Blancanieves y los siete enanitos gigantes*, a re-writing of the famous story with clear references to Francoism, where the queen symbolized the dictatorship and the seven dwarves were, in actuality, giants tricked and oppressed by the

evil power. His 1980 play *Es mentira* was also a tribute to those who endured torture. Juan Antonio Castro's *De la buena crianza del gusano* (1975) was, likewise, an allegory of fascism and the creation of perfect individuals. His play *¡Viva la Pepa!* (1980) was a review of *Las Cortes de Cádiz*, the history of Spain during Napoleonic invasions, as well as social criticism.

Fermín Cabal in *Tú estás loco, Briones* (1978) criticized the nepotism of the former regime, the lives of those close to it, how they benefited from the system, and, at the same time, how the democratic changes could affect them personally. The dictatorship was also revisited in *¿Fuiste a ver a la abuela?* (1979), a play that offered a look back for those who suffered repression in every aspect of life: family, religion, education, sex, and politics (Miguel Ángel Medina, qtd. in Pérez 92).

One of the main writers studied in the “Novel” section of this dissertation was Miguel Delibes. In 1979 he saw his 1967 book *Cinco horas con Mario* made into a play. The story was also revision and criticism of Francoist society in a monologue—or, rather, a dialogue with no answers—by Mario's widow, Carmen, after his death. It was directed by Josefina Molina. Another adaptation was *El español y los siete pecados capitales*, which premiered just before the beginning of the Transition, on March 29, 1975. Fernando Diaz-Plaja adapted Delibes's book published in 1966. The play is a close study of the behavior and social customs of the Spaniards. Another writer analyzed earlier was Fernando Vizcaíno Casas. In 1981 he wrote *El hombre del 23-F*—a dinner-theater production—, clear reference to the failed coup d'état carried out by Antonio Tejero in 1981. Previously, he co-wrote with Rafael Muñoz Lorente *Cantando los cuarenta* (1979), a musical that revolved around the infamous hunger years in post-Civil

War Spain based on his 1971 book. Antonio Gala could be added to the list of well-known and prolific Spanish writers. Right before the beginning of the Transition, in 1974, he presented *Las cítaras colgadas de los árboles*, a play about the perennial topic of the two Spains (José Monleón, qtd. in Pérez 148). The history of Spain was revisited in *Anillos para una dama* (1982), a story about the role of women—centered on *El Cid*'s Jimena—in Spanish society previously shown in 1973. *Petra Regalada* (1980) was Gala's political allegory of the Iberian Peninsula, a play where a prostitute rebels against the world. *¿Por qué corres, Ulises?*, first staged in 1975, right before the death of the dictator, shocked the audiences—who, sometimes, protested the play—with the partial nudity of a young Victoria Vera (“Gala, pateado”) and because of the way he treated social issues, like marriage.

Fernando García Tola, journalist and TV personality, dealt with the topic of political terrorism and kidnapping in *Alguien debe morir esta noche* (1975). Politics was also the topic of Lauro Olmo's *La condecoración*, which, although written in 1963, was banned from the stage by Francoist censorship. The title is a reference to medals awarded for services during Francoism, a period whose practices turned many Spaniards into “asses” (“La condecoración”).

From TV personalities to new authors and critically acclaimed playwrights, the Spanish stage was flooded with political commentary after 1975. From plays written during the Transition to those censored during Francoism and now revisited, writers wanted to express their ideas and ideals in public. Some, however, also wanted to add a more risqué touch to their productions, now that it was possible to do so. Thus, together with the references to politics, they included in their works the use of nudity, to either

prove a point or just because they could—at least, in most cases—or intended to profit from it.

### 3.1.3. Politics and Eroticism in Transitional Plays

Arguably, the combination of political and social commentary with erotic innuendo was one of the favorite subgenres of the period, and many writers jumped on the bandwagon. An example was TV host Alfredo Amestoy. Sex, adultery, current social and political events, and soccer, were the topics chosen in his debut play *El partido* (1976), where the author had a cameo appearance playing himself. The plot was simple: A wife cheats on her husband while he attends soccer games. Another famous writer, Juan José Alonso Millán, who wrote scripts for many of the directors studied previously—Francisco Lara Polop, Antonio Mercero, or Mariano Ozores, among others—, was also a well-known playwright. In 1980 he presented *Los misterios de la carne*, a comedy about a *bar americano*<sup>91</sup> and its clients. In the play, we see four characters, a man and three prostitutes, who constantly comment on current affairs and sexual relationships (Haro Tecglen). Some political and erotic innuendo could also be seen in his plays *El heredero de Barba Azul*, also from 1980—a musical comedy about an, allegedly, descendant of the infamous Bluebeard<sup>92</sup>—, *Hombre rico..., ¡pobre hombre!* (1981), or *Sólo me desnudo ante el gato* (1981). Fernando Fernán Gómez, also previously studied in the “Film” section of my dissertation, wrote, in 1980, *Los domingos, bacanal*. The play revolved around two middle-class couples that get together

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<sup>91</sup> In Peninsular Spanish, the term *barra americana* or *bar americano* does not refer to the nationality of the place—as explained previously with *barrio chino*. It is a reference to a hostess bar and covert prostitution.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Perrault's folktale from 1697.

on Sundays to stimulate themselves erotically (“Fernán Gómez estrena en Madrid”). Jaime Chavarrí’s *Las bicicletas son para el verano* (1983), as mentioned earlier, was Fernán Gómez’s 1982 play made into a movie, centered on the life of a family in Madrid during Spanish Civil War.

Awarded playwright Jesús Campos García wrote and directed in 1976 *Siete mil gallinas y un camello*. The play deals with adultery, jealousy, and social and political criticism. Manuel Pozón also added the political and religious criticism in *Juicio contra un cura* (1982), where a priest’s niece is in love with a communist mayor’s son (Lorenzo López Sancho, qtd. in Pérez 358). *Una hija de su madre* (1980) was the criticism-laden comedy written by Germán Bueno. A transvestite, a bar, the shadow of incest, and sexual freedom are mixed up with the Civil War and references to the two Spains (“Disparate”) in this play that covered most of the topics of the trend. Gay men, politics, terrorism, or prostitution were also the foundation for José María Rodríguez Méndez’s *Flor de otoño*, a play written in 1973 that play premiered in 1982. It was a story about upper classes in Barcelona, with drugs and homosexuality as background. The story was made into a movie in 1978—*Un hombre llamado “Flor de Otoño”*—, as explained in the Film Section of this dissertation, directed by Pedro Olea and starring José Sacristán.

Antonio D. Olano, Emilio Romero, Eloy Herrera, and Pablo Villamar were part of what Berenguer labeled “Tendencia Restauradora,” with an ideology in line with Francoism and against the changes of democratic Spain. It is interesting to note, however, that, even though relaying conservative messages in their dialogues, most of their plays

were full of eroticism and *destape*<sup>93</sup>—not obviously the ideas the dictatorship advocated. In any case, Antonio D. Olano’s comedies, for instance, centered on sex and politics. Thus, *Madrid..., pecado mortal* (1977), a story *a la El Diablo cojuelo* (1641) full of political criticism and as many naked bodies as actors (Enrique Llovet, qtd. in Pérez 319); *Cara al sol...con la chaqueta nueva* (1978) or *Los chaqueteros*<sup>94</sup> (1980), clear references to the *Falange* anthem or the hypocrisy of politicians during the Transition; *Pecar...en Madrid* (1979); *Locos por la democracia* (1981); or *España..., pecado mortal* (1982), among others. Another example was Emilio Romero, who played with sex, prostitution, and politics in *La Chocholilla* (1981), whose story revolved around the people in a tenement house in Madrid—prostitutes, politicians, etc.—before the return of Halley comet and its possible catastrophic effects. Francoists, revolutionaries, political ideology and hypocrisy—the topic of *chaqueteros* once again—, nuns and priests having babies, fraud, or prison, were some of the topics of Eloy Herrera’s *Un cero a la izquierda* (1978). Similar political and social topics were the basis for *Que Dios os lo demande* (1979). Pablo Villamar created a “pornopolitical farce” (Lorenzo López Sancho, qtd. in Pérez 456) with *¡Jo, que corte..., estamos en Europa!* (1977), a play that criticized the Spain of the 1970s and a Europe full of prostitution and homosexuality.

Gregorio Parra’s *Eros y Tánata* (1977) centered on political terrorism, with the real-life assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco as background and the addition of sexual content—Ágata Lys, among others, contributing to the erotic part of the play.

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<sup>93</sup> Amorós 152.

<sup>94</sup> *Chaquetero* is the term used in Peninsular Spanish for those changing parties like jackets for their personal benefit, a sort of turncoat or, in some contexts, a flip-flopper.

*Lecciones de cama para políticos* (1978) was Emilio Loygorri's erotic musical about politicians who will be "sexually schooled" by Madame Claude.

Torcuato Luca de Tena, a well-known writer and journalist, debuted in the Transition with his comedy *Una visita inmoral o la hija de los embajadores* (1975). The plot centered on a mature married man, his extramarital affair with a younger woman, and social criticism. The mayor in Pedro Mario Herrero's *No le busques tres pies al alcalde* (1975) and his artificial leg were the protagonists of this comedy around a tyrannical, hypocritical, and womanizing politician—Francoist, by allusion, although the play was set in Italy—whose life is given to dissolute pleasures. As Amorós argued, the play revolves around religion, politics, and eroticism (qtd. in Pérez 184). Divorce, homosexuality, or role-playing sex are some of the topics of Jose María Lloreda's *Agapito se divorcia* (1979). Actor, writer, and director Adolfo Marsillach presented in 1981 *Yo me bajo en la próxima, ¿y usted?* (1981). The play was a chronicle centered on sexual habits during post-Civil War Spain (López Sancho, qtd. in Pérez 217). 1979 Planeta Award runner-up Fernando Quiñones saw his novel onstage that same year with the title *Legionaria*—with the subtitle *Las mil noches de Hortensia Romero*. A male actor played the part of Hortensia in this monologue. He also dealt with the topic of Spanish emigration to Germany in *El grito* (1982).

Certain eroticism was seen in Julio Mathias's *Prohibido seducir a los casados* (1977), a social commentary on this comedy of errors with three women whose only pieces of clothing were bath towels (Luis Blanco Vila, qtd. in Pérez 245). Sex, adultery, tyrannical power, picaresque, and witchcraft were some of the ideas covered in Domingo Mira's *La venta del ahorcado* (1977). *Tragicomedia del serenísimo príncipe don Carlos*



(1980), one of the texts banned during Francoism (Amorós 155),<sup>95</sup> was Carlos Muñiz's exploration of the alleged sexual relationship between Don Carlos, the eccentric son of Felipe II, and his stepmother, Isabel de Valois. Politics and repressed sexuality were the topics of Francisco Nieva's *Coronada y el toro* (1982) (Haro Tecglen, qtd. in Pérez 315). Sex and politics were also the main focus in *Charly, no te vayas a Górra* (1977), a play, written by Luis Portoles, full of references to the politicians of the Transition and nudity. Francisco Teixidó criticized society and sexual relationships as well in *Los consensos medievales o Follones a raudales* (1981), where, in Middle-Age Spain, we hear references to the Transition, contraceptives, prostitution, or divorce, among others. One of the most controversial plays of the early Transition was *Equus*. Given its importance, it will be analyzed in a following section, together with another work that shocked the Establishment: Els Joglars's *La torna*.

Political references in their skits, together with beautiful actresses in skimpy outfits and crossdressers, were the field for a genre known as *Revista*. Burlesque, Music Hall, Variety Theater, or *Revista*, as it was called in Spain, was very well received during the period. Bárbara Rey, Norma Duval, Eva León, and many other actresses, in multiple shows, tried to emulate performances from famous venues such as Paris's *Moulin Rouge*. Transvestites' impressions and performances onstage were also favored by audiences. Paco España was the most recognizable example. He explored, not only the world of burlesque, but he was also featured in plays like, among others, *Mi marido no funciona* (Joe Rigoli and Eva León) in 1977; *La noche de los maridos infieles* (directed by Marisa

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<sup>95</sup> A good study on the plays and authors banned during the dictatorship is done in García Lorenzo, Luciano. *Documentos sobre el teatro español contemporáneo*. Madrid: SGEL, 1981. The writers themselves respond to questions regarding their own plays and the problems they had with censorship.

Medina in 1977); or *Madrid, pecado mortal*. He also appeared in the film *Un hombre llamado Flor de Otoño* (Pedro Olea, 1977). Another famous transvestite from the variety shows who, eventually, had a sex-change operation and enjoyed success on the big screen thanks to Vicente Aranda and Pedro Almodóvar was Bibi Andersen—a.k.a. Bibiana Fernández. It just goes to prove that times, regardless of opinions, were changing in Spain and giving way to a more equal society.

Despite controversial plays, in general, as I have reviewed in the previous pages, most authors of the period were able to get away with their forays into the sociopolitical criticism combined with erotic displays. These incursions into sex and politics were almost a need for both playwrights and audiences, a declaration of their freedom; they were reactions to repressive practices from the former regime. Now creators and public wanted to express and see what had been either a sin or a reason for jail during the dictatorship. But not only individual playwrights debuted their plays onstage. Numerous independent groups and companies populated Spanish theaters with a variety of shows and perspectives.

### **3.2. Independent Theater Groups and Companies**

Arguably, the best-known group of the Transition was Els Joglars. Their fame came, apart from their performances, from the controversy that surrounded them because of the themes they developed. Els Joglars and their play *La torna* will be analyzed in a following section. The same as Els Joglars, other groups burst into the Spanish stages during the Transition. Dagoll-Dagom reviewed education during Francoism in *No hablaré en clase* (1977). The play showed the abuse of Catholicism and patriotism in Francoist education (Antonio Valencia, qtd. in Pérez 471). Following a similar trend, the

group La Farándula in *Y nacimos un poco cojitos* (1976), criticized education and presented a call for revision of the teachings during Francoism.

The Gran Compañía de Espectáculos Ibéricos approached another of the untouchable topics during the former regime and even the Transition—Religion—in their play *Los diez mandamientos* (1978). Jordi Teixidor's *Retablo del flautista* was the basis for the Grupo Internacional de Teatro's *Ratas y rateros* (1976), a political version of the text that turned it into a social denunciation ("Grupos de teatro independiente en la sala Cadarso"). The Teatro Experimental Independiente presented in *Preludios para una fuga* (1977) a clear social and political critique from their ideological perspective. Another well-known group that started in Barcelona in 1971 was Els comedians. More than just actors, they are an ensemble who defines themselves as a group of actors, musicians, and artists completely dedicated to the creative process ("Comedians"). During the Transition they took five plays to the stage: *Ceremonia inaugural y pasacalles* (1975), *Taller* (1976), *Plou i fa sol* (1976), *Sarao de gala* (1976), *Sol solet* (1978), and *Dimonis* (1981). In their works, their goal was to achieve a theater of the senses and make people aware of the world as a wonderful house of culture and friendship that must be looked after by all before it is too late ("Comedians").

Finally, a group that appeared during the last years of the Transition—also from Barcelona, in 1979—, La Fura del Baus, changed the stage for the streets, as an example of urban theater with a direct communication with their audiences and different aesthetics and language. One of their features is the tendency to shock the audiences. An example is the rape of an underage girl in *XXX* (Gómez-Montero 143), questioning what is socially

acceptable, and transgression as a revulsive. Their first official play debuted right after the Transition: *Accions* (1984).<sup>96</sup>

Independent groups and companies, just like their fellow playwrights, attacked the stages in different forms and from different perspectives. In most cases, the *mise-en-scène* of their plays followed different patterns, mainly because some of their performances were not limited by the physical space of a conventional playhouse. They could represent their creations in outdoor venues or, simply, on the streets, which enhanced the creativity and the response of the audiences. Many of them had a tendency to shock those in attendance, trying to make people aware of injustice, world problems, and conflicts. But, among them, as mentioned earlier, the one who rocked the foundations of the Establishment was Els Joglars.

### **3.3 *Equus* and *La torna*. Theatrical Controversy on a Stage in Transition**

*Equus* and *La torna*, for different reasons, faced the wrath of the institutions and/or the audiences during the first stages of the Transition. *Equus* was a complex story about a young man named Alan obsessed with horses, his repressive family's religious upbringing, sexuality, social criticism, and psychoanalysis. Even though it was written in the UK in 1973 by Peter Shaffer, it premiered in Spain in 1975, starring Maria José Goyanes, José Luis López Vázquez, and Jose Ribó. The play had problems with censorship and threats by right-wing sectors of society due to Goyanes's topless scene. Regarding the issue, the actress herself expressed her fears in an interview featured in *Xornal*:

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<sup>96</sup> *Accions* was part of a trilogy that also comprised *Suz/O/Suz* (1985) and *Tier Mon* (1988).

Yo hice *Equus* (1975) porque la actriz que iba a hacerla se acojonó. Y mi marido, Manuel Collado, que era el productor, me pidió que le hiciera el favor. Tuvimos muchos problemas con la censura y pensamos en hacerla vestidos, pero quedaba más sucio. Al final, salíamos en calzoncillos y bragas. Yo acababa de dar a luz, tenía un pecho pequeño y muchos de aquellos que venían a ver la obra por el morbo –llegaban en autobuses– se iban decepcionados. Me llamaban de todo, incluso mandaron un paquete bomba que tuvo que desactivar la policía. Fue muy desagradable pero yo pensaba que, si dejaba de hacerlo, era darles la razón a todos aquellos. Y no estaba dispuesta. (“Xornal”)

Nudity attracted and repulsed audiences during the transitional period in Spain. For some, it was the morbid fascination and the allure of the flesh, the inner *peeping toms* who wanted to satiate their repressed desires. For others, plays like *Equus*, with their social and religious criticism, together with the display of naked actors, epitomized the evil they wished to eradicate from society. Radical individuals even turned to violence as a way to eliminate what they considered moral decay. It is interesting to note that *Equus* was revisited in London, for the first time since premiere, in 2007. The actor to take the leading role, Alan, was no other than 17-year-old Daniel Radcliffe, Harry Potter himself, who appeared naked onstage. Both play and actor received positive reviews by the critics. Things, apparently, have changed.

Similar problems to those endured by Goyanes in the 1970s were faced by an author like Albert Boadella, member of Els Joglars and author of *La torna*. Boadella was, arguably, the most controversial playwright of the Transition. The *enfant terrible* of

theater criticized society and politics like no other. In 1962, Boadella, along with Anton Font and Carlota Soldevila, formed the theater company known as Els Joglars. During the Transition years they represented *La torna* (1977), about the execution of two individuals during Francoism; *M-7 Catalonia* (1978), a play centered on Catalan culture and its people; *La Odissea* (1979), a new version of the classic Greek play; *Laeti* (1980), depicting the world after nuclear devastation; *Operació Ubú* (1981), with Alfred Jarry's character<sup>97</sup> with a twist and therapy; and *Olympic man* (1981), a story about totalitarianism.

*La torna* was the play that would have resulted in Boadella's incarceration had he not managed to escape. The author was sentenced by a military court because his play referenced an execution carried out by Francoist authorities:

En 1978, el actor y director teatral Albert Boadella fue juzgado en consejo de guerra por la obra *La torna*, que narraba el ajusticiamiento del polaco Heinz Chez al mismo tiempo que el anarquista Salvador Puig Antich, en 1974. El crítico Joan Anton Benach explica su visión de los acontecimientos: “Fue uno de los últimos coletazos del régimen militarista de Franco en su intento de imponerse a la sociedad civil y a la libertad de creación artística.” La fuga de Boadella y otros joglars fue un rocambolesco episodio de la larga transición. (“Foro por la memoria”)

Based on a true story, *La torna* is a farce that narrates the last days of Georg Michael Welzel, a.k.a. Heinz Chez, in 1974. One of the metaphors used in the play is the portrayal of the *Guardia Civil* as chickens in a henhouse—representing their offices—

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<sup>97</sup> Alfred Jarry was a nineteenth-century French writer. In 1986 he wrote *Ubú rey*, a grotesque satire on monarchy and the abuse of power.

and wearing masks. It is interesting to note that Chez is the only character who does not wear one and his face is not covered. It is, in a sense, the depiction of a hypocritical society, primarily those in power, hiding behind a surreal face.

Regarding the title of the play, the Catalan term *torna* refers to a way to round up numbers, el *redondeo*. Heinz—a prisoner accused of the murder of a Civil Guard—became “la torna” to hide the political implications of the execution of anti-Franco activist and anarchist Salvador Puig Antich, also in prison at the time. The artists themselves explain the subject on their Web site:

[Heinz] pasó por el garrote vil sin saberse casi nada de su persona y sus acciones (es posible que hasta su nombre sea falso). El espectáculo se ha creado como una versión libre sobre el tema, con la finalidad esencial de salvar del olvido una de entre tantas injusticias cometidas en nombre de lo que se llama justicia y que confía que el polvo de los años entierre los episodios oscuros. Hemos querido tratar con la máxima simplicidad los elementos escénicos, así como la narrativa, porque algunas de las situaciones, a pesar de su tono esperpéntico, son auténticas. No obstante, no hemos construido una tragedia sino una comedia de máscaras tal como debía ser la visión de Chez, pues aquel hombre desconocía además de nuestra lengua, las costumbres y los ritos judiciales de España. (“Els Joglars”)

The other character referenced is Salvador Puig Antich, a Catalonian anarchist member of the MIL—*Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación*—, charged with the murder of police subinspector Francisco Anguas Barragán. MIL members held up banks to finance

clandestine publications. The attempt to capture him, together with other members of the group, resulted in the death of Anguas and the subsequent death sentence to Puig Antich. Even though national and international institutions requested his pardon, he was executed by *garrote* on 2 March 1974. The play was adapted for the big screen by Frances Bellmunt in 1978. In 2008, Elisa Crehuet, Ferran Rañé, Gabi Renom, Andreu Solsona, and Arnau Vilardebó presented their book *Juglars 77, del escenario al trullo. Libertad de expresión y creación colectiva 1968/1978*. It was prologued by Juan Margallo and included testimonies by other members of Els Joglars gathered by Rosa Díaz and Mont Carvajal. The book tells the story of the group and the legal and authorial problems of *La torna*—a judge recognized Boadella as the sole author of the play.

In conclusion, both authors and groups, still during the Transition to democracy, had to endure the wrath of the censors, primarily when their topics centered on harsh sociopolitical criticism or the display of nudity was not considered appropriate by the powers that be. In November 1977, censorship officially ended and writers and audiences were now free to criticize, depict, or enjoy the themes they wanted. However, this did not change the fact that, just like during Francoism and in other genres, most of the creators were men. Some women, nonetheless, emerged and fought for their right to write and/or direct a text that could, eventually, be performed onstage.

### **3.4. Women Playwrights and Directors**

Theater written or directed by women during the Transition years had the same problem as novels and films: a lack of female directors and writers. However, there were some and they were highly qualified for the tasks. One of the best examples was Ana Diosdado, a well-known playwright and director of the Transition. During the period she



wrote and directed *Y de Cachemira, chales* (1976). The play was a social, political, and existential review and criticism in a post-apocalyptic play. Josefina Molina was, arguably, the most famous director at the time in Spain. She directed Josep Maria Benet's play *Motin de brujas* (1980), a drama that dealt with feminism, politics and religion, as we follow the misadventures of six cleaning ladies who rebel against a corporation—personified by a man. *Cinco horas con Mario* (1976) was also directed by Molina. The play was the adaptation of Miguel Delibes's homonymous 1966 novel. Actress Lola Herrera was in charge of the monologue.

Actress Isabel Hidalgo wrote in 1980 *Las desempleadas*, a play that revolved around four women sharing an apartment who, given the fact that they are unemployed, decide to turn their residence into a brothel—and themselves into prostitutes—to make ends meet. Finally, an actress, director, and playwright who appeared right after the Transition was Paloma Pedraza. In the mid-1980s she debuted with two plays, *La llamada de Lauren* (1984) and *Resguardo personal* (1985). Her theater was full of the battle of the sexes and conflicts between couples, leading, in some cases, to gender violence and their own repressive methods (Gómez-Montero 144).

Throughout the last pages dedicated to theater, I have referenced a plethora of plays that premiered during the Transition years. Some of them were new and written by younger playwrights. Some others, however, were the realization of former plays written during Francoism by highly acclaimed authors that, finally, made their way to the stage thanks to the lifting of censorship in 1977. Eroticism and politics were staples in many of the plays. As in the field of cinematography, these topics were used, in some cases, as a means to criticize social and politically punishable behaviors, both of the current situation

and Francoism. Others, just as in films, were mere excuses to (ab)use the favorite subjects of the trend now that it was possible to do so. The former repression, once again, took matters to the extreme, as a way to explore and experience what had been taboo or illegal. Eventually, when both artists and audiences completed their cathartic journey, these topics became part of the mainstream productions, since the demand for them as a sole purpose of a creation had disappeared.

### **3.5. Music in Transition. A Cry for Freedom, *Cantautores*, Rock, Punk, Rumba, and the Early *Movida***

Music has always been a means to express feelings and ideals. Authoritarian regimes, however, have a tendency to repress people's opinions; as Foucault argued, "repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality" (*Sexuality Vol. I*: 5). Expression of thoughts that imply criticism of the Establishment in a dictatorship becomes, simply, taboo and people are deprived of "the right to speak" (Bourdieu, *Social Critique* 411). Those who dare utter their ideas in any form of art—songs, novels, plays, etc.—are destined to jail or exile. Despite the circumstances, singers sang about Francoism and the Transition. Some did it in a direct form; others, as seen in films for instance, resorted to the use of metaphorical messages in an attempt to point out the wrongdoings of the system while circumventing censorship.

The music during the Transition, more than an erotic representation—although some followed this trend—, was used by many as a way to channel political messages and discontent, both with the dictatorship, as they had been doing for many years, and with the changes that were taking place in the nation, not fulfilling the expectations a great part of society had:

Tras las primeras elecciones generales, y a lo largo de todo el proceso comprendido entre 1977 a 1982—fecha en la que el PSOE gana las elecciones legislativas por mayoría absoluta—, la “nueva canción” continuó manteniendo, como uno de sus rasgos característicos, su claro posicionamiento crítico frente a las actitudes y a los comportamientos políticos, sociales y culturales del gobierno de la UCD. (Lucini 217)

Protest music and songs were, in essence, the country’s cry for freedom, an amalgamation of lyrics composed by the people who suffered the control of their liberty and the (mis)behavior of their leaders. But songs also arrived in Spain composed by individuals from other nationalities. That is, for example, the case of the tune popularized by, among many others, folksingers and activists Pete Seeger and Joan Baez and entitled “We Shall Overcome”—originally a gospel song by Charles Tindley from 1901 and adapted by Guy Carawan in the 1950s. It was loosely translated as “No nos moverán” and it became a hymn against the dictatorship, as it had previously been the anthem for the US Civil Rights Movement:

Unidos en la lucha, no nos moverán

Unidos en la lucha, no nos moverán

Como un árbol firme junto al río

No nos moverán

¡No, no, no nos moverán! ¡No, no, no nos moverán!

It was an expression of determination, a message to the higher political spheres regarding the power of the people, who, united, would fight them, endlessly, for the restoration of

their rights. And if there was an individual who stood over the masses to express publicly the feelings of his or her fellow countrymen, that was the *cantautor*.

### **3.6. *Cantautores*. Solo Singers, Movements, and Groups**

One of the figures that became an icon during the period was the *cantautor*. Even though the term translates as singer-songwriter, the connotation goes beyond the simplistic translation. During late Francoism and the Transition, the *cantautores* were not only the composers and performers of their own music; in most cases, their lyrics had a clear sociopolitical message and were part of what was called *canción protesta* or protest songs—mainly, with a leftist influence. Many of their tunes were banned in Spain during the dictatorship and were either sang illegally or released in other countries. When Franco died, the singers kept singing about injustice, freedom, and the flaws of the new democracy and its process.

The phenomenon had a presence in all the regions of the Iberian Peninsula. The future autonomous communities and nationalities wanted to express and speak their minds against the oppression, labor conditions, and their own land. In Andalusia, late Carlos Cano was one of best-known *cantautores* of the Transition. A song like “Verde, blanca y verde”—a.k.a. “La verdiblanca”, from his album *A duras penas* (1975)—, for instance, named after the color of the flag, was a cry for the freedom of Andalusia<sup>98</sup> and became the unofficial anthem of the region. The lyrics talked about his land and the hope that, one day, it would be granted autonomous status. From his second album, *La luz de los cantares* (1976), the song “La murga de los currelantes” was regarded as the accurate portrait of the Transition (“La voz de la memoria”). It referenced social and political

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<sup>98</sup> Autonomy in the region did not take place until 1981.

events in Spain during the period—unemployment, *destape*, emigration, corruption, or *caciquismo*, among others:

Esto es la murga  
los currelantes  
que al respetable  
buenamente va a explicar  
el mecanismo tira palante  
de la manera más bonita y popular  
sacabe el paro y haiga trabajo  
escuela gratis, medicina y hospital  
pan y alegría nunca nos falten  
que vuelvan pronto los emigrantes  
haiga cultura y prosperidad.

In humorous fashion, the lyrics requested the end of unemployment, one of the most important problems of Spain during the Transition and even in later periods. That would pave the way for the return of the emigrants—mostly from Germany and France—and prosperity in the nation. Also from *La luz de los cantares* was “Rota oriental”—with lyrics written by Rafael Alberti—, a clear criticism against the base in Rota and how the town had changed because of the American presence. Another popular Andalusian singer was, and still is, Joaquín Sabina. As a result of his left-wing anti-Franco ideals and his protests against the Burgos trial, his father, a policeman at the time, was given the order to arrest him. To avoid prison, he had to go into exile in Paris and London, where he helped ETA members—something Sabina himself confessed in *Interviú*:

Yo tuve en mi casa de Londres a etarras y era una gente encantadora que pegaban tiros en la nuca, algo que nos parecía una cosa muy graciosa en ese momento. Y hacíamos mal. Porque de aquellos polvos vinieron estos lodos. Así que creo que la gente como yo está muy obligada a estar muy en contra y a decirlo muy alto por cobardes que sean. Y yo lo soy como el que más. (“Sabina, *Interviú*”)

During Francoism, any activity against the regime was considered by leftist sectors of society as commendable, including the murders carried out by terrorist groups. After the death of the dictator, and taking into account the nature of their crimes—against democrats, in some cases—, the social perspective of the bands changed.

Sabina’s first album, *Inventario* (1978), had songs like “Donde dijeron digo decid Diego,” dealing with the impositions of Francoism, having to live patiently, and in fear, in a world where pleasure was a sin:

Nos enseñaron a guardar silencio  
Nos enseñaron a temer la noche  
Nos enseñaron que el placer es malo  
Nos enseñaron a crecer a golpes  
Nos prohibieron las cosas más hermosas

Eventually, however, people learned about a different type of life beyond the dictatorship, a life of freedom after change, and they embraced it and let it flow, even to the extreme, before starting from scratch:

Prometimos pecar a manos llenas  
Nos hicimos más tiernos y más niños.

Ahora, cada día tiene su fruto,

cada noche su secreto

.....

Y cantaremos a la vida y no abriremos la puerta

a la muerte mientras dentro del cuerpo quede una gota

de deseo, de deseo.

In “Canciones para las manos de un soldado,” the singer depicts a clear criticism of *caciquismo*, emigration, unemployment, politicians, and the armed forces, among others. “Palabras como cuerpos” was also an allusion to Francoism and how they stole it all from that generation. The lyrics resembled the last scene of the film *Asignatura pendiente*, when director Garci listed what the authoritarian regime took away from the individuals of that time. In “Mi vecino de arriba” he criticized those still stuck in Francoism. It was a metaphor for the lack of understanding and respect for others. His second album, *Malas compañías* (1980), had popular songs like “Pongamos que hablo de Madrid,” an analysis of the society of the time in the capital of Spain—it was first sang by Antonio Flores. “Gulliver” was also against Francoism and the dictatorship, among other things, and how, one day, the Lilliputians—the ordinary men in the world—will rebel against Gulliver—the dictators:

Un día

los enanos se rebelarán

contra Gulliver.

Todos los hombres de corazón diminuto

armados con palos y con hoces

asaltarán al único gigante  
con sus pequeños rencores, con su bilis,  
con su rabia de enanos afeitados y miopes

In 1981 he recorded, together with Alberto Pérez and Javier Krahe, the album *La Mandrágora*, a live performance of many of his songs. “Un burdo rumor,” for instance, went off the political commentary and was a sarcastic reference to the size of a penis—and the rumor spread on the subject by a woman:

No sé tus escalas, por lo tanto eres muy dueña  
de ir por ahí diciendo que la tengo muy pequeña  
No está su tamaño en honor a la verdad  
fuera de la ley de la relatividad

It is, perhaps, one of the metaphorical weapons women possess and that can be used to harm the ego of a man. It is interesting to point out that, along with the references to the political situation, some *cantautores* used eroticism in their lyrics. In addition to Sabina, other artists like Javier Krahe or Luis Eduardo Aute included sexual innuendo in their songs. Something similar will happen in other genres—pop, rock, punk, etc.—, where Pedro Almodóvar or bands like Semen Up will talk about sex in an explicit way.

But Andalusia was not the only region whose *cantautores* fought the repressive dictatorship and the mistakes of the new democratic state. In Castile, Luis Eduardo Aute—*cantautor*, film and theater score composer, writer, director, and painter—was one of the most accomplished artists of the Transition. Given the importance of his lyrics—above all the controversial *Al alba*—, he will be analyzed in a subsequent section. Another singer whose career developed in Castile was the above-mentioned Javier Krahe.



Part of Krahe's career ran parallel with Sabina's and Alberto Perez's. His only album as a solo singer during the Transition appeared in 1980, and it was entitled *Valle de lágrimas*. The record, full of sarcasm, irony, and acid/dark humor, dealt with topics such as sex, death, *machismo*, politics, or exile. The song that opened the album, "Villatripas," narrated a comic-erotic story that played with the meaning of the word *erection*:

Y con grandiosa vehemencia  
añadió la concurrencia  
-sobre todo los varones-  
que en lo tocante a erecciones,  
la Jacinta en el pilón,  
matarilerilerón.

The words applied to a statue of Venus Aphrodite in a town called Villatripas de Arriba. The rivalry with another town, Villatripas de Abajo, made them erect a real woman instead, the sensual Jacinta, who would guarantee a better (male) *erection* and the defeat of their neighbors. Its second song, jazzy "Don Andrés octogenario," also played with sarcasm and erections, as an old man in his eighties, and about to die, asked his nurse for the *ultimate* favor. Even though she accepted, unluckily for him, he died, but sporting an impressive and maintained erection, even after dead. That prevented his regular burial in a closed casket and the attendance of the locals, due to their morals. "¿Dónde se habrá metido esta mujer?" analyzed, also in a comedic way, the still patriarchal society during the Transition, marriage, relationships, the selfishness of men, and the escape of women, given the circumstances. The song told the story of a man who only worried about

himself and his needs as he came home and found out his wife was not there—therefore, neither his dinner nor his clothes were ready.

Luis Pastor, born in Cáceres but raised in Madrid, saw his music, as many others, censored during Francoism. Work, freedom, and the conditions of the underprivileged were staples in his lyrics. His first album, *Fidelidad*—that appeared in 1975, just before Franco’s death—, was comprised by the poems of some of the most important Spanish-speaking poets, such as Rafael Alberti or Octavio Paz. His second album, *Vallecas* (1976), referenced the political moment in Spain during the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition. Thus, titles like “Canción del exilio” or “Vamos juntos,” promoting unity and encouraging to fight for freedom and for the future. *Nacimos para ser libres* (1977) repeated similar topics, and added corruption in real estate—“Plan parcial”—, amnesty—“Coplillas de la amnistia”—, or clear messages about the past dictatorship and new hope:

Han sido tiempos sombríos  
y aún no son los tiempos claros,  
pero soplan nuevos vientos:  
parece que respiramos.

Están cambiando los tiempos,  
están cambiando ¡qué bueno!  
Por mucho que le llaméis  
no saldrá del agujero.

Even though the past was dark, and the future is not as bright as it should, times are changing; a time when people can begin to breathe. His last album of the period was

*Amanecer* (1981). Pablo Guerrero, just like Luis Pastor, was another *cantautor* and poet born in Extremadura but who moved to Madrid. He released two albums during the period: *Porque amamos el fuego* (1976) and *A tapar la calle* (1978). His songs were full of metaphors and symbolism, more than clear references to social and political issues of the period. In *Porque amamos el fuego*, we hear songs like “Un rincón de sol en la cabeza,” a homage to the Carnation Revolution:<sup>99</sup>

Porque amamos el fuego  
y creemos en días semejantes a nubes  
días en que florezcan fusiles y claveles  
sobre el viejo país de los dientes afilados

The lost freedom was also referenced in “Dulce muchacha triste.” But the song that most clearly alluded oppression, dictatorship, freedom, and even the US, was “A tapar la calle,” entitled like the album:

A tapar la calle  
que no pase nadie  
que vista de negro  
que lleve pistola  
que hable de la guerra  
y beba Coca-Cola  
a tapar la calle.  
A abrir la calle

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<sup>99</sup> *Revolução dos Cravos, O 25 de Abril*, a peaceful coup on 25 April, 1974, against President Salazar’s government.

que pase la gente  
que vista de flores  
que beba aguardiente  
que va hablando sola  
y pinta en las paredes.

The title of the song encourages people to put a block, to close the streets—the world—to, among others, negativity and death—people dressed in black, carrying guns, or talking about war—to American imperialism—the image of Coca-Cola—or to those who won the Civil War and oppressed people. On the other hand, the world should open up for freedom—flowers, people spray painting the walls—, grandmothers, and mischievous kids—not to a constrained world where everything seems to be perfect.

Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio was the son of one of *Falange* founders, Rafael Sánchez Mazas, and brother of the writer of *El Jarama* (1953), Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio. He had a cameo in the movie *Soldados de Salamina* (2003)—based on the book by Javier Cercas<sup>100</sup>—talking about his father. As mentioned earlier, he was also featured in Fernando Trueba's *Mientras el cuerpo aguante* (1982), a documentary about his life, his music, and his ideas. Unlike his father, his ideals were against the regime. Even though, over the years, he composed songs for many other singers, in 1974 he released an album in Sweden with tunes recorded in the 1960s: *Canciones de la resistencia española*. *Spanska motståndssånger* was the official title and Sánchez Ferlosio's name remained anonymous because of his background and the political situation in Spain, with the

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<sup>100</sup> Javier Cercas will be studied in the “Contemporary Revision” section, together with his book *Anatomía de un instante* (2009), a story about the failed coup that took place on 23 February 1981.

dictator still alive. The album had, among others, the song “Gallo rojo, gallo negro,” a reference to the fight against Franco. According to Lucini, it was a song that captured the essence of the political situation during those years (67). “Paloma de la paz” centered on the oppressive social and laboral conditions during Francoism. In 1977 he released *A contratiempo*, where he included previous songs—“Gallo” and “Paloma”—and added new ones, such as “Hoy no me levanto yo”—where he fights for his right to spend his day in bed and not work, regardless of requirements—, or “A contratiempo” (with the subtitle “Carabelas de Colón”), with lyrics written by Agustín García Calvo, urging Christopher Columbus to not to discover America and leave it alone. His last album during the period was *Canciones retrogradadas* (1982), still a cry against injustice and oppressors. During the Transition he also wrote for different newspapers, always criticizing the social and political situation of the period.

Hilario Camacho, best known for his song “Tristeza de amor” (1986)—that became the theme for a TV show starring Alfredo Landa—, was a member of *Canción del Pueblo* during the late 1960s, following the trend of the *Nova Canço* in *Catalunya*. During the Transition, he released *De paso* (1975), *La estrella del alba* (1977), and *La mirada del espejo* (1981)—with his famous “Final de viaje” and “Madrid amanece.” His music was more poetic and romantic than transgressive, full of hymns to love and freedom. An example was “Volar es para pájaros,” from *De paso*, and whose lyrics were written by Pablo Guerrero:

Ahora quiero volar, y sé que antes del silencio,  
antes del bien y el mal, del cruel y del tirano,  
pasaba por el mundo sobre ángeles y cosas

un hombre libre con alas en las manos.

It was a clear reference to the state of the country, the world, before the appearance of tyrants; a world where men could roam freely, fly, without impositions or repression.

Adolfo Celdrán was another member of the *Nueva Canción*—although he was born in

Alicante. During the period he released *Silencio* (1970), *4.444 veces, por ejemplo* (1975)

(Miguel Hernández, other poets, and his own songs), *Al borde del precipio* (1976)

(Miguel Hernández), and *Denegado* (1977)—the latter with his censored songs during the

dictatorship containing poems by Miguel Hernández or Bertolt Brecht, among others, and

his own.

Víctor Manuel was, and still is, one of the most recognizable stars in Spain, both

for his work and his marriage to actress-singer Ana Belén. Even though known for his

leftist and anti-Franco ideals, one of the first songs he wrote was dedicated, with praise,

to no other than Francisco Franco himself; it was entitled “Un gran hombre,” from 1966:

Hay un país

que la guerra marcó sin piedad.

Ese país

de cenizas logró resurgir

.....

Vivo feliz

en la tierra que aquél levantó.

Gracias le doy

al gran hombre que supo alejar

esa invasión

que la senda venía a cambiar.

Oddly enough, the song thanked the *Caudillo* for rebuilding Spain after the war and for making it a land where he was happy. Considered by many a hoax to damage his reputation, the singer confessed to *El País* that he was the author. According to him, it was just a sin of his youth and he “did not really know what he was saying”:

Yo tenía 18 ó 19 años, era un crío que no sabía nada, estaba empezando, no estaba nada politizado, no sabía muy bien lo que decía... Mi padre no sabía ni quería saber nada de política. Iba a hacer un disco sobre personajes conocidos, y así salió la cosa. (“Cuando Víctor Manuel alababa”)

Not long after, however, his ideology started to change and clashed with the Establishment. It could be seen in songs like “Planta 14” or “Por eso estoy aquí.” During the Transition, Víctor Manuel released several albums: *Cómicos* (1975), *Víctor Manuel en directo* (1976), *Canto para todos* (1977), *Spanien* (1977), *Víctor Manuel 10* (1978), *Soy un corazón tendido al sol* (1978), *Luna* (1980), and *Ay amor* (1981). His album *Cómicos* was in support of the Spanish actors on strike during the period. *Canto para todos* was a political work with songs like “Socialismo en libertad,” “Camaradas,” and “Al compañero Orlando Martínez.” *Spanien* was released in Germany. It included “Veremos a Dolores”—a reference to Dolores Ibarruri—, and “Nadie nos niegue el derecho,” requesting the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party. *Víctor Manuel 10* was also a highly political album, with his songs and poems by, among others, Blas Otero. *Soy un corazón tendido al sol* had among its tracks his acclaimed “Sólo pienso en ti,” a song dedicated to the relationship of two mentally handicapped individuals.

Paco Ibáñez was, perhaps, one of the most recognizable *cantautores* of the Transition, mostly composing the music for some of the best Spanish poems. Born right before the beginning of the Civil War, in 1934, he had to go into exile when the conflict ended, as a result of his father's left-wing ideology. His music was based on poems by Lorca, Alberti, or Miguel Hernández, among many others. During the Transition he released two albums *A flor de tiempo* (1978) and *Paco Ibáñez canta a Brassens* (1979). From this album was, probably, one of his most famous songs, “La mala reputación,” dealing with the problems of not following the rules, which, in turn, gives you a bad name—hence the title:

Cuando la fiesta nacional  
Yo me quedo en la cama igual,  
Que la música militar  
Nunca me supo levantar.  
En el mundo pues no hay mayor pecado  
Que el de no seguir al abanderado.

The previous lines reference, sarcastically, the “sin” that represents, in a dictatorial state, not being in line with its ideology and their symbols. Martial music becomes, in that sense, a metaphor for a military regime. It is used by the (higher) political spheres to move citizens who, at the same time, feel identified with melody and nation. It has the opposite effect on those whose ideals are against the Establishment, i.e., the feeling of repulsion because of what it entails. That is the case of this tune—where the singer will not stand up at the sound of the music/call of the regime.



In addition to the music and singers from Andalusia and Castile, Catalanian *cantautores* also expressed their ideas against the regime and injustice through their music. One of the clearest examples was Lluís Llach. He was a member of Els Setze Jutges—formed by, among others, the artists of the *Nova Cançó* from the 1960s. From his beginnings, his most controversial song was “L’Estaca” (1968), banned by the regime and a hymn to freedom against oppression:

Siset, que no veus l'estaca  
on estem tots lligats?  
Si no podem desfer-nos-en  
mai no podrem caminar!

Si estirem tots, ella caurà  
i molt de temps no pot durar,  
segur que tomba, tomba, tomba  
ben corcada deu ser ja.

The stake, *l'estaca*, is, once again, the symbol for the dictatorship. The song is a call for unity against repression; we are all tied to it and it will not let us advance unless we all pull together. In 1974, a year before the end of the dictatorship, he released the album *I si canto trist*. The importance of this work for this dissertation is the homonymous song, dedicated to Salvador Puig Antich—previously mentioned in *La torna*—, one of the last individuals executed during Francoism:

I si canto trist  
és perquè no puc

oblidar la mort  
d'ignorats companys.

Jo no estimo el meu cant, perquè sé que han callat  
tantes boques, tants clams, dient la veritat;  
que jo m'estimo el cant  
de la gent del carrer  
amb la força dels mots  
arrelats en la raó.

If I sing sadly, he says, is because I cannot forget the death of the ignored comrades. Many felt at the time that left-wing figures did not do as much as possible to save Puig Antich's life and that it was, at the same time, the revenge the regime took for Carrero Blanco's death. After the incidents in Vitoria in 1976,<sup>101</sup> where the police shot five workers to death, he composed "Campanades a morts." During the Transition he released six albums: *Viatge a Itaca* (1975), *Barcelona, Gener de 1976* (1976), *Campanades a morts* (1977), *El meu amic el mar* (1978), *Somnien* (1979), *Verges 50* (1980), *I amb el somriure, la revolta* (1982). After the period, in 2006, he created the soundtrack for the film *Salvador*.

Joan Manuel Serrat is, arguably, one of the most recognizable voices in Spain. He was also a member of the *Nova Canço* movement and the group *Els Setse Jutges*, although he also sang in Spanish—something for which he was criticized by Catalonians.

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<sup>101</sup> March 3, 1976, marked the day for a general strike after seventy workers were fired. Police, sent by then Minister Manuel Fraga shot and killed five workers and wounded forty more.

However, his attempt to sing in Catalan while representing Spain in the Eurovision Song Contest (1968) meant his veto by the regime. As many others, over the years, he wrote music for the compositions of famed poets, among them Miguel Hernández, Rafael Alberti, Joan Salvat Papasseit, or Antonio Machado. During the Transition he released: *Para piel de manzana* (1975), *Res no és mesquí* (1977), *1978* (1978), *Tal com raja* (1980), *En trànsito* (1981). Singer-songwriter Raimon, even though born in Valencia, was linked to the *Nova Canço* and Els Setze Jutges as well. One of his best-known songs during Francoism was “Al vent” (1959), a cry for freedom against oppression sang in Catalan, the desire to face and go against adversity. It was released thanks to Edigsa, a record company that wanted to commercialize a song in Catalan (“Cruz”). Another song that became an oppositional hymn during Francoism was “Diguem no” (1963), which had problems with the censors due to its message regarding political prisoners:

Hem vist tancats  
a la presó  
homes plens de raó.

No,  
jo dic no,  
diguem no.

Nosaltres no som d'eixe món.

The lyrics encourage people to say no to injustice, to the fact that men are incarcerated for their ideals, not for wrongdoings. But he, not only criticized Francoism; he also defined the Transition as a “pact of weaknesses”:

Hubo tantos pactos tácitos, tantos pactos de debilidades. Porque la transición fue un pacto de debilidades: la izquierda no sabía qué tenía, porque venía de la oscuridad, y los franquistas y sus adláteres tampoco sabían qué coño pasaba, porque vivían en una burbuja, fuera de la realidad. Entonces se produjo una especie de pacto de mínimos entre las dos debilidades, con todo lo que eso supone. Ahora se empieza a hablar de cosas que en los ochenta no salían en ningún sitio . . . Se acaba la dictadura, pero la lucha por la democracia no se acaba nunca. Nunca hay suficiente democracia. Hasta 1979 me prohibieron recitales. (“Cruz”)

According to the singer, the Transition was a period of ignorance, a moment when nobody knew what to do. The end of the dictatorship did not mean, for him, the end of the fight for democracy; there is no such thing as “enough democracy”—as an example, he was banned, in some venues, until 1979. Right before Franco’s death, in 1975, he composed the song “Jo vinc d'un silence,” a reference to the silence imposed upon people by those who oppress them. During the period he released *El recital de Madrid* (1976)—double album recorded live during his concert in Madrid—, *Lliurament del cant* (1977), *Quan l'aigua es queixa* (1979), and *Totes les cançons* (1981)—his greatest hits to date.

Francesc Pi de la Serra and Valencian actor and singer-songwriter Ovidi Montllor were also part of the *Nova Canço* movement. During the Transition, Pi de la Serra released, among others, *Lluita i Compromís* (1976), *Junts* (1979), and *Katalonien* (1980). Montllor, as an actor, had roles in important Spanish movies—*Furtivos* (1975), *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1980), or *Amanece, que no es poco* (1988). As a *cantautor*, he released *De manars i garrotades* (1977) and *Bon vent... i barca nova!* (1979). From

the album *De manars i garrotades*, the homonymous song deals with the unfairness of life for the poor:

El preu que es paga per a viure.

El preu que es paga per a viure.

Quan més pobre ix més car.

Quan més ric el preu és lliure.

In essence, the poorer an individual is, the more expensive it is to live, the song refers. On the other hand, when a person is rich, everything is free—the irony of life. Another popular song, from the same album, was “La samarreta,” about a poor guy and his red—color connotation— t-shirt.

Although in a lesser number, other areas of Spain, apart from the main regions analyzed above—Andalusia, Castile, and Catalonia—, also had their *cantautores* who sang against the dictatorship and for the liberty of their land. Aragón, Galicia, the Basque Country, or the Canary Islands joined in the effort for a more equitable and free society. In Zaragoza, for instance, José Antonio Labordeta was not only a singer, but, at the same time, a writer and a politician. During the Transition he released *Tiempo de espera* (1975), *Cantes de la tierra adentro* (1976), *Que no amanece por nada* (1978), *Cantata para un país* (1979), and *Las cuatro estaciones* (1981). From *Tiempo de espera* was, arguably, his most famous song, “Canto a la libertad”:

Habrà un día en que todos

Al levantar la vista

Veremos una tierra

Que ponga libertad

The lyrics reference the dream of liberty and the hope for a free land that, some day, mankind will enjoy. Amancio Prada is an artist who sings both in Galician language and Spanish. As many other *cantautores*, over the years he has composed the music for poems written by other writers, including those of Galician poet Rosalia de Castro. During the period he released *Rosalía de Castro* (1975), a homage to the poet; *Caravel de caraveles* (1976), full of traditional Galician folk songs; *Cántico espiritual* (1977), centered on San Juan de la Cruz's work; *Canciones de amor y celda* (1979), with poems by Juan del Encina, Agustín García Calvo, or Antonio Machado, among others; and *Lelia Doura* (1980), an album with *Cantigas de amor y de amigo*<sup>102</sup> dedicated to the first Galician-Portuguese trovadores.

The Basque country also saw its share of *cantautores* and artists against dictatorship and who demanded the use of *Euskera* as an official language in the Iberian Peninsula. One of the best known was Imanol Larzabal—called simply Imanol. He was a member of ETA during Francoism (“Barbería”). Due to this, he had to go into exile, not returning to the country until 1977, with the amnesty. However, in 2000, he was forced to leave Spain again because he was threatened by the terrorist group:

Imanol decidió abandonar Euskadi en octubre de 2000 por encontrarse amenazado, según manifestó él mismo. El cantautor explicó entonces que había sufrido “todo tipo de presiones” desde que, en 1986, participó en un concierto de homenaje a la activista Dolores González Katarain, “Yoyes,” asesinada por ETA. (“Fallece el cantautor vasco Imanol”)

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<sup>102</sup> Medieval romantic poetry composed in the Galician-Portuguese region.

Allegedly, his participation in a concert in favor of Yoyes—an alias used by Dolores González Catarain, an ex-member of the band executed by her own colleagues—made him *persona non grata* for the organization. *Lau haizetara* (1977) and *Jo ezan* (1981) were the only albums he recorded during the period. Some of his most famous songs were “Mendian gora haritza” and “Poeta Kaxkarra.” Mikel Laboa was considered by many an icon of Basque culture (“Muere a los 74 años Mikel Laboa”). During the Transition he released only one album: *Lau-bost* (1980). A psychiatrist by profession, he combined art and science since the 1950s. In the 1960s he became a member of the group Ez Dok Amairu.<sup>103</sup> His most popular song comes from his 1974 album entitled *Bat-Hiru*: “Toxia tori.” The song references how imposition on others change who they are. It talks about a bird that escaped; had its wings been cut off, it would not have flown away. But, thus, it would no longer be a bird. The song was later covered by Joan Baez.

On the Canary Islands, Caco Senante also became one of the icons and driving forces of the *Nueva Canción Canaria*, following the model of the *Nova Canço*. In the period he recorded *Entre Amigos* (1976), *¿Qué te pasa, tierra mía?* (1978), which included “Siete”; *Chateaubriand (filete y salsa)* (1980); and *Mojo Picón* (1982). “Siete” was, perhaps, his most political song:

Siete, son siete.

Siete hambres que alimentan

la esperanza de mi pueblo.

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<sup>103</sup> Basque cultural movement (1966-1972). The name can be translated as “there is no thirteen,” referencing the negative connotations of the number.

Siete, tenían que ser siete.  
Como esos siete puños  
que del Atlántico emergen.  
.....  
son siete los que levantan,  
la bandera de su hambre,  
para poder defender  
a los setenta veces siete  
que en silencio la padecen.

It was dedicated to MPAIAC political prisoners<sup>104</sup> fighting for the independence of the seven islands—hence the title and the references to the seven fists coming out of the Atlantic Ocean.

Solo singers were not the only ones who voiced their ideas during Francoism and the Transition through their lyrics. Together with them, a number of groups and movements emerged in the different regions. Many of the Catalanian *cantautores* were part of the so-called *Nova Cançó*, as explained earlier, a movement that started during Francoism demanding the use of Catalan language and criticizing the regime. Director Francesc Bellmunt gathered in his documentary *La nova cançó* (1975) the live recordings of some of its artists. Many of the singers also belonged to El Setze Jutges (1961-1969), The Sixteen Judges, the formation of sixteen singers-songwriters who started singing in Catalan language during Francoism—Lluís Llach, Joan Manuel Serrat, Francesc Pi de la

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<sup>104</sup> MPAIAC stands for *Movimiento por la Autodeterminación e Independencia del Archipiélago Canario*, an organization whose goal is the independence of the Canary Islands from Spain.



Serra, or María del Mar Bonet, among others. Many of the members kept singing after the group was disbanded in 1969. In addition to them, comedic group La Trinca—Josep Maria Mainat, Miquel Angel Pasqual, and Toni Cruz—used humor to channel social and political criticism with clear irony and sarcasm. Their songs were irreverent and addressed politics, religion, or sex. Most of their production during Francoism and the early Transition was in Catalan language, to claim their right to use it, regardless of the ideals of the authoritarian regime. A very prolific group, during the period, in addition to compilations, they released, among other albums: *Trincameron* (1975), *Opus 10* (1976), *Trempera matinera* (1977), *7 anys i 1 dia de cançons* (1977), *Èxits* (1977), *Vestits de milionaris* (1977), *Don Jaume el Conquistador* (1978), *Ara ja amb llibertat* (1978)—with its “Oda al paper de wáter”, ode to toilet paper—, *Pel broc gros* (1978), *El millor de La Trinca* (1979), *Que bonica ets Barcelona* (1980), and *Nou de Trinca* (1981). In January 1983, just after the end of the Transition, they released their first album in Spanish: *Quesquesé se merdé*—with an ironic title in French. From that album, “El baró de Bidet,” praised the French Revolution for making the use of the bidet equal for all citizens. Also included were “Oda al papel higiénico,” now in Spanish, and “Mi colegio,” criticizing Catholic education and pedophilia:

Su misión era enseñarnos declinaciones  
y arrearnos bofetadas y coscorriones,  
y glosar todos los mártires del santoral  
y formarnos es espíritu nazi-onal.

.....

“Las manos sobre el pupitre” nos repetían,

“Esas cosas dejan ciego” nos advertían,  
“Hay que ser puros y castos” nos predicaban  
mientras con la mano tonta nos magreaban.

It was a clear reference to the hypocrisy of ultracatholic education taken to an extreme, where priests used violence in their teachings and, although praised “purity,” abused minors behind closed doors. In 1985 they released a single called: “Quiero una novia pechugona,” sung in Spanish, an erotic-humoristic song wishing for a well-endowed girlfriend. In 1986, they released *Trinca, sexe i rocanrol*.

Andalusia, in addition to solo artists, also had its share of groups and bands. Jarcha was, arguably, the most recognizable of the period. Their song *Libertad sin ira* became an anthem during the Transition:

Durante los años de la Transición, su música reflejaba el sentir de muchos españoles en unos años en que se pasaba del franquismo a la democracia. La canción Libertad sin ira (R. Baladés/P. Herrero), que inicialmente fue prohibida el 9 de octubre de 1976 cuando el periódico *Diario 16* la utilizó como eslogan de su salida a la calle, se convirtió posteriormente en un himno no oficial de aquel momento histórico. De hecho Jarcha fue elegido como mejor grupo del país por votación popular en 1975 y 1976.  
(“Jarcha”)

The song called for freedom without wrath—hence the title—, reason for which it was banned by the Francoist censorship in 1976. The members of the formation have changed since the group’s debut in 1972. According to their official Web site, the initial lineup was comprised by “Maribel Martín, Lola Bon, Antonio Ángel Ligeró, Ángel Corpa,

Crisanto Martín, Gabriel Travé y Rafael Castizo.” But, regardless of names, the group’s musical career has always centered on sociopolitical issues together with Andalusian traditional tunes. During the period they recorded: *Andalucía Vive* (1975), with the hit “Andaluces de Jaén;” *Cadenas* (1976), popularized by its homonymous song; *Libertad sin ira* (1976), their anthem; *En el Nombre de España Paz* (1977); *Por las Pisadas* (1978); *Andalucía en Pie* (1980); and *Imagen de Andalucía* (1982). Their songs focused on freedom against oppression, enslaved workers, and Andalusia. The best example was, as stated above, *Libertad sin ira*:

Dicen los viejos que en este país hubo una guerra  
y hay dos Españas que guardan aún,  
el rencor de viejas deudas.  
Dicen los viejos que este país necesita  
palo largo y mano dura  
para evitar lo peor.

Its first lines referenced the Civil War and the repeated topic of the two Spains. Likewise, the need for violence to maintain order in authoritarian regimes—which is alluded again. However, they see the country full of people in pain who just want to be in peace. To all, they encourage to live a life without fear or wrath, now that Spain is free—and, if it is not yet, it will soon become one:

Libertad, libertad, sin ira libertad,  
guárdate tu miedo y tu ira,  
porque hay libertad, sin ira libertad,  
y si no la hay sin duda la habrá.

*Manifiesto Canción del Sur* was a formation of Andalusian *cantautores* and poets that started in the late 1960s and lasted until the beginning of the Transition, in 1976. Focused on their region—the *andalucismo*—, and instigated by Juan de Loxa,<sup>105</sup> their music and poems were full of political innuendo. Its members were all politically committed to leftist positions and, of course, against the dictatorship. Carlos Cano or Joaquin Sabina were some of their best-known members. Antonio Burgos explained the origin of the group in *El Mundo*:

¿Fueron otros sus creadores y no Juan de Loxa? Quizá. Pero a mí quien me mandó una casé con el programa de Radio Popular de Granada fue Juan de Loxa. Quien me mandó las canciones de aquellos muchachos de Granada, con la guitarra y un billete de la Alsina, fue Juan de Loxa. Éramos unos pocos los que soñábamos que Andalucía tuviera su autonomía. Mirándonos en el espejo de Cataluña, la autonomía no nos cuadraba sin canción. No teníamos ni un mal Serrat. La copla andaluza había muerto, pero aún no había nacido la canción. Ni nueva ni vieja. No había canción. Decías canción andaluza y sonaba el disco del oyente con las “Cinco Farolas”. Sólo estaban las proclamas, tan autonomistas, tan nuestras, tan de la verde y blanca, del granadino Manifiesto Canción del Sur. Juan de Loxa lo había lanzado porque tenía unas ideas muy personales. (“Burgos”)

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<sup>105</sup> Juan García Pérez, a.k.a. Juan de Loxa, is an Andalusian writer, founder, and director of radio show *Poesía 70*.

To Burgos, the origin of the formation was in poet Juan de Loxa, one of the very few who fought for the importance of native Andalusian music, almost inexistent until then—unlike in other regions. The autonomy of the southernmost area of Spain was still a dream for many. In any case, a new autonomous region needed a new and popular music to be part of the people’s idiosyncrasy. That is what Loxa strived to achieve.

Canary Islands’ Los sabandeños have been promoting their land, its music, and culture since 1966, when the group started. Until the end of the Transition, they had released a total of seventeen albums, as they explain on their Web site; to date, they have recorded sixty-nine albums. From *La Cantata del Mencey Loco*<sup>106</sup> there are songs like “La raza.” The song speaks of oppressors and freedom, as well as the invasion of the islands by the Spaniards. *Ez Dok Amairu*—Basque for “There is no thirteen”—was similar to the *Nova Cançó* in the Basque Country. The movement ended in 1972, a few years before the death of Francisco Franco. One of the most famous members was Mikel Laboa, already mentioned. Likewise, *Canción del Pueblo* was the movement in Castile:

Canción del Pueblo fue un colectivo que, aunque de muy corta duración (se rompería al año siguiente, dando lugar a la asociación La Trágala, en donde estuvieron algunos de los antiguos miembros, pero no todos), tuvo una trascendencia importante y sirvió de semillero para algunos de los más grandes cantautores en castellano de España, aunque no fueran los primeros—o por lo menos, no reconocidos— cantautores en lengua castellana. Entre sus miembros se contaban gente como Luis Leal, Carmina Álvarez, Paco Niño, José Manuel Brabo “Cachas,” Ignacio

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<sup>106</sup> Mencey is the name given to the *guanche* king from Tenerife.

Fernández Toca, Adolfo Celdrán, Elisa Serna, Hilario Camacho, y otros, todos ellos dirigidos bajo el periodista y crítico musical—además de letrista—Antonio Gómez, al que se le puede considerar con total justicia como el ideólogo, dicho con la mejor de las intenciones y de los sentidos, del colectivo. (“40 Aniversario de la fundacion de Cancion del Pueblo”)

Finally, Galicia was the land of Voces Ceibes, a formation that started in 1968 and ended in 1975, just at the beginning of the Transition. Some of its best-known members were Benedicto Garcia Villar, Xavier del Valle, or Xerardo Moscoso, who came back to Spain in 1976, after leaving in 1973—due to death threats and problems with the authorities.

As I have analyzed in the previous pages, the phenomenon of the *cantautor* included most of the regions in Spain, from Galicia to the Basque Country, Catalonia, Castile, or the Canary Islands. In different languages, from different perspectives, singers and groups alike were eager to express their feelings, ideals, anger against repression, and the need for freedom through their music. Many started during Francoism, which resulted in problems with justice, jail, or exile. Some of those, together with the new voices that emerged in the Transition, continued to criticize the wrongdoings and (mis)behavior of those in power—as Raimon argued, there is never enough democracy. One song, however, became a hymn against the state that was willing to execution its own people in order to maintain its status quo. It was “Al alba,” composed by Luis Eduardo Aute, a prolific singer-songwriter whose lyrics, in addition to the sociopolitical references, were also full of erotic innuendo.

### 3.7. Luis Eduardo Aute. Politics and Eroticism in the Lyrics of the Transition. “Al alba.”

Luis Eduardo Aute was one of the best-known and controversial *cantautores* of late Francoism and the Transition. His songs combined criticism of the former regime with sensual lyrics. He released his two first albums of the Transition in 1974: *Espuma* and *Rito*. They were, perhaps, the most erotic of his career during the period. Many of his lyrics referenced the topic of sex in metaphorical fashion. An example from *Espuma* was “Lentamente”:

Mécete lentamente  
para que las olas no se despierten,  
no digas nada,  
ni una palabra.  
piensa que el mar te arrastra  
y que voy montado en tu barca.

As in previous genres and artists, the use of the sea as a symbol for intercourse was very common. In this case, though, Aute added a more clear reference when he mentioned “riding her boat.” Other examples were “Anda,” “Hembra mía,” or “Sólo tu cuerpo.”

From *Rito*, the song “Dentro” is a clear metaphor for masturbation:

A veces recuerdo tu imagen  
desnuda en la noche vacía,  
tu cuerpo sin peso se abre  
y abrazo mi propia mentira.

Así me reanuda la sangre  
tensando la canción dormida,  
mis dedos aprietan, amantes,  
un hondo compás de caricias.

.....  
Mi mano ahuyentó soledades  
tomando tu forma precisa,  
la piel que te hice en el aire  
recibe un temblor de semilla.

The thought of a woman ignites desire. But, because of his current loneliness, it can only be satisfied with a substitute, a lie, the manual practice of onanism—*abrazo mi propia mentira*. *Babel* (1976), however, was a more sociopolitical album. Songs like “Yankee, go home,” or “Canción-consumo” referenced the situation in the country during the period. Later albums like *Sarcófago* (1976), *De par en par* (1979), *Alma* (1979), and *Fuga* (1981), followed a similar trend. But, arguably, if there is a song for which Aute will be remembered during late Francoism and the Transition, that has to be “Al alba,” one of the most controversial tunes of the moment. It was a metaphorical allusion to the last executions of the dictatorship. As explained earlier, on September 27, 1975, the Francoist regime applied the death penalty to two members of ETA and three members of FRAP. “Al alba” was composed by Aute days before the infamous action, but first recorded by Eva León in her homonymous album. Ricardo Cantalapiedra, in his article “Los fusilaron al alba,” referenced the song, written as a love poem to avoid being banned by the censorship:



Luis Eduardo Aute compuso desde su rincón de Jorge Juan la canción “Al alba,” dedicada a los cinco condenados. Para burlar la censura, convirtió la protesta en un bello poema de amor que enseguida grabó Rosa León. En la actualidad, es uno de los temas infaltables en cualquiera de los conciertos de Aute. Los fusilamientos, al fin, no fueron al alba. En Hoyo, el macabro ritual comenzó a las 9.10 y se remató a las 10.05. La memoria histórica está a la vuelta de la esquina. (Cantalapiedra)

The lyrics, in code, referenced the executions under the appearance of a sad and dark love song, full of anguish:

Presiento que tras la noche  
vendrá la noche más larga,  
quiero que no me abandones,  
amor mío, al alba,  
al alba, al alba.

The execution was to take place, as Cantalapiedra mentioned, at dawn, “al alba”—hence the title. They actually happened at 9:10 a.m. The singer references darkness as symbol for eternal death—*la noche más larga*—after a long night wating for the fatal moment to come. The future, after this moment, comes full of despair:

Los hijos que no tuvimos  
se esconden en las cloacas,  
comen las últimas flores,  
parece que adivinaran  
que el día que se avecina

viene con hambre atrasada.

Miles de buitres callados  
van extendiendo sus alas,  
no te destroza, amor mío,  
esta silenciosa danza,  
maldito baile de muertos,  
pólvora de la mañana.

The rest of the song is an allegory of the bleak moments, the desolation, the suffering—*hambre atrasada*—, the death to come and that lurks in every corner—the symbol of vultures—in a hostile world that kills its own. His last album of the period, *Pasaba por aquí* (1981), was also full of eroticism. Songs like “No te desnudes todavía” or “Deseo” were some examples. Right after the Transition, in 1984, he released *Cuerpo a cuerpo*, with hits like “Una de dos”—the story of a man in love with someone else’s woman—or “Cine, cine.”

Luis Eduardo Aute was one of the best examples of *cantautores* during the Transition whose lyrics combined the topics of this dissertation: politics and eroticism. Using colorful metaphors, the singer referenced the injustice of the dictatorship—with a symbolic call to the death penalty still in effect months before the death of Franco—and erotic encounters. But Aute and the *cantautores* were not the only ones whose songs protested against the system or talked about sex. Rock, Punk, or Rumba, followed suit and depicted in their stories society, its problems, and eroticism.

### **3.8. Rock, Punk, *la Movida*, and Rumba. Social Criticism, Transgression, and Sexual References during the Transition.**

Rock and roll has always been a sign of rebellion against the Establishment and, for some, a symbol for obscene sexual movements since the early 1950s, achieving popularity with singers like Fats Domino, Bill Haley, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chubby Checker, or Elvis Presley. For many, and for a number of years, “the culture of rock & roll consisted of a rich iconography of delinquency . . . rebellious, discontented, working-class teenagers who were always ‘at risk’ for delinquency” (DeCurtis 52). The Spanish youth also used its new freedom to rebel against the system. A plethora of bands emerged during the period, different from the ones that had been playing during Francoism, like Los Brincos, Los Sirex, or Los Bravos. It was the beginning of the Spanish Rock with groups like Leño—founded by Rosendo Mercado—or Barón Rojo.

Just as Bellmunt had done with the *cantautores* of *La Nova Cançó*, Manuel Gómez Pereira depicted the rock scene in the Spain of the period in *Nos va la marcha* (1979). It was a music documentary featuring a concert that took place on September 22, 1978, in Madrid, featuring Leño, Teddy Bautista, Topo, Coz, Cucharada, and Mad. The first images of the film show a group of young men and women chanting “queremos libertad,” we want freedom, while a couple is French kissing in front of the camera. Here is the first example of politics and eroticism. One of the the first bands performing was Topo, with their song “El periódico.” Part of their lyrics referred to the social and political situation: “Una mujer maltratada por su marido/un chiste agudo sobre el gobierno/que nada va a solucionar...”—a reference to women abused by their husbands,

gender violence, and criticism about the government, which will not change much. Foreshadowing the future, in “Vallecas 1996,” they sang about the problems that implied living in that area of Madrid, highly affected by drug consumption. Leño’s “El tren,” singing Rosendo Mercado, was also a reference to drugs—the train as a metaphorical trip. In “Este Madrid,” they alluded to drugs, alcohol, and the new found freedom of the period, where the level of permissiveness was high compared with the years of the dictatorship. The documentary alternated live performances by the bands in concert as well as interviews with those involved in the music of the time. It also reviewed the corruption and manipulation of the system and the underground music versus the commercial pop of Camilo Sesto and the likes. Among others, the film showed the performances of Mad (“Mad airport”), Topo (“El periódico” and “Vallecas 1996”), Teddy Bautista (“Si no te ries de tu propio culo acabaras tomandotelo en serio” and “Anda suelto Satanás”), Cucharada (“Compre” and “Madrid”), Leño (“La nana,” “El tren,” and “Este Madrid”).

A trend that saw its height during the Transition was the so-called *Rock andaluz*—Andalusian Rock, a mixture of progressive rock from Southern Spain, *flamenco*, and Arabic music. Triana was, arguably, one of its best-known bands. Others were Cai, Alameda, Medina Azahara, Imán, Mezquita, or Guadalquivir. Triana saw their first album, *El patio*, released in 1975. Their second album, *Hijos del agobio* (1977), had more political meaning. An example was the song “Rumor:”

Se oye un rumor por las esquinas  
que anuncia que va a llegar  
el día en que todos los hombres

juntos podrán caminar,  
la guitarra a la mañana  
le hablo de libertad.

Rock bands, as well as *cantautores*, also talked about freedom and a future of peace and unity in this new Spain that was still finding its way. This song referenced the possibility—the rumor—that the dream could become a reality some day. Similar topics were covered in songs like “¡Ya está bien!” an allusion to the need to choose leaders without impositions.

The 1970s marked the beginning of the Punk movement, a real transgression of the societal rules:

Un movimiento renovador que fue percibido inicialmente como la gran metáfora de la crisis en la que Inglaterra estaba sumida . . . Sin embargo, los orígenes del punk como estilo musical arrancan de un puñado de bandas norteamericanas que renegaron del sueño hippy y del rock progresivo para abrazar de nuevo la rudeza del rock’n’roll. Son bandas como la Velvet Underground, The Stooges y MC5, relacionados de distinta manera con la Factory de Andy Warhol. Un poco más tarde aparecieron en escena los New York Dolls de Johnny Thunders, que salían al escenario travestidos tocando rock enérgico. Su manager en la última época fue Malcolm McLaren, quien en 1973 juntó por primera vez a los miembros de los Sex Pistols. La tienda que hacía las veces de cuartel general se llamaba *Sex* en su mejor momento, pero antes se había llamado

*Too far to live, too young to die.* El disco que marca el pistoletazo de salida del punk rock es el disco homónimo de los Ramones. (Fouce 53-55)

Even though many associate the beginning of Punk music with England, its roots are in US bands like the Velvet Underground, New York Dolls, or The Ramones. In Great Britain, however, bands like The Sex Pistols criticized Queen Elizabeth II and what her country represented in “God Save the Queen,” considering it a “fascist regime.”

In Spain, one of the first bands to shock the audiences with their lyrics was La Polla Records. They started in 1979, but did not see the release of their first album, *¿Y ahora qué?*, until 1983. Even though they had a first attempt with *Banco Vaticano* in 1981, it was never commercialized. The name of the band—that can be translated as The Prick Records—, their lyrics, and their titles, such as their live album *En tu recto* (1988), were a clear provocation. Some of their songs were full of social criticism in their lyrics. An example was “Delincuencia,” where they criticize those who exploit others and the real organized delinquents. Right after the Transition, in the mid 1980s, pop group Semen-up was another band whose name had a sexual connotation. Their first song, “Lo estás haciendo muy bien,” described a fellatio:

Pero cariño no pares, tú sigue y no hables  
que Dios te lo pague que lo haces muy bien  
y mientras yo me concentro,  
chúpala más adentro  
que ya llega el momento y lo has hecho muy bien

Without restrictions, the group referenced the sexual act from the perspective of a man who, sarcastically, thanks a woman for her skills. Another punk band from the early

1980s was Siniestro Total, from Galicia. Their first album was released in 1982 and it was entitled *¿Cuándo se come aquí?* Its lyrics, usually short, alluded to both politics and eroticism. Some examples were “Todos los ahorcados mueren empalmados,” pointing out the erection of those who die hanged; “Las tetas de mi novia,” a reference to a girlfriend’s breasts with cancer; “Fuera las manos chinas del Vietnam socialista,” about the Chinese presence in Vietnam; or “Los mártires de Uganda,” regarding the African nation and brutal ex-president Idi Amin Dada. Ramoncín was also another controversial pseudo punk singer from the mid-70s. With songs like “El rey del Pollo Frito” or “Marica de terciopelo,” he criticized the Establishment. His first TV appearance was in 1978, on the program *Dos por dos*, where he was introduced, with a diamond painted on his eye, by Mercedes Milá and Isabel Tenaille. His performance, full of antics, confused the audience of a, still, rather conservative country.

But if there was a social and cultural phenomenon that marked change and the end of the Transition, that was the so-called *Movida*. It was the name given to the movement that started in Madrid in the 1980s:

La movida significó la cultura del *happening*, de la fiesta, el exceso, la transgresión y la violencia. Una violencia que en el pasado se había canalizado políticamente y que ahora se materializaba en la música, en el *rock*, en las modas, las costumbres, el consumo de drogas, la delincuencia y el sexo. (Angulo 23)

For some, it was the culture of the transgression, the epitome of many of the topics covered in this dissertation, where everything had to be taken to the extreme. For others, however, its excess was more a socialist manipulation than a reality. As Pavlović noted,

“*La movida*’s shock value, punk aesthetics, spontaneity, and irreverence was from the very beginning manipulated, tied to the Socialist Party (PSOE), (mis)appropriated, coated in nostalgia, denied, and disavowed” (93). The same critic considers that the country gave way to poor taste with the beginning of the movement: “Franco’s Spain gave *la movida* unlimited access to bad taste with its folklóricas, child actors, clash of urban and rural, and so on. They embraced what the intellectual crowd of the 70s was terrified by: bad taste, poor imitation, and artificiality” (96). A homage concert dedicated to late singer Canito—from Tos—marked the beginning of *la Movida*. Director Pedro Almodóvar was one of the best representatives of the trend, and a very active part of the movement before his cinematic success. Almodóvar, as a singer, together with Fabio—or Fanny—McNamara, released songs like “Suck it to me” or “Quiero ser mamá”—from their first album, entitled *¡Cómo Está el Servicio... de Señoras!* (1983)—, full of provocation and clear depiction of sexuality:

Suck it to me, suck it to me babe.

Suck it to me, suck it to me now.

After dinner, before dinner.

After lunch, before lunch.

After breakfast, before breakfast.

After fuck, before fly.

“Suck it to me” was a transgressive and ironic song about fellatio that the duo recorded in English—although with some problems in the translation. Other bands included in the movement were *Ejecutivos Agresivos*—with their commercial hit “Mari Pili”—,



Glutamato Ye-Ye, Derribos Arias, Aviador Dro, Nacha Pop, Radio Futura, or Los secretos. A parallel band of Alaska y los Pegamoides, sinister Paralisis Permanente, recorded songs like “Adictos a la lujuria” (1982)—from their album *El acto*—full of gothic, dark sex, and homosexual connotation in prison. From the same and only album, songs like “Vamos a jugar”—with sado references—or “Te gustará,” were also full of sexual innuendo.

In addition to the excess *la Movida* represented, another genre was used to tell the stories of those living on the fringe of society. Rumba—Rumba Flamenca or Rumba Gitana—was artistically utilized by groups like Los Chunguitos, Los Chichos, or Bordón 4 to narrate the (mis)adventures of youngsters living as outlaws. Los Chunguitos performed the movie soundtrack for José Antonio de la Loma’s *Perros Callejeros 2* (1979). Four songs were included in the movie: “Para que no me olvides,” “Como yegua brava,” “Ven por favor,” and the title song “Perros callejeros.” They also worked on the soundtrack for Carlos Saura’s *Deprisa deprisa* (1981)—with the songs “¡Ay! qué dolor” and “Me quedo contigo.” Los Chichos composed a complete album, entitled *Yo, “El Vaquilla,”* for the homonymous film directed by José Antonio de la Loma in 1985. The record comprised nine songs; among them, “Cartas de arrepentimiento,” “Mi condena cumplí,” or “El Vaquilla.” Bordón 4 also participated in the trend, being the voice of those plagued with adversity, living in the slums. As a result, their music was included in the afore-mentioned movie genre, with songs like “Al Torete.” The lyrics composed by the three groups were, in essence, naturalistic stories full of fatalism and determinism, a channel to criticize the societal circumstances that led them to a life of crime—that would range from petty to grand theft auto—: drugs, unemployment, homelessness, etc. Those

were some of the problems the Transition had to face. The juvenile delinquent became, both in the music and the films, a victim of society and a popular hero, a somewhat Robin Hood-esque figure who had to fight with adversity to survive in a world that marginalized them.

In summary, as I have explained, during the Transition years, all kinds of musical genres were used to express feelings and to point out the injustices of the Establishment, both from the period and from the dictatorship. Up until now, only men and male bands have been covered. In the next section, I will analyze the female view. Women, unlike what was remarked in other aspects of culture, were, musically speaking, very active and, in a large number, used their music to protest or to share their ideals, just like their male counterparts.

### **3.9. Women Singers during the Transition. Politics and Feminism**

As mentioned above, the number of women dedicated to music during Francoism and the Transition was not as limited as in other artistic fields—especially in directorial tasks. Women flock to the stage to fight for their rights and to speak their minds, which resulted, just as it had happened to men, in problems with the system. Jeanette was the first female rebel of late Francoism—at least, in a metaphorical sense—when in 1971 she said:

Yo soy rebelde porque el mundo me ha hecho así,  
porque nadie me ha tratado con amor,  
porque nadie me ha querido nunca oír.  
Yo soy rebelde porque siempre, sin razón,  
me negaron todo aquello que pedí

y me dieron solamente incomprensión.

The song implied, as in previous cases studied, rebelliousness due to society, lack of love, and a certain repressive behavior. Later, in 1974, her song “Porque te vas” would become the soundtrack for Carlos Saura’s *Cria Cuervos* (1975). In 1978 she talked about teenage pregnancy in “Voy a tener un niño.” But, together with the sweet heroin of the 1970s—whose lines could be interpreted in different ways—, many other women expressed their ideas about the political and social situation during the last years of the authoritarian regime and the Transition. One of those women was Elisa Serna, a member of *Canción del Pueblo* who had trouble with the police and was arrested during the last years of Francoism:

Elisa Serna: “Puede provocar un grado de excitación en el público capaz de dañar la paz social.” Lo que en principio podría parecer un exagerado piropo fue una acusación en toda regla que a la cantante le costó, en 1974, cuatro días de incomunicación en la Dirección General de Seguridad, dos meses en la prisión de Alcalá de Henares y 200.000 pesetas de multa. El lugar del delito fue el madrileño teatro Benavente, donde interpretó, entre otras, *El galope*, de Rafael Alberti, *Quejido* y *A los mineros de Asturias*, canciones que, por lo que se ve, excitaron a la Brigada de Información Social (BIS). Pocos meses después fue de nuevo detenida y expulsada de Asturias bajo la acusación de subversiva y pornográfica tras un recital en la Facultad de Filosofía de Oviedo. Esta vez fueron las poesías eróticas de Salvat Papaseit, que cantó junto a Teresa Rebull, las que escandalizaron a la BIS. (Niño)

Interesting to note what was said by the Francoist authorities: She may excite the audience to the point of disturbing social peace. Obviously, any words against the system uttered in public may make people aware of the wrongdoings of those in power and encourage them to act. That would never be allowed by any authoritarian regime, whose strength is based on fear and the lack of awareness of their actions.

During the Transition she released *Este tiempo ha de acabar* (1974), *Brasa viva* (1975), *¡Choca la mano!* (1977), and *Regreso a la semilla* (1978), albums full of texts in favor of freedom and against Francoism. She was also a member of La Trágala,<sup>107</sup> a group whose name is an allusion to the popular and anonymous song sang against Fernando VII and also, with variations, during the Civil War against Franco's troops:

Tú que no quieres  
lo que queremos  
la ley preciosa  
do está el bien nuestro.  
¡Trágala, trágala,  
trágala perro!  
¡Trágala, trágala,  
trágala perro!

María del Mar Bonet was one of the members of Setze Jutges and part of the Catalanian movement *La Nova Cançó*. One of her most controversial songs during late Francoism was “Què volen aquesta gent?” The song was written in 1968, but not

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<sup>107</sup> Trágala is Spanish for “swallow it,” a reference to the fact that people had to put up with, or swallow, the law of the dictators.

recorded until 1977 in her album *Alenar*—with lyrics by Lluís Serrahima. It was also sung in Spanish by Elisa Serna—with the title “¿Esta gente qué querrá?”—, and referred to the death of Rafael Guijarro Moreno, a 23-year-old student killed in 1967 by the police.<sup>108</sup>

De matinada han trucat,  
-la llei una hora assenyala-  
Ara l'estudiant és mort,  
n'és mort d'un truc a trenc d'alba.  
“Què volen aquesta gent  
que truquen de matinada?”

As Serrahima himself explained in *El Mundo* in 2003, the song reflects a true story. Guijarro was a young man from Madrid beat to death by the police and, later, thrown out the window—declaring he had committed suicide (“María del Mar Bonet graba un disco para recaudar dinero con destino a los niños de Irak”). During the Transition she released *Cançons de festa* (1976), *Alenar* (1977), *Saba de terrer* (1979), *Sempre* (1981), *L'àguila negra* (1981), *Jardí tancat* (1981), and *Breviari d'amor* (1982). In an interview for *La voz de Granada* in 2009 she explained her participation against Francoism and her activism during the Transition:

Todos pusimos de nuestra parte desde que vivía el dictador. Yo he estado dos veces detenida. He luchado para que se acabara la dictadura, como otros artistas. Mi compromiso es fuerte. Recuerdo que cuando Tejero

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<sup>108</sup> A similar case was law student and activist Enrique Ruano, killed by the Francoist police in 1969.

estaba en el Congreso yo andaba por Francia grabando un disco de poesía mallorquina. Uno de los músicos franceses decía que había visto en televisión a un militar vestido de torero. Me quedé helada con las imágenes, pensando que quizá no podría volver a mi país. (“Sueño con fundirme en el Mediterráneo”)

The end of the dictatorship was a common goal, where all, included her, had to participate, even if it implied incarceration. Franco’s death gave hope to a country that, at least in theory, was beginning to taste freedom. The attempted coup that took place in February 1981 brought fear back to many individuals who saw, with this action, the possibility of a return to a repressive state. Luckily, it failed.

Soledad Bravo was born in Spain, but moved to Venezuela as a child because of her father’s Republican ideals. She returned to Spain after Franco’s death. During the Transition she released *Cantos de la Nueva Trova Cubana* (1976), *Soledad Bravo y Rafael Alberti* (1977), *Flor del cacao* (1978), *Cantos sefardíes* (1978), *Boleros* (1980). Rosa León started singing with Jorge Krahe. In 1975 she recorded Aute’s “Al Alba” in an homonymous album. During the Transition she only released one more record, in 1978, entitled *Tiempo al tiempo*. Evangelina Sobredo—a.k.a. Cecilia—had one of the most brilliant yet shortest career of the period, due to an unfortunate death in 1976, at the age of 27, right at the beginning of the Transition. Along with romantic and intimist songs like the hit “Un ramito de violetas” (1975)—with many renditions by other artists—, her lyrics were full of existentialism like “Me quedaré soltera” (1973) or “Dama, dama” (1972), portraying the life of women of the period and their dependence on men:

Dicen que es mejor ser monja que estar así,

como lo estoy yo, con mi perro viejo,  
mi loro que llora, mi gato tuerto.

Soy como un verso suelto sin rima, sin par.  
Soy un alma en pena contando lunas,  
apenas me quedan ni para contar.

Me quedaré soltera  
aunque yo no quiera

The song references a topic previously studied. For most women, their only options in a patriarchal society were either marriage, a convent, or, in the worst case scenario, prostitution. She also released songs like “Esta tierra” (1975), “Mi querida España” (1975), or “La guerra” (1976), about the country and its hardships, including the consequences of the Civil War.

Vainica Doble was the duo formed by Carmen Santonja and Gloria Van Aerssen. During the Transition they released three albums: *Contracorriente* (1976), *El eslabón perdido* (1980), and *El tigre del Guadarrama* (1981). This last album included the song “Crónica madrileña,” an allusion to *la Movida*:

Soy hermana de los perros y de toda la canalla,  
desayuno en la Latina con un trago de cazalla.  
Por las noches me reunía con conjuntos musicales  
y cantando en compañía huían todos mis males.  
Los vecinos protestaban y con muy malos modales

nos vaciaban encima sus repletos orinales  
y llegaba la policía y con sus maneras rústicas,  
demostraba que la música no es para todos los mortales.

The song listed what the movement represented for many: excess, in every sense of the word—something older generations and the law were not willing to tolerate. Their movie fame came from the soundtrack they composed for Ivan Zulueta's *Un, dos, tres, al escondite inglés* (1969) and, above all, for Jose Luis Borau's *Furtivos* (1975).

Mexican-born Olvido Gara, better known by her stage name, Alaska, was the epitome of *la Movida* and transgressive looks in the Transition years. Between 1977 and 1980, she was a guitar player for punk band Kaka de Luxe—with songs like “Viva el metro,” “La pluma eléctrica,” “Rosario,” or “Toca el pito.” After those years, and until 1982, she was a member of Alaska y los Pegamoides—singing the hits “Bailando,” or “Horror en el hipermercado.” Later on she went on to form Alaska y Dinarama in 1983 and Fangoria in 1991. In addition to her music, she also worked on both films and television. She had a small part in Ivan Zulueta's *Arrebato*, was one of the stars of Pedro Almodóvar's first movie, *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980), and hosted TVE's show *La bola de cristal* (1983).

Kaka de Luxe's lyrics were full of sarcasm and social criticism. “Rosario” encouraged young people to run away from home, and in “Viva el metro” they complained about subway fares and their price increase, which would take over their lives and, eventually, not let them enjoy their own vices. Alaska y los Pegamoides's lyrics, now with Alaska singing, were less offensive or provocative, and centered on



social aspects, like shopping and consumerism—e.g. “Horror en el hipermercado,” or social life of youngsters, like in “Bailando.”

In conclusion, and as I have analyzed in this chapter, music in Spain was used as a way to channel political discontent, both during Francoism and the Transition:

A lo largo del franquismo los cantautores, que utilizaban la música como arma política, fueron la producción más relevante del underground. Esta sumisión al mensaje hizo que la estética fuese arrollada por la ética, y las instrumentaciones parecían tener la única función de envolver el mensaje en lugar de ser un objeto estético en si mismo. (Fouce 46-47)

The different musical styles, from *cantautores* to rockers, punk-rockers, or rumba singers, were used as unequivocal means to express repressed feelings regarding social, political, and, to a lesser extent, sexual issues. Freedom of speech had arrived, particularly after November 1977, and both young and old, male and female musicians alike, found in lyrics a way to be heard, without the reprisals from the former regime. The symbolism and metaphorical lyrics that became an important example of the anti-Franco movement—“Al alba,” “L’Estaca,” “Al vent,” etc.—gave way to more explicit lyrics, with the advent of the Punk movement and the excesses of *la Movida*. As in other fields of culture, transgression did not mean better quality of the productions, but served its purpose of closing a circle required in the process.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MEDIA DURING THE TRANSITION: TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND COMICS. SEX AND POLITICS OVERLOAD

As previously stated, both literature and film saw pivotal changes after Franco's death toward more aggressive tendencies that involved the constant (ab)use of both political references and erotic innuendo, some of them going beyond societal rules and transgressing them as a form of communication. Something similar happened regarding the mass media. Television and radio on the one hand—both in a more gradual fashion, considering their public status at the time—, and newspapers, magazines, and comics on the other, followed suit, portraying and reflecting what was taking place in a country in transition. The death of the dictator in 1975 marked the beginning of the end of “an age of repression emblematic of what we call the bourgeois societies” (Foucault, *Sexuality Vol.1*: 17).

But the road would not be easy, since some of those repressive rules were still in effect, especially regarding public entities. Those whose ideals were in line with the former regime were not willing to accept a society full of sexual imagery and leftist slogans—turning even to violence to stop what they would regard as dissolute behavior. The Establishment was, in most scenarios, against what they saw as “‘impure’ taste . . . the simple, primitive form of pleasure reduced to a pleasure of the senses” (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 486). Society, however, was ready for change regardless of impositions. It would be just a matter of time till the oppression would turn, in many cases, into transgression. Thus, society will influence the way the media operates—from a

consumeristic perspective, since sales are always the goal of any enterprise. But the media, needless to say, will influence society as well, as Morcillo argues:

Popular media . . . played as much of a role in shaping the political landscape of countries like Spain as the heavy-handed efforts of state ministries. We can see in real time how the images of women's bodies change during this epoch. This physical transformation is not solely a Spanish phenomenon but one smuggled into the country from the United States and the emerging Western European democracies under the guise of economic development. (15)

The approach to the changes in the media was not uniform, since each medium of communication had rules and regulations imposed by its own circumstances and dictated, in most cases, by ownership—public versus private enterprises. Thus, the government still controlled television and some radio stations, which were public entities—and ratings were unimportant—, while the success of printed publications was measured by the number of issues sold. Therefore, they had to be ahead of the competition in order to attract readers and advertisers, spur sales, and, ultimately, survive. In the following sections I will analyze the different approaches and how each medium reflected the changes of a Spain in transition.

#### **4.1. Spanish Television and Radio during the Transition**

Spanish television—TVE or *Televisión Española*—began broadcasting officially on October 28, 1956 (Montes Fernández 639), twenty years after the beginning of the Civil War. Almost two more decades had to pass until the death of Franco and the end of his regime. The dictatorship controlled society, and that included the media. TV shows,

therefore, had to abide by the rules and regulations of the ideals of the *18 de julio*. There was one, and only one, network and it was owned by the state; thus, news and opinions were expressed unilaterally, without the possibility of contrast or perspective. In other words, television was nothing but a tool at the service of the government that controlled it (Palacio 81). At the same time, “it is widely accepted that the influence of the political party in power is very much present in the way the news is constructed and broadcast in public European radio and television systems” (Jordan 161). On the other hand, regardless of perspective, the intelligentsia considered television, and still does, mass culture. So much so that no one seems to take it seriously—professors, for instance, claim not to watch it (Palacio 12). However, since this study centers on the (ab)use of politics and eroticism during the Transition, television can be used as a barometer of change, of what Spaniards saw and liked—or, ultimately, were fed—in the period.

During the Spanish Transition to democracy, Spain maintained the one-channel television previously mentioned—two if we take into account the individuals who had access to the so-called UHF<sup>109</sup> since 1966. It was not until the early 1980s that the Spaniards gained access to channels from the different Autonomous Communities.<sup>110</sup> Audiences had to wait till 1990 to be able to enjoy private networks—Canal +, Telecinco, and Antena3 television.<sup>111</sup> One of the main changes during the period was the arrival of

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<sup>109</sup> UHF, or Ultra High Frequency, was popularly known in Spain as “la segunda cadena,” the second channel, at that time. Later on, the name became “la dos.”

<sup>110</sup> Canal Sur (1989), Euskal Telebista (1983), TV3-Televisió de Catalunya (1984), Canal Nou-Valencia (1989), TVG-Galicia (1985), or Telemadrid (1989), among others.

<sup>111</sup> Ley 10/1988, de 3 de mayo, de Televisión Privada.

color television,<sup>112</sup> allowing the lucky individuals who owned the required technology to enjoy shows like Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente's *El hombre y la tierra*<sup>113</sup> in a more realistic manner. But both in color and black and white, what did not change at the first stages of the Transition was censorship. It was fully in place until the end of 1977. Even though shows were changing, they were still under surveillance by the authorities. We have to understand that this was public television, in the hands of the government, with Director Generals being appointed, and replaced, constantly: Gabriel Peña in 1975, Rafael Ansón in 1976, Fernando Arias Salgado in 1977, Fernando Castedo in 1981, Carlos Robles Piquer in October of that same year, and Eugenio Nasarre in 1982 (Palacio 91). Jose María Calviño was the first Director with PSOE in power; he was followed by Pilar Miró in 1986, the first woman to hold that position in Spanish history. This constant change had a clear explanation:

Este récord, difícilmente igualable, tiene su explicación en ese papel fundamental asignado a TVE durante la transición por todas las fuerzas políticas. Muchas batallas partidarias se desarrollaron en los pasillos de Prado del Rey, y muchos disparos que querían alcanzar otros objetivos se concentraron, en fuego graneado, sobre nuestra televisión. (García Matilla 95)

Prado del Rey—the symbol of public television—was almost an extension of the *Congreso de los Diputados*, a place whose hallways were the epitome of lobbying that

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<sup>112</sup> In 1973, TVE started airing some of their programs in color, but still maintained black and white. In 1977, TVE began broadcasting in full color.

<sup>113</sup> According to a survey published by the *Academia de las Ciencias y las Artes de Televisión de España* in early 2000 evaluating the best programs in the country, *El hombre y la tierra* was ranked number 1 (Palacio 14).

lead to chaos. TVE, therefore, saw a plethora of gradual changes over the period. And I have to emphasize the adverb gradual. Given its nature of public entity, transitions required more time. Comedy was a way to start them. Humor and comedy have always been a means to channel opinions. As Vázquez Montalbán argued, humor was, and still is, an outlet for social critique (*Crónica* 38). Tip y Coll—José Luis Coll and Luis Sánchez Pollack—were one of the first examples of this during late Francoism and the early Transition. They had been a famous duo since 1967. Their sometimes grotesque, sometimes surrealistic, humor, criticized what they saw; or, at least, they pretended they did. One of their trademark phrases was: “La próxima semana, hablaremos del gobierno”—next week, we will talk about the government. But, oddly enough, they never did. Talk they did, however—especially Tip—, years later, after the Transition, and on the radio, on Luis del Olmo’s *Protagonistas*, in the section entitled “El estado de la nación.” And, as mentioned earlier, they were also the voice-over actors in Lara Polop’s *El asalto al castillo de la Moncloa* (1978), a satire of political criticism based on *Los amantes del desierto* (1957). Nevertheless, some of their performances on *625 líneas*, for instance, were censored, as many other things during the period:

El pasado domingo 21, Televisión Española no emitía el espacio de los humoristas Tip y Coll en el programa *625 líneas*, que dirige José Antonio Plaza, sin mediar explicación alguna. Al día siguiente el director del programa explicaba que la suspensión del espacio se había debido a problemas de calidad del mismo. (“El guión censurado a Tip y Coll”)

That was another example that, even in democracy, the institutions and its members were still untouchable—at least, on public television. The “lack of quality” commented in the

article that appeared in *El País* was, in actuality, the multiple references to politicians, ministers, the police, the judges, and their apathy. However, comedians continued the trend and kept criticizing what they saw. *Martes y Trece* started on TV in 1978 as a comedic trio—Fernando Conde, who would eventually leave the group in 1984, Josema Yuste, and Millán Salcedo. Their humor, during the Transition and until 1997, when they went separate ways, was a reflection of the Spanish society of the period, with satire and impressions of many public figures. This led, on occasions, to the (ab)use of some topics that would not be considered politically correct today. An example was their skit based on *Cantares*—a musical show focused on Spanish *copla*, popular folk music. They mocked real host Lauren Postigo and his guest star, a fictitious Tony Sevilla, who sang “Yo soy maricón...de España”—a caustic satire on homosexuality, something common in a traditionally homophobic country. But audiences needed to be entertained from diverse angles and a good medium was the so-called game show, a type of program where average citizens had the opportunity to be featured on television—rubbing elbows with celebrities—and, perhaps, have access to prizes they would not be able to afford in real life—the apartment on the coast, the brand new car, or the millions of pesetas.

Game shows were a way to keep people occupied, under control, and dreaming—and out of trouble. *Un dos tres ...responda otra vez* (1972) became the leader during late Francoism and the Transition. Hosted by Kiko Ledgard between 1972 and 1978—and by Mayra Gómez Kemp in its new season that started in 1982—, it was based on a previous program that Ledgard started hosting in his native Peru in 1965—*Haga negocio con Kiko*, also based on US show *Let's make a deal* (1963)—and on a previous Argentinian program by Narciso “Chicho” Ibañez Serrador entitled *Un, dos, Nescafé*. The show,

created and directed by Chicho, was an instant hit. Eroticism was brought on by the so-called *Secretarias*, a group of six young and attractive women in skimpy outfits—at least, for the time. The program was also a stepping stone for many of the secretaries and artists that worked on it—Victoria Abril or Ágata Lys, among many others—who became actresses and sex symbols during the period.

Game shows, however, would not be enough to keep the minds of the citizens occupied during the afternoons and evenings. Different kinds of programs completed the lineup of the state network, some adhering to the change more than others. Talk shows, music variety shows, *Revista*, or Burlesque, did see important transformations during the process, especially in the outfits worn by the female performers, in line, at least to an extent, with the *destape* trend of the moment. José María Iñigo was the host of some of these shows, like *Directísimo* (1975-1976) and *Fantástico* (1978-81). Others worth mentioning were *El Hotel de las mil y una estrellas* (1978-1979), hosted by Luis Aguilé; *Música y estrellas* (1976), with Marujita Díaz; *Palmarés* (1976), hosted by future sex-symbol Bárbara Rey; or *¡Señoras y señores!* (1973-1976), co-directed by the master of zoom himself, Valerio Lazarov, and hosted by actresses Victoria Vera, Fiorella Faltoyano, or María José Cantudo, among others. It is interesting to note that all three of them—Vera, Faltoyano, and Cantudo—will appear nude in different movies and magazines during the Transition. In a sense, as mentioned above, even if some of these shows did not reflect the extreme trends in other sections of the media or film, they catapulted their female actresses to fame; this would lead, eventually, to nudity—if they wanted to maintain their marketability.



Perhaps, one of the most controversial talk show directors-hosts of the time was Fernando García Tola. He brought three shows to the television of the period: *Dos por dos*, in 1977, co-hosted by Isabel Tenaille and Mercedes Milá; *Esta noche* (1981), with Carmen Maura playing the role of candid hostess; and *Si yo fuera presidente*, right after the Transition, in 1983, and hosted by himself. Most of his programs resembled American talk shows, with interviews and musical performances. *Esta noche* was supposed to be a hit, as explained on an article from *El País* published in 1981:

El programa más importante de los cinco estrenos debería de ser *Esta noche*, si se tiene en cuenta su privilegiada posición horaria: las diez de la noche, a continuación del *Telediario*. El programa que escribe y dirige el realizador Fernando García Tola tuvo ya un precedente en el espacio *Dos por dos*, dirigido también por él mismo y que presentaron Isabel Tenaille y Mercedes Milá. *Esta noche* pretende combinar actuaciones musicales con entrevistas a personajes que puedan interesar al telespectador por razón de su actualidad o por su popularidad . . . Las tres entrevistas que se efectuarán en cada emisión será realizadas siempre por periodistas ajenos al medio televisión. (“RTVE estrena hoy cinco programas”)

It had all the ingredients to succeed: it aired during prime time—which in Spain is 10 p.m.—, had the presence of diverse and popular guests, added music to the equation, and its director was a well-known Spanish television figure. *Esta noche*, however, ended in 1982, just a few months after its opening:

Fernando García Tola, que esta noche despedirá uno de los programas más abiertos, pluralistas y conflictivos de TVE, y al mismo tiempo, uno de los

más correctos técnicamente hablando, considera que no ha tenido “suficiente confianza de la dirección de televisión,” patente por ejemplo en que nunca le han ofrecido que el programa fuera directo . . . y en que “me han prohibido sistemáticamente traer personajes políticos.” García Tola y su equipo sienten que han sido “demasiado atacados por un sector de la prensa, seguramente porque no podían soportar el ambiente de libertad indudable en el programa,” y añade que “algunos espectadores han reaccionado de manera violenta: yo he recibido amenazas e insultos, a Carmen Maura le han escrito innumerables cartas procaces e insultantes . . .” (“García Tola”)

A combination of lack of freedom and the, still, harsh censorship of the period could be some of the reasons for its cancellation. Sectors of society, the media, and the institutions were not ready, yet, for diversity. Something similar happened later to the variety show that became the symbol of that change, the Transition itself, *la Movida* on television, and cultural transgression: *La edad de Oro*. It came aboard in 1983, as PSOE was starting its long stay at the top of the Spanish political universe. The show, hosted and directed by Paloma Chamorro, was a review of new artistic tendencies of the period—art, music, comics, films, etc. Its format combined videos—depicting interviews to a diverse group of representatives from the different cultural trends—with live musical performances on the set. According to Chamorro, the program intended to pay homage to avant-garde masterpieces, such as Dalí’s or Buñuel’s, and become a reference for the possible new Golden Age that Spain was beginning to enjoy (“La Edad de Oro”). No topic was taboo on the show. Thus, drugs, sex, politics, or religion, to name a few, were

discussed on television, sometimes in an irreverent and free manner, which, obviously, brought along the criticism of the most reactionary sectors of society:

Los consejeros de administración de RTVE pertenecientes al Grupo Popular y a Minoría Catalana calificaron ayer determinadas escenas del programa *La edad de oro* del pasado martes como una “vulneración frontal de la Constitución y del artículo 4º del estatuto.” Dicho artículo dispone en su apartado c que “la actividad de los medios de comunicación social del Estado se inspirará en el principio del respeto al pluralismo político, religioso, social, cultural y lingüístico.” La consejera Ester López de Portela, del Grupo Popular, señaló como imágenes más ofensivas y graves la de un crucifijo con cabeza de elefante—“un cerdo,” según la aclaración del director general de RTVE—, así como un simulacro de celebración de la misa y la escena de una pareja desnuda en un ataúd. Protestó también por que en el programa *Dos en raya*, emitido el pasado domingo a las 19 horas, la presentadora entrevistó a un invitado en la cama, mientras desayunaban caviar, salmón ahumado y champaña.

(“Consejeros de RTVE protestan”)

As in previous cases, references to the institutions or the Church were more than enough to annoy the Establishment. Furthermore, if those allusions were perceived as irreverent—at least from a subjective and reactionary perspective—, they were, automatically, wiped out of the map. Spain was not a liberal country yet and freedom of speech had its limitations. The program was cancelled in April 1985.

News on television chronicled the changes that were taking place during the Transition too. Thus, audiences were informed—from an unilateral perspective, as expressed above—, among other topics, about the political amnesty, the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), the first General Elections in 1977, the failed coup d'état known as 23-F in 1981, and the triumph of Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) in October 1982—considered by most the end of the Transition process. Ladislao “Lalo” Azcona was one of the newsanchors that conveyed the news of the events— in *Telediario* or *En este país*—together with Eduardo Sotillos, Pedro Macía, Jesús Hermida, Alberto Delgado, or Rosa María Mateo, among many others. News magazines were also popular during the period. One of the most prolific hosts was Alfredo Amestoy. His shows <sup>114</sup> were a reflection of that Spain still tied to the past, depicted the daily struggle of its citizens, and had a certain influence on the society of the period. Cultural news came from shows like *A fondo* (1976-1981). In the format of conversations between Soler Serrano and his guests, it brought to TVE-2 some of the best Spanish-speaking writers of the period, both from Spain and Latin America. Among the 274 guests were Juan Rulfo, Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Octavio Paz, Rafael Alberti, or Ramón J. Sender, to name a few (Ansón et al. 38).

*Paisajes con figuras* (1976-1977) was another program that, still, had to face censorship during the early Transition:

*Paisaje con figuras* fue prohibida por orden directa del entonces presidente de Gobierno, Carlos Arias Navarro, a raíz de una polémica

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<sup>114</sup> *Vivir para ver* (1977), *Mi no comprender* (1977), *La España de los Botejara* (1978), or *Treinta y cinco millones de españoles* (197 )—created by José Antonio Plaza—, among others.

suscitada en la Prensa por la inclusión de un padrenuestro en lengua vasca en el capítulo dedicado a Elcano. (“Antonio Gala publica”)

Religion and the use of the different languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula were, in this case, the reason for the cancellation. It proves, as in the number of cases cited above, that television was a public entity and, as such, was at the mercy of the Establishment. The scripts of the show that were banned, written by Antonio Gala, were not published until 1985.

In addition to the world of TV news and information, another way to capture the attention of audiences was the use of series and situation comedies. They were as popular as ever during the Transition. Spanish television, however, said goodbye to shows like *Crónicas de un pueblo*. Directed by Antonio Mercero (1971-1974), it had been, for three years, a classic of Francoism and a channel for its ideology. The series depicted the life of a small Castilian town in the early 1970s. All the social and political institutions were represented: Church, with the presence of the priest; the law, with the symbology of the *Guardia Civil*; education, in the hands of the teacher, “moulding” the new generations; and the Establishment, led by the mayor. *Crónicas de un pueblo* was full of the ideals of the *Alzamiento Nacional*, which were spread every week in moralistic stories. As the times changed, prolific director Antonio Mercero moved on and directed other shows during the period, many of which became hits for audiences of all ages. One of the first ones of the Transition was *Este señor de negro* (1975-76). The show was a representation of the morals of the Spanish society during the early twentieth century. Actor José Luis López Vázquez played both grandfather—in the form of a portrait that comes to life—and grandson. The contrast was the sometimes more liberal ideals of the grandfather

against the more reactionary jeweler grandchild. Subtle eroticism came with the character of Loreto—played by actress Florinda Chico—, the voluptuous widow who ignites Sixto’s inner desires. His biggest hit of the period was at the end of the Transition: *Verano azul* (1981-82). The series followed middle-class families vacationing in Nerja, Málaga, with their children and the interactions with the locals—especially old fisherman “Chanquete” and part-time resident Julia, played by Antonio Ferrandis and María Garralón respectively. The show portrayed Spanish society from the perspective of both parents and children, most of them teenagers. The language used by the characters was colloquial and their discussions centered on topics such as freedom of speech, the right to be on strike, the role of divorced parents, pollution, solidarity, sexuality, pregnancy, hippies, or generational conflict. There was also a reference to the song “No nos moverán,” mentioned earlier, as a solidarity movement when the boat that belongs to “Chanquete” was about to be removed from his backyard, bringing up the topic of real estate and land speculation.

Other shows that depicted family and the societal changes taking place were *Diálogos de un matrimonio* (1982)—starring Jesús Puente and María Luisa San José, a sitcom about a married couple—or *Don Baldomero y su gente* (1982)—that substituted *Dialogos de matrimonio* on TV. The latter, starring Luis Escobar, was almost a continuation of the grotesque scenes offered by Luis Berlanga in his *Escopeta nacional* movies. Luis Escobar stars in the series, the same as he did in the movies. Class references and the decline of a Spain were a constant in the comedy.

The series, however, that became a classic and left its mark in the period was *Curro Jiménez* (1976-1978). It chronicled the life of a *bandolero*, highwayman Curro

Jiménez—loosely based on the adventures of real-life bandit Andrés López, a.k.a. *el barquero de Cantillana*,<sup>115</sup> a town in the province of Seville—and his band. The series was set in Andalusia in the early 1800s, against the backdrop of the *Guerra de la Independencia Española* (1808-1814), the Spanish War of Independence or Peninsular War. It was full of social and political criticism—the *afrancesados*, political corruption, invasion, freedom, social injustice, etc.—, with Jiménez portraying a romantic Robin Hood-esque character. Despite his criminal background, obviously forced by a classist society and the wealthy—the outlaw therefore faces determinism—, he was always in favor of the poor and those in need, and also against the French invader. Due to its political content, especially in some episodes, the series suffered the attack of the still castrating censorship. That was the case of “La gran batalla de Andalucía,” that aired on March 27, 1977, and dealt with the topics of class struggle and rebellion against imperialism (Palacio 88). Censorship, as previously explained, would not disappear until November 11, 1977, and sexual images or political content were, still, taboo in an ultraconservative and reactionary society.

Even though political and social references abounded during the period on television and some sexual innuendo made its way to the small screen, audiences would have to wait until the end of the Transition to experience eroticism in their own homes—before the popularization of video. A year after the culmination of the sociopolitical process, in 1983, eroticism came with *El jardín de Venus* (1983-1984). It was directed by Jose María Forqué and had among its actors some of the most important stars of the

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<sup>115</sup> “El barquero de Cantillana” was the title of the first episode of the series, that aired December 22, 1976.

moment, such as Fernando Fernán Gómez, Victoria Vera, Esperanza Roy, Adriana Ozores, or Agustín González. The series comprised the adaptation of thirteen erotic tales by Giovanni Bocaccio, Guy de Maupassant, María de Zayas, and Braulio Foz:

La nueva serie, dirigida por José María Forqué, está “libremente” basada en algunos cuentos de *El Decamerón*, de Giovanni Bocaccio, y otros de Guy de Maupassant, María de Zayas y Braulio Foz. “Son relatos en torno a las relaciones eróticas, galantes o amorosas,” dice José María Forqué. “Una región vital para las relaciones humanas afrontada muy brillantemente por la literatura mediterránea” . . . Los cinco primeros capítulos corresponden a relatos del *Decamerón*. Los cuatro siguientes se extraen de Maupassant, los tres siguientes corresponden a Zayas y el último capítulo es de Foz. Todos están contados, según Forqué, en una “tonalidad general irónica, sonriente, tierna y directa.” (“Comienza la serie ‘El jardín de Venus’”)

Also, after the Transition, in the 1990s, some of the regional and private channels showed erotic movies in series: *Cine de evasión* (Canal Sur), *Erotísimo* and *Historias del Playboy* (Telecinco), *Venus TV* (TVE-2), or *Serie Rosa* (TVE) were some typical examples.

Many novels and plays were adapted for television during the period as well, which was an achievement for a mass media (Ansón et al. 26); audiences are, in numerous cases, more interested in trivial matters than in cultural events. However, the adaptations that TVE carried out were in line with what the public wanted. So much so that the period was known as the Golden Age of television series in Spain (Ansón et al. 71), bringing literature to the homes of many Spaniards. One of the flagships of TVE was the



show known as *Novela* (1962-1979). Spectators were glued to the television set every evening to watch famous novels divided into daily episodes. Before the Transition, the adaptation of *El Conde de Monte Cristo* (1969), starring Pepe Martín, was a total success, due to a great story of political manipulation and the eventual triumph of justice—the return and success of the underdog is always a fan favorite. That could apply to many of the TV novels of the period.<sup>116</sup> Something that became a staple in many adaptations was the sexual connotation that most brought along. Whether explicit or suggested, sexual tension was common in those series.

Theater was also widely adapted for television.<sup>117</sup> The best example was *Estudio I*, a show that ran for twenty years, from 1965 to 1985.<sup>118</sup> Many Spanish authors' plays were taken to the small screen.<sup>119</sup> The all-time favorite, however, was Zorrilla's *Don Juan Tenorio*, that was represented a total of five times. Around November 1, Spanish audiences enjoyed the romantic play and its morals—the advent of Realism and Naturalism will change that perspective in the late 1800s—, with a Tenorio played by

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<sup>116</sup> During the Transition, among others, the audiences were treated to Vicente Blasco Ibañez's *Cañas y barro* (1978), starring Manuel Tejada, José Bódalo, and Victoria Vera, and *La barraca* (1979), with Alvaro de Luna, of *Curro Jiménez* fame, both dealing with passion, politics, and social injustice; Benito Pérez Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1980)—Ana Belén and Maribel Martín's face-off; Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's *Los Gozos y las sombras* (1982), with Eusebio Poncela, Amparo Rivelles, and Charo López; Merce Rodoreda's *La plaza del Diamante* (1982)—where actress Silvia Munt played the role of Colometa; or Juan Valera's *Juanita la larga* (1982), starring Violeta Cela and Conrado San Martín.

<sup>117</sup> Theater has been part of TVE since 1957, when O'Neill's *Antes del desayuno* debuted. (Ansón et al. 97).

<sup>118</sup> For a complete study of many of the plays adapted for TVE, see, among others, Virginia Guarino's chapter "El teatro en TVE durante la Transición (1975-1982). Un panorama con freno y marcha atrás" and in Ansón et al. *Televisión y Literatura en la España de la Transición*. 97-118.

<sup>119</sup> Examples were Calderón's *La dama duende* (1979), Lope de Vega's *La discreta enamorada* (1980), Miguel Mihura's *Maribel y la extraña familia* (1980), Alfonso Paso's *Al final de la cuerda* (1979), Jardiel Poncela's *Cuatro corazones con freno y marcha atrás* (1977), Rafael Alberti's *El adefesio* (1982), Buero Vallejo's *El tragaluz* (1982), or Unamuno's *Fedra* (1981).

some of the most renowned actors in the country—Paco Rabal, Fernando Guillén, or Carlos Larragañaga, among others. Among the international authors whose plays were adapted for *Estudio 1* were Shakespeare, Pirandello, Wilde, Ibsen, or Molière, to name a few.

Children's and teenage shows also saw some changes with the Transition. Spaniards left behind *La casa del reloj* (1971-1974)—hosted by Miguel Vila, Pedro Meyer, and Paula Gardoqui—, or *Los Chiripitifláuticos* (1966-1976), a classic of its time, with the infamous *Locomotoro*. *Los payasos de la tele* revolutionized the idea of TV clowns—Gaby, Fofó, Miliki, Fofito, and Milikito, the Aragón family, until 1991. A program that received accolades in 1983 was *Planeta imaginario*. The show aired until 1986. And, the same as *La Edad de Oro* had become the symbol of the Transition and the new tendencies for adults, *La bola de cristal* (1984-8) became the show for children and adolescents in the new democratic Spain. Hosted by Olvido Gara, a.k.a. “Alaska,” the show was very popular among the youngsters. For them primarily, music had an important presence on television during the period, both in the format of singing/dancing competitions or as musical magazines.<sup>120</sup> For more traditional generations, programs like *La copla*, hosted by Lauren Postigo, covered popular folk music. Music showed how diverse society had become during the period, covering from transgressive Punk to the more traditional Spanish folk songs.

Commercials on TV also saw changes during the period, trying to be part of a new and changing society. Perhaps, one of the most provocative ones was the infamous created by soap company Fa right after the Transition. Under the motto *Los limones del*

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<sup>120</sup> *Gente Joven* (1974-1987), *Aplauso* (1978-1983), *Tocata* (1983-1987), *Popgrama* (1977-1981)—with Carlos Tena and Diego A. Manrique—, *Musical Express* (1980)—hosted by Ángel Casas.

*Caribe*, spectators could see the naked bust of a model for the first time on television sponsored by a brand. The commercial could run at any time of the day, with audiences of all ages exposed to the images. Even though the images were not pornographic in any sense, it was another example of the different direction Spanish society was taking.

Nudity, at that point, had become mainstream and was no longer an obsessive topic.

The situation of Spanish radio at the beginning of the Transition was similar to that of television, and a remnant of Francoism, with government-controlled messages and political communiqués:

El prestigio social de la radio española como medio de comunicación era realmente bajo a la altura de 1975. Sujeta aún a seria vigilancia y censura, no había podido desarrollar sus capacidades informativas como lo hicieron los medios escritos gracias a la “Ley Fraga.” Radio Nacional de España poseía la exclusiva de la información política y todas las emisoras estaban obligadas a conectar con ella para radiar los diarios hablados. Esta situación persistió hasta el 6 de octubre de 1977, fecha en que un real decreto eliminó dicha obligación, dando así el pistoletazo de salida a los informativos libres y plurales en la radiodifusión española. Tarde llegaba la medida (ya se habían celebrado meses antes las primeras elecciones generales), pero constituyó un evidente revulsivo, dado que las características del medio radiofónico hacían de él una fuente informativa de primera magnitud, por su potencial agilidad y versatilidad. Hasta entonces había tenido que conformarse con desempeñar el papel de cauce

de entretenimiento para sectores no excesivamente cultos de nuestra sociedad. (Barrera 272)

Control and manipulation, as mentioned, included radio waves, subject to the rules and regulations of the regime, even during the first few steps of the Transition. Gradually, things started to change, FM radio took off, and audiences had the chance to listen to non-biased messages. During the Transition, the three main stations were RNE (Radio Nacional de España), the public radio that, as explained in the previous quote, had the exclusive of the political news until October 1977; COPE (Cadena de Ondas Populares de España), owned mainly by the *Conferencia Episcopal Española*, i.e., Church; and CADENA SER (Sociedad Española de Radiodifusión), the oldest station in Spain.<sup>121</sup>

One of the most important figures of the period was Luis del Olmo, who, in 1973, took over the the longest-airing show in Spanish radio history: *Protagonistas* (1969-present). The show has a section known as “El estado de la nación.” Over the years, comedians, writers, and artists in general—Tip y Coll, Forges, Mingote, or Ussia, among many others—have been analyzing current events, above all political and social. However, freedom in the airwaves had spots of censorship and Luis del Olmo was fired as host and director of *Protagonistas* because he allowed one of his guests to criticize President Suárez on the air. But, as a reflection of change, the pression of the listeners, mainly from Barcelona, brought Del Olmo back to the show (Barrera 287). If some controversy surrounded Del Olmo, it was nothing compared with the conflict José María García generated on the air. García was, arguably, the most controversial radio

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<sup>121</sup> It started in 1924 as Radio Barcelona, with María Sabater on the microphone (“Ondas”). Its name was changed to Unión Radio—radio stations that broadcast from different cities in Spain—and then SER after the end of the Civil War, a commercial radio owned by Garrigues and Fontán.

personality of the time. “Ojo al dato, señores” was one of his catch phrases as he pointed out the data on corruption—also depicted in his book *La corrupción en el deporte español* (1979). On shows like *Hora 25* (1972-1978) or *Supergarcía*, García displayed his caustic critique of nepotism in politics, society, and sport, above all against Pedro Porta, President of the Spanish Soccer Federation from 1975 to 1984:

Con Porta al frente de la federación más importante, económicamente y en licencias, del país, las deudas de los clubes han ascendido de forma vertiginosa hasta superar los 12.000 millones de pesetas, cifra aproximada, puesto que los propios clubes parecen dudar a la hora de ofrecer cuentas exactas. Al margen de los problemas económicos derivados también de las auditorías realizadas en la federación, durante su gestión se han producido tres huelgas de futbolistas y alguna tentativa frustrada. (“Porta”)

García accused Porta over the years of all the malaises of Spanish soccer—debt, strikes, etc. He, endlessly, pointed out the corruption and troubles that during his time as president the sport had suffered. However, José Ramón de la Morena—of *El larguero* fame—, later on praised Porta, stating it had all been a campaign against him orchestrated by García (“El comentario de José Ramón de la Morena”).

If García was the constant accusation, Jesús Quintero was the art of silence himself during the last stage of the Transition. He is best known for his talk show *El loco de la colina*—on RNE (1980-82), SER (1982-1986), and on TVE-1 in 2006. The program started with its theme song, Pink Floyd’s *Shine on you Crazy Diamond* in the background, and the calm voice of Quintero’s. It became a hit. Unlike other hosts, his appeal was the way interviews were conducted. In an intimate atmosphere, Quintero

displayed long gaps of silence after the answers given by the guests, who, feeling that their responses had been short, were compelled to develop the subject matter. In the south, a poet with love for his homeland, Andalusia, and its indigenous music, almost non-existent then, had the dream of a radio show. Poet Juan de Loza started a program in 1967 in Radio Popular (Granada) called *Poesía 70*. The radio show was the seed for *Manifiesto de la Canción del Sur*—previously mentioned. The show aired until 1993.

Not only men reigned in the world of radio during the Transition. There was also a woman whose power grew immensely over the years. Her name was Encarna. Encarna Sánchez was the female star of night radio during the period with her show *Encarna de noche* (1978), where she reflected on—and criticized—current social and political events. Listeners, mainly women, called in to share their lives and Encarna’s answers and opinions became very influential at the time. Loved by many and hated by a part of society, her antics will always be part of the radio history of Spain. Her fame took comedy duo Martes y Trece to perform a skit based on her show that became one of the duo’s all-time fan favorite.

In conclusion, Spanish television and radio followed the trend opened by the rest of the media and film, however, in a more gradual fashion. As a result of their public status in most cases—completely owned by the state in the case of television, and partially in the radio—, change was made in steps. Political commentary, unless supervised by the government, was impossible on television and Radio Nacional de España. The same applied to television and nudity, although, as the years passed, both the higher spheres of Francoism and the Transition became more permissive, trying to show a false image of modernization, as they had done regarding cinema, as explained earlier

in Aznar's *La Celestina*. Eventually, with the advent of the Socialist government in 1982, the channels from the different autonomous communities, and, above all, private TV networks in the early 1990s, the scenario changed completely, and the extremes television had not experienced during the first years of the Transition, were condensed in those first moments of "privacy," with shows like *Erotísimo*, *Historias del Playboy*, both from Telecinco, or *Venus TV* (TVE-2).

#### **4.2. Newspapers, Magazines, and Comics. The Reflection of a Society in Transition**

The Transition also brought changes to the way printed news and information were relayed to the readers. Ironically, one of the icons—or images, if we like—of Francoism marked the beginning of the change. Pepa Flores, better known as Marisol, appeared naked on the cover of magazine *Interviú* on September 2, 1976. Today, that would be something unimportant. But we have to keep in mind that, at the time, censorship was still in place—it ended in November 1977—and the ideals of the former regime regarding sexual or political displays ruled the nation. However, politics and eroticism soon began filling up newspapers and magazines. They became the core of the publications. As Marisa Flórez<sup>122</sup> explained, in those years, politics was the star of the news (*Cuéntame*, "Y llegó el destape"). Many newspapers and magazines were published for the first time during the Transition, trying to be a reflection of what was going on in a changing country, full of political news, terrorism, financial crisis, and a high rate of

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<sup>122</sup> Marisa Flórez is one of the most important press photographers in Spain. One of her iconic pictures of the period is the one depicting actress Susana Estrada and Socialist politician Tierno Galván on February 14, 1978, when Estrada received the *Pueblo* diary popularity award from Tierno. The actress was photographed showing one of her breasts. It was the perfect combination of the topics studied in this dissertation.

unemployment; they became such an important part of the period that they got to be known as *el parlamento de papel* during the first stages of the period.<sup>123</sup>

However, censorship, as explained earlier, did not end till 1977. Just as the regime had controlled TVE and RNE, the so-called *Prensa del Movimiento*, the National Movement Press, did the same with the printed press until the beginning of the Transition:

El 16 de mayo de 1984 dejó de existir la que hasta entonces—y desde la posguerra—había constituido la mayor cadena de prensa en España: la antigua Prensa del Movimiento, convertida a partir del mes de abril de 1977 en el organismo autónomo Medios de Comunicación Social del Estado (MCSE). (Barrera 53)

The group had been founded in 1940, right after the Civil War, and its newspapers—*Arriba*, among others—benefited from the presses and other printing equipment confiscated by the regime to publishing companies that had clearly opposed the Movement, like, for instance, *El liberal* (Busquets). And, even though Fraga had modified the law in 1966, giving the press more freedom, it would not be until the end of 1977 when censorship would be banned. That meant that, sometimes, newspapers were seized or sequestered and news banned by the authorities. As journalist and writer Rosa Montero stated, during the Transition, they lived under censorship and they could not

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<sup>123</sup> Yet, as Fuentes explained:

Con la elección en 1977 de las primeras Cortes democráticas la prensa iba a dejar de ser ese Parlamento de papel que, a falta de instituciones verdaderamente representativas, había servido de tribuna de opinión y caja de resonancia de la vida pública española. Las Cortes y los partidos políticos empezarían a cumplir, de esta forma, el papel de representación e intermediación entre la sociedad y el poder que hasta entonces habían desempeñado provisionalmente los medios de comunicación. (322)



write about certain topics, primarily the institutions—namely Church and the Armed Forces (*Cuéntame*, “Y llegó el destape”). As we can see, not everyone welcomed the changes. Reactionary sectors of society opposed them with a vengeance. Thus, bomb threats to the offices of several newspapers were not uncommon at the time.

Even with restrictions, repression, and threats, one of the signs that showed that things were beginning to change was the freedom to express political opinion publicly. An example was the the poor welcome newspapers dedicated to Adolfo Suárez when he was elected president in 1976:

El nombramiento de Adolfo Suárez como presidente del Gobierno en julio de 1976, desplazando a los candidates que parecían mejor colocados—Fraga y Areilza—, fue mal recibido por *El País*. No fue mejor la acogida que el nuevo presidente encontró en otras publicaciones próximas a la oposición democrática. *Cuadernos para el diálogo* le dedicó un titular de portada, sobre un fondo negro, que expresaba gráficamente la decepción general: “El apagón.” La crisis de Gobierno, en vez de acelerar la reforma democrática, parecía frenar la apertura iniciada tras la muerte de Franco: “No caben paliativos—sentenciaba *Cuadernos*—: el nombramiento de Suárez ha sido un error”. Más o menos la misma fue la interpretación de *Triunfo* y de *Cambio 16* al hacerse eco del “estupor absoluto,” según este ultimo, que el hecho había provocado en la opinión pública. (Fuentes 319)

Suárez was considered by many the wrong candidate to take the reins of a country under construction and people voiced their opinion. Thus, now, in most cases, unlike the times of harsh censorship the regime had imposed over the society, the citizens had a right to

speak; the press, especially the new newspapers and magazines that appeared during the Transition, echoed their opinions.

Many newspapers and magazines appeared during the period with the intent to cover the information of the multiple sociopolitical changes the country was undertaking. Arguably, one of the most influential newspapers that started its publication during the Transition was *El País* (1976). Its first issue hit the newsstands on May 4, 1976, at 2:50 a.m., with 180,000 issues published (“*El País* 30 Aniversario”). In a country *en route* to democracy, ironically, its first director, Juan Luis Cebrián, was sentenced to three months in jail for contempt in 1980:

La Sala Segunda del Tribunal Supremo condenó ayer al director de EL PAIS, Juan Luis Cebrián, a tres meses de cárcel (arresto mayor) y 50.000 pesetas de multa, como autor de un delito de desacato por la publicación, hace dos años, de un editorial titulado Prensa y democracia que comentaba desfavorablemente una sentencia de los tribunales . . . Celebrado el juicio, la sentencia de la Audiencia declaró inocente al señor Cebrián del delito de desacato, pero le condenó al pago de una multa de 5.000 pesetas por una falta de “leve desobediencia a la autoridad o falta de consideración o respeto a la misma” . . . Como Juan Luis Cebrián carece de antecedentes penales, se le aplicará probablemente la condena condicional, por lo que no tendrá que cumplir en la cárcel los tres meses de arresto . . . (“El tribunal supremo condena a la cárcel al director de *El País*”)

However, due to Cebrián’s lack of previous criminal record, the director would not spend time in jail—during those three months, however, the court tried to deprive him of many

of his rights. As we can see, even in democracy, certain topics and the institutions, as I have pointed out in several occasions, are still sacred. Previously, on October 30, 1978, the newspaper was attacked by extremists. That summarizes some of the events taking place in a country still confused with its direction and with a long way ahead before democracy was fully established. An example was the series of events that unfolded on February 23, 1981, the day of the failed coup d'état carried out by factions of the military and the *Guardia Civil*. *El País* chronicled the assault, supporting at the same time democracy and the newly approved Constitution (1978). Thus, at 10:00 p.m., they distributed their edition, followed by six more, covering the events (“*El País* 30 Aniversario”).

Together with *El País*, another important daily newspaper was *Diario 16*. It appeared for the first time on October 18, 1976, published by Información y Publicaciones—the company that also owned *Cambio 16* magazine, its sister publication. However, unlike *El País*, *Diario 16* was canceled in 2001. The newspaper also chronicled the events in the new democracy, including, among many others, *Operación Galaxia*—the prelude to the coup—, 23-F, or the legalization of PCE. The same as *El País*, the newspaper was the target of a terrorist attack on June 26, 1977:

Los Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre (GRAPO) han reivindicado de nuevo la autoría del atentado contra el Diario 16 en la madrugada del domingo día 26 de junio, a través de sendos comunicados hechos llegar a las redacciones de Informaciones y EL PAIS. Como prueba de autenticidad de sus comunicados, los GRAPOS han adjuntado una fotocopia de una carta manuscrita de Antonio María de Oriol dirigida

a los directores de los GRAPOS en los últimos días de su cautiverio. Una llamada anónima, a las diez de la mañana de ayer, comunicó a EL PAIS la existencia de un comunicado de los GRAPO bajo al alfombra del portal de la finca de la calle General Mola, 44. (“Los GRAPO reivindican el atentado contra ‘Diario 16’”)

Terrorism was another example of the social and political extremes that took place during the Transition and it came from both the extreme right and left. In this case, the terrorist attack was claimed by left-wing GRAPO. The last two years of the Transition, and until 1989, the newspaper was directed by Pedro J. Ramírez. The paper became the first one—with the exception of *La hoja del lunes*—to be published also on Mondays, something not allowed by law at the time (“Expediente a *Diario 16*”).<sup>124</sup>

Politics became such an important topic during the Transition that many political parties or associations had their own publications, to inform their members and supporters of the news, obviously from their own perspective, now that they could do so under the new freedom of speech and freedom of the press. *Mundo Obrero* was the newspaper published by the Spanish Communist Party—PCE. Even though its publication dates back to 1930, it was officially closed down and banned during Francoism—but published illegally nevertheless—and did not officially return to newsstands until the Transition (1978). During the dictatorship, it was a tool against the regime, defending freedom and opposing oppression. Likewise, *El socialista* (1886) was the newspaper published by the Spanish Socialist Party. Banned after the Civil War, it also came back during the Transition (1977). On the opposite side of the spectrum of

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<sup>124</sup> The *Secretaría de Estado para la Información* took disciplinary action against the newspaper.

both *Mundo Obrero* and *El socialista* was *El Alcázar*. *El Alcázar* (1936-1987) did not appear during the Transition—it was founded in 1936 with an ideology in line with the ideals of the National Movement—but, in 1975, it was acquired by the Confederación Nacional de Hermandades de Ex-combatientes, becoming the channel for pro-Francoism and for those opposed to the new democratic state.

Together with national newspapers like *El País* and *Diario 16*, some regions—above all, the Basque Country and Catalonia—had their own publications, in line with their ideals of freedom from centralism. Many appeared during the Transition. *Egin* (1977) was the first Basque newspaper published during the period. It was printed mainly in Spanish but with a clear *abertzale* ideology. This brought along constant accusations of ties to terrorist group ETA. Thus, and after the Transition, in 1998, judge Garzón shut it down:

El 15 de julio de 1998, Baltasar Garzón ordenó la clausura de las actividades del diario Egin y de la emisora Egin Irratia, al considerar que ambos estaban integrados en la estructura de ETA. Fruto de las investigaciones judiciales, el 20 de noviembre de ese mismo año, 26 personas fueron procesadas por la supuesta relación de Egin con ETA.

(“Egin”)

During the years of the dictatorship, ETA was perceived as another attempt to overthrow the fascist regime, and was supported and favored by many. After the end of Francoism, the terrorist organization’s attacks, some against civilians and democrats, earned them social condemnation. However, many individuals and groups in the Basque Country still contributed to their cause, which, in turn, resulted in legal actions against them. Along

with *Egin*, *Deia* was another Basque newspaper that appeared during the Transition—in 1977. The nationalist newspaper was promoted by the Basque Nationalist Party—Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV).

The same as the Basque Country, Catalonia had its own share of regional publications, some of a more nationalist nature than others. *El Periódico de Catalunya* was a Catalan newspaper published in two versions, Catalan and Spanish. Its first issue appeared on October 26, 1978. Its articles were signed by prestigious writers—among them, writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. *Avui* was another Catalan newspaper founded during the Transition, in 1976, and the first one published in Catalan language after the end of the dictatorship. Unlike *El periódico de Catalunya*, its ideals were more pro-independence and nationalist.

If newspapers saw important changes with the advent of democracy, magazines turned 180 degrees in their perspective and the images and articles portrayed in them. As stated above, the appearance of nudity in magazines marked, for some, the beginning of the real freedom of the press, the use of the naked body as a work of art in publications (Ponce 7). For others, however, it marked the starting point of a new objectification of women. Juan Eslava Galán explains that magazines with images of naked women and news uncovering some kind of scandal represented 70 % of the national production (qtd. in Altisent 22). *Interviú* (1976) was, arguably, the magazine that best represented the amalgamation of politics and eroticism in the Transition. It will be analyzed in a later section. During late Francoism, *Diez Minutos* (1951) had been the precursor of *destape* with sections like *Famosas en la intimidad*, *Famosas bajo el sol*, *La chica de la semana*, and posters and calendars with the images of famous artists of the moment (Fontes 668).

In the early Transition, magazines like *Personas*, *Boccaccio 70* or *Flashmen* combined eroticism with political commentary. They were published, mainly, for male readers. *Por favor* was in the same line, but with a more “cultural character,” according to Ponce (31). Many of these magazines were sequestered or fined during the period for their attempt to portray seminaked women on their covers. And then, *Interviú* burst into the scene. French magazine *Lui* had been doing something similar since 1963, although it was not sold in Spain until the Transition:

*Lui* apareció en 1963, dentro del grupo Filipacchi, como respuesta francesa a *Playboy*. Si *Salut les Copains*, del mismo editor, era para los adolescentes, *Lui* era para los “adultos de la nueva época.” La dirigía Jacques Lanzmann, periodista y novelista. Entonces la fórmula consistía en alternar reportajes, encuestas sobre sexualidad, entrevistas a famosos con fotos a todo color y en papel satinado de chicas desnudas que, ¡oh milagros del contorsionismo y de la luz!, nunca mostraban ni pezones ni vello púbico. (“Desaparece la revista ‘Lui’”)

It combined, the same as *Interviú*, political commentary with the display of some nudity. In 1994 *Lui* disappeared from newsstands for good. During its run, the magazine also established the Premio de Relatos Eróticos, the erotic-story award whose first edition was in 1979. That year, the first prize went to Raúl Chávarri for “Sólos los tres.” The edition also had among its writers prestigious names, such as Fernando Quiñones or Fernando Sánchez Dragó, and female newcomers like Dolores Vega and Hortensia Valdés, already referenced in the “Novel” section of this dissertation. Other erotic national magazines of the time were *Pen* and *Lib*. *Pen* first appeared in 1978 and, soon, had a supplement, *Las*

*cartas privadas de Pen*, where individuals, allegedly, wrote and sent letters dealing with their sexual encounters and experiences of all type—including aberrations. *Lib* (1976) was, at the same time, one of the standards for the erotic publications of the period:

*Lib* nació en 1976 en plena transición democrática, y fue un auténtico boom editorial. En aquella época de movimientos políticos que saliera a la luz una revista con este tipo de contenido no fue fácil; y durante más de 30 años de existencia no se ha dejado de publicar. Podemos afirmar, con toda seguridad, que es la revista erótica más completa y comprada, y os aseguramos con orgullo que es la pionera del erotismo en España. (*Lib*)

*Lib* also established the *contactos*, the “Personals section” where private individuals connect with others regarding sexual matters.

Until now, I have only analyzed magazines published for men and whose content was, primarily, the display of female nudity. But not only male and heterosexual readers were treated to the effervescent eroticism of the period. The gay man also had a chance to enjoy the new trends in *Party* magazine since 1979. Many famous men showed their naked torsos on the cover—among them, José Velez, José Luis Rodríguez “El puma,” Miguel Bosé, or Bertín Osborne. Inside, many artists appeared totally naked.

Even though, as mentioned earlier, erotic magazines represented 70 % of the market share, politics were just as important during the period, and many magazines, like newspapers had done before, devoted its space to the coverage of the events that were taking place in the nation. *Cambio 16—Diario 16*’s sister magazine from which it evolved—was one of the most important of the period. It first appeared during the last years of Francoism, in 1971, and, therefore, had to endure the still active and harsh



ensorship. Something similar happened to *Triunfo*, that appeared in 1946 and became, during the period, the cultural magazine for leftist intellectuals. *Ajoblanco* was first published in 1974 with a clear ideology against the Establishment and a reference for the alternative culture or counterculture. Other magazines were *Algarabía* (Málaga, 1978-79); *Andalucía Libre* (1976-1982), the channel for the political ideals of ASA, *Alianza Socialista de Andalucía*; right-wing *Revista Fuerza Nueva*, that first appeared in 1967 but that saw its prime during the Transition, while the homonymous political party was still active, between 1976 and 1982; *La calle* (1978-82), *Argumentos* (1977-84), and *El Cárabo* (1976-80), all three with a clear communist ideology; *Leviatán* (1978), of socialist tendency; or *Tiempo de hoy*, a more political supplement to *Interviú* that appeared in 1982, among many others.

Feminist Magazines also had its space during the Transition, given the changes in gender roles that were, gradually, taking place.

Las ideas feministas se introdujeron en España en los años de la transición, en trabajos y artículos diversos, entre los cuales es representativo “Feminismo o Antipatriarcalismo”, publicado por Cristina Alberdi en la revista *Negaciones* (Alberdi, 1977:22-23). Aquí encontramos muchas de las claves teóricas y de praxis política que definieron al movimiento. (Pecourt 174)

The feminist movement was beginning to gain momentum in the process, as women were becoming more aware of their status and fighting for their rights in a patriarchal society where they were dependent on men for daily actions—from opening a bank account to working outside the house. Arguably, the best-known feminist publishing company

during the period was *Vindicación Feminista Publicaciones*, created in 1976 by the founder of the Spanish Feminist Party, lawyer, and writer Lidia Falcón—analyzed in the “Novel” section of this dissertation:

Vindicación Feminista Publicaciones es la editorial feminista con más años de trayectoria en España. Existe desde 1976 cuando Lidia Falcón fundó Ediciones de Feminismo, SA. En 1979 adoptó el nombre de Vindicación Feminista Publicaciones y hasta el año 2000 fue un departamento editorial del Club Vindicación Feminista de Madrid. Actualmente la dirigen Lidia Falcón y Elvira Siurana. (*Vindicación Feminista*)

In 1976, the first feminist magazine was published: *Vindicación Feminista*, a monthly publication that lasted until 1979; it was directed by Carmen Alcalde.<sup>125</sup> In 1979, Falcón founded the magazine *Poder y Libertad*, “la revista teórica del Partido Feminista de España” (*Vindicación Feminista*), still published bi-annually.

In addition to newspapers and magazines, the world of the adult comic gained popularity during the Transition. Adult comics and magazines are considered by the intelligentsia as part of the so-called marginal or alternative culture (Dopico 10). In Spain, these publications have known different stages since the late 1960s, when Francoism began to show traces of *aperturismo*. Up until then, most of the popular comic

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<sup>125</sup> Rosa Montero, Maruja Torres, Beatriz de Moura, or Carmen Sarmiento, among others, were part of the board.

magazines were created for children, represented, mainly, by TBO <sup>126</sup> or the characters drawn by Ibáñez—namely *Mortadelo y Filemón* (1958) or *Pepe Gotera y Otilio* (1966), among many others—, with the exception of *La Codorniz*, that first appeared in 1941, or the new *DDT* (1951) for adults. <sup>127</sup> During the Transition, however, comic magazines became the medium in a decade marked by political, social, and economic repression derived from the opposition to the government led by Arias Navarro (Lladó 11). Social, political, and sexual topics were depicted in the magazines.

One of the first examples of satirical magazines was *Hermano Lobo* (1972-1976), promoted and supported by Chumy Chúmez (Ponce 30). A year later, *El Papus* (1973) became the reference for adult comics and caustic criticism. A harsh satire of politics and society, it was sequestered in several occasions by the authorities. On September 20, 1977—just like other publications of its time not in line with the former regime had endured before—, it was attacked by a terrorist group unknown to date, as *El País* informed in 2011 (“*El Papus*, un atentado sin culpable”). The criminal act resulted in sixteen casualties and one fatality. One of the most important comic magazines at the beginning of the Transition was *Star* (1974). According to Ponce, it was the magazine that, edited by Juan José Fernández, opened the genre of underground press in Spain, nonexistent then. It had the support of counterculture Catalan figures and a clear discourse of sex, drugs, and rock and roll—which resulted in fines and sequestrations

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<sup>126</sup> It is interesting to note that, in Spain, the term *tebeo*—from *TBO*, a comic magazine that first appeared in 1917—refers, exclusively, to comics for children. For adult or teenage comics—superheroes and the likes—, Spaniards use the English term, comic, usually with the proper accent mark—*cómic*.

<sup>127</sup> *DDT* started as a magazine dedicated to teenage readers. Yet, from 1964, they included the subtitle *Revista para adultos*—adult magazine (Lladó 18).

(98). It was considered, by some, a clear attack against good taste (“*Star*: ataque frontal contra el ‘buen gusto’”).

*El jueves* (1977) was a satirical magazine that, ironically, as its cover explained, came out on Wednesdays to criticize current social and political events. Its cover also represented a naked buffoon, the magazine’s emblem, which was not exempt of controversy. Because of its caustic criticism and content, its seventh issue was sequestered by the authorities—over a religious reference that involved the Pope and Monsignor Lefebre. *El víbora* (1979) followed the same trend:

Durante los años 80 se convirtió en el mejor referente de las inquietudes sociales de aquella muchachada en plena movida. La gran baza de la revista fue su capacidad de caminar pegada a la realidad de la calle. El número dedicado al golpe de estado del 23 de febrero de 1981 demostró la agilidad y desparpajo de un colectivo de artistas capaces de asumir riesgos con sorprendente descaro. (“¿Puede morir *El Víbora*”)

It disappeared in 2005. In the same line were *El Rollo enmascarado* (1973), *Ozono* (1975), *Totem* (1977), or *Bésame Mucho* (1980). Other adult comic magazines followed the trend after the Transition. Thus, *Cairo* (1981) or *Madriz* (1984).

Among the plethora of magazines and newspapers that appeared during the Transition, one represented the amalgamation of politics and eroticism, the two most (ab)used topics of the Transition, like no other. It broke molds and was both vilified and praised during the period. Regardless of opinions, I think it is necessary to carry out a closer study to what this magazine meant for the Spain of the 1970s, a moment when change was taking place and some issues were catapulted to the extreme.

### 4.3. *Interviú*. The Epitome of the (Ab)use of Politics and Eroticism

*Interviú* was founded by Antonio Asensio<sup>128</sup> in 1976. At the time, one of the magazines that combined social issues with a certain touch of eroticism was *Personas*, first published in 1971. The magazine dedicated 30 % of its pages to models whose clothes started to vanish with the new and more permissive laws (Fontes and Menéndez 922). The first issue of *Interviú* magazine, at a price of 40 pesetas, hit the newsstands on May 22, 1976, with a model on the cover whose breasts were insinuated under a macramé cardigan and a reference to Montejurra, among others. Celebrated by some, criticized by others,<sup>129</sup> its rise to fame and popularity, however, arrived with the portrayal of Marisol’s naked body on the cover of its issue number 16, published on September 2, 1976, when censorship was still in effect:

El 2 de septiembre de 1976, ya con el Gobierno de Suárez, la revista *Interviú*—creada por el fundador del Grupo Zeta y de *El periódico*, Antonio Asensio—publicó por vez primera la fotografía de una mujer totalmente desnuda en la portada. Se trataba nada menos que de Marisol, icono del régimen franquista, del desarrollismo, de la España en paz. Lo cierto es, sin embargo, que Pepa Flores demostraría con el tiempo ser más progresista que su personaje Marisol. (“Foro por la memoria”)

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<sup>128</sup> Antonio Asensio created *Interviú* when he was only 29 years old. Born in 1947, he was also the founder of Grupo Zeta. *Interviú*, *El Jueves*, or *El Periódico de Catalunya* were some of the newspapers and magazines published by the company during the Transition.

<sup>129</sup> Imelda Navajo, for instance, declared that “Cuando una mujer abre una revista del tipo de *Interviú* se siente agredida [...] Esto demuestra que seguimos estando en el sistema, sea franquista, postfranquista u otro cualquiera, pero un sistema patriarcal y dentro de unas relaciones de producción que cosifican a la mujer y la convierten en un objeto de consumo más.” According to her, the magazine was a “mezcla exótica de pornografía y política que sume a los lectores en la enajenación mental y en un profundo caos ideológico” (qtd. in Fontes 946). After the Transition, however, Teresa Viejo was appointed director of the magazine—in 2002.

*Interviú* challenged the Establishment with the publication of pictures of an actress, not only naked, but someone who had been, for years, an icon of the former regime—and that represented for some a double affront to the ideals of National-Catholicism that had ruled the country for almost four decades. The pictures, taken by professional photographer César Lucas, were published in the magazine without Marisol's or Lucas's permission—it is not clear who provided the magazine with the images. Lucas had photographed Marisol, now Pepa Flores, to promote her international career as a sex symbol, an idea of Carlos Goyanes's, at the time Flores's husband. The pictures resulted in accusations of public indecency for Lucas. He was acquitted in 1980, since the judge considered that the photographs could not be considered pornography (“Sentencia judicial”).

In any case, from that point on, its sensationalistic investigative reports unveiling corruption and politics, together with the exhibition of female bodies, became a reference for the period. Among the many topics they covered were the *colza* case, the industrial rapeseed oil that was illegally commercialized for human consumption and affected thousands of people; the communal graves used by Francoist troops during the Civil War; the business owned by the Church; the Urquijo murders, where Rafael Escobedo was accused of the deaths of the marquise and her husband; or, right after the Transition, the GAL case, a right-wing terrorist group that involved the PSOE government in a complex plot of what was considered state terrorism.

*Interviú* also became a platform for many models and actresses. If they wanted to succeed in show business, they had to appear in the magazine. At the time, after so many years of repression, as Ramón de España explained, if you did not show your buttocks publicly, you were nobody (Ponce 9). *Interviú*, as Sara Mora expressed in one of the

documentaries about *destape* analyzed in this dissertation—in the Contemporary Revision section—, did not pay models and actresses for their image. But, for many, appearing in the magazine was a stepping stone that would lead to movie roles and, in essence, work. For others, it was a sign of freedom, and artists and public figures wanted to be portrayed in it as a symbol of modernization. During the Transition, in addition to Marisol, the number of popular women who appeared on the cover was high, since the magazine was published weekly: María José Cantudo, Ágata Lys, Victoria Vera, Bibi Andersen, Carmen Cervera, Bárbara Rey, Amparo Muñoz, Silvia Tortosa, Sara Montiel, or even Lola Flores herself, a Spanish institution for many, in September 1983. Years after the Transition, renown actresses like Concha Velasco also appeared naked. Today, as society and television have apparently focused on reality shows, the covers are graced by contestants from *Gran Hermano*—Spain’s version of *Big Brother*—and the likes. Their investigative reports keep trying to uncover corruption or wrongdoings, both in Spain and around the world, with their reporters being infiltrated in numerous conflicts and scams that they try to expose to their readers.

I have analyzed in this chapter the important changes the media underwent in Spain during the period of democratic restoration. As any process, it was not free of setbacks and confusion. During the first years of the Transition—until the end of 1977 and the lifting of the censorship—, newspapers, magazines, and both radio and television were still controlled by a repressive state, which led to fines and sequestration. But, as I stated, the media influenced society and something similar happened the other way around. Eventually, the media chronicled the dramatic changes society was experiencing and reflected the trends, primarily regarding eroticism and politics. Freedom of speech

and freedom of the press resulted in a more diverse scenery. During the first years of the Transition, television was the medium whose changes were slow compared with the printed press, due to its public nature, controlled by the government. Newspapers and magazines quickly started their coverage and critique of the events taking place in the nation. As a symbol of change, feminist publications appeared. On the other side of the spectrum, however, erotic magazines displayed women on their covers. This was seen by some as the beginning of the modernization. For others, it was one more example of the objectification of women in a still patriarchal society. The topics were taken, in some cases, to the extreme, as it had happened in novels and films. It was, once again, part of a process that, in the end, would lead to the current society, where both politics and eroticism are just two more of the many issues covered by mass and popular media.



CHAPTER 5  
CONTEMPORARY REVISION OF THE CULTURAL TRANSITION TO  
DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, both the Civil War/Francoism and the Transition have been the topics of many artistic creations. Artists and historians alike seem to find some kind of allure, of fascination revisiting Spain's most controversial past, those years of uncertainty, of extremes, with a degree of general madness or folly, "which embarks all men without distinction on its insane ship and binds them to the vocation of a common odyssey"<sup>130</sup> (Foucault, *Madness* 14). It was, indeed, a common, and yet, multiperspectival odyssey, full of achievement and disillusionment, of struggle between the advocates of democracy and "those who defend the old system" (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 310). It was criticized by many, but it led, eventually, to a more equal society—at least in most cases and scenarios, although gender violence is still a remnant of an aggressive patriarchal past—where women travelled from house chores to ministries and directorial positions, where politics became part of the average citizen, and where sex, satiated the primal and repressed (male) instincts, turned into commonplace.

The review and revision during the last decades cover all aspects of culture and society. The political and erotic tendency that started during the Transition continued in the first years after the period. As I have explained, novels like Almudena Grandes's *Las edades de Lulú* or television shows like *La Edad de Oro*, maintained the trend to transgress conservative societal rules. Something similar happened with the emergence of

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<sup>130</sup> In a certain sense, the transitional period could parallel Sebastian Brant's idea of *the Ship of Fools* (1494), with a diverse group of citizens embarked in a common trip to change society, but clueless in regards to where the process would take them.

the new private TV networks in the early 1990s, like Telecinco or Canal +, and shows like *¡Ay, qué calor!* (1991) or *Cine X*, as previously explained. Even *El País* published in 2009, on DVD format, *Las obras maestras del cine erótico*—1 euro per DVD.<sup>131</sup> One of the movies that revisited the Transition from the perspective of the actresses who were part of the *destape* trend was *Los años desnudos*. On the other hand, a production reviewed history under the grotesque perspective of Els Joglars: *Buen viaje, excelencia*. Both will be analyzed in depth in the following section.

## **5.1. The Contemporary Film Revision**

### **5.1.1. *Los años desnudos. Clasificada S. Objectified Women in Transgressive Environments***

The plethora of erotic and political films that during the Transition filled movie theaters, and that people flocked to see as a novelty, ended up on television networks during the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, S-rated movies disappeared as the new X-rated films covered its niche. However, they were revisited by a production that reached theaters in 2008. It was one of the best contemporary examples that reviewed the erotic genre during the Transition: *Los años desnudos. Clasificada S*.

In a critical, and somewhat nostalgic, fashion, directors Félix Sabroso and Dunia Ayaso—a “coed” directorial team to guarantee equal perspective—offer a realistic, though utterly sentimental, vision of the production of the so-called S-rated movies,

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<sup>131</sup> Among them, *Calígula* (1979) or one of the best-known films by American filmmaker Russ Meyer, *Vixen* (1968), with a promiscuous and incestuous woman in charge of her sexual relationship:

Rodada con cuatro duros, fue un colosal éxito de taquilla y muy especialmente entre las mujeres. La protagonista es de una incansable promiscuidad que alcanza no sólo a casi cualquier tipo de machote. Experiencias lésbicas, incestuosas y danzas con un pescado completan el repertorio . . . Algunos lo consideran un ejemplo de la liberación de la mujer que toma las riendas de sus relaciones sexuales. (“El apetito voraz de las chicas XL”)

together with the depiction of Spanish society of the late 1970s and early 1980s. From the objectification of women in transgressive environments to the consequences of living out of mainstream Spain, the film analyzes the societal roles of men and women and the double standard regarding conduct.

As explained in the section on S-rated movies, most of these films were just an excuse to fill the screens with naked bodies, primarily feminine, and oversatiate the inner desires and fetiches of the repressed *macho*, deprived of its visualization for almost four decades. In a still patriarchal society, men played the role of voyeurs, the focus of the new flesh displayed everywhere. On the other hand, “Women’s bodies represent the symbolic site of the political and social tension that Spain endured” (Morcillo 266).

Due to the primarily visual content of these movies, script quality was never an issue—even though some directors claimed their artistic component—, as long as female bodies were up to par and breasts abounded. Along with nudity, the goal for producers was to shock audiences and feed male voyeuristic, and dark, instincts—profiting from it, obviously. Thus, actresses’ naked bodies were shown, not only in bedroom scenes, but also in women’s prisons, convents, boarding schools, and contexts. Films were full of monster victims, nuns, naïve students, or lonely homemakers eager to engage in grotesque sexual intercourse with service men—the electrician, plumber, or the TV repair guy were some of those chosen as favorite characters. *Los años desnudos* depicts those years and the production of such films, the ups and downs of those involved in them, where scripts and acting were irrelevant, especially for women, since nudity was the only thing that mattered. According to a section of society—namely male—, that was freedom. For female sectors, it meant objectification of their gender and humiliation. The

movie also reviews the lives of these performers, and the end of many of them,<sup>132</sup> when those who could not act were left like broken toys. It is also an analysis of the role of women in the society of the period, still dependent upon men at the time, and a nostalgic homage to the actresses. At the same time, it is a clear depiction of the years of the Transition, with political innuendo in every corner—although following the “show, don’t tell” approach.

The film narrates the story of Sandra (Candela Peña), Lina (Goya Toledo), and Eva (Mar Flores), three archetypical women with different backgrounds in their pursuit of fame, love, and, in a word, happiness, in a patriarchal and yet repressive society that regards public nudity as depravity. Sandra, the only real actress of the three, as many others, had to swallow her pride because the rule was “no clothes equals work.” Sandra’s character illustrates an audition where she is asked to take her clothes off. In a quasi grotesque scene, a naked Candela Peña recites a monologue of *Doña Rosita la soltera*.<sup>133</sup> The other two “stars” will be shown simultaneously. Eva, from a rural and incestuous background—once again, the transgressive behavior—who came to Madrid escaping from an oppressive environment and who ended up working in a hostess bar, is the second. Lina, the upper-class street hustler, in need of money, will be the third. All three will cover different statuses and situations of the diverse women who represented the moment; women with different dreams and goals, all doomed to engage in an ephemeral

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<sup>132</sup> One of the best, or worst, examples is German-born actress Nadiuska, whose life, after her glory days, was spent between mental institutions and the streets.

<sup>133</sup> It presents a certain foreshadow: the character in Lorca’s play is abandoned by a man. Sandra is abandoned by men, as the homosexual character Rafa Sevilla will point out later, and will remain single for life: “Ya me llamarás cuando te deje el próximo tío. Porque a ti te dejan.”

environment that will chew them up and spit them out, and will leave them scarred and abandoned.

Eva's first dialogue onscreen represents the patriarchal repression during Francoism and, still, during the Transition. Looking for a way out of a suffocating environment, she escapes to Madrid. Her brother's offer to "give her a ride," both literally and figuratively, and his proposal to go to a hotel, to "say goodbye properly," is a clear reference to sex. It opens the innuendo of the incest that has been taking place: her parents are dead and she has been living with her brother and his family—here is the criticism of male sexual instincts that prevail regardless of others' welfare. Given the circumstances and her need of money, his only response will be to not to try to become a hooker, since she is worthless in that field. In Spain, still for many, a woman had to be either a wife or a nun—or a prostitute—due to the double standards of a sexist society, even during the first stages of the Transition. Lina is the street hustler and the symbol of the Spanish picaresque. While Lina is eating a lunch that she cannot afford at a restaurant, we are treated to the feminist perspective in the movie. On television we see Montserrat Roig <sup>134</sup> urging women to write their own story, instead of allowing men to write it for them.

Political and sexual innuendo, just as in the films produced in the Transition, permeate *Los años desnudos*. As I have explained in the review of different movies, politics and eroticism were a substantial part of the nation's everyday life during the period. They marked the beginning of the change, after almost four decades of deprivation, and images containing any traces of both topics took to overabundance and

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<sup>134</sup> Catalanian writer, journalist, and feminist.

excess. This is well reflected in the film in several scenes. As Eva arrives in Madrid, we are treated to a combination of them. The first thing we see on the walls are posters of CNT,<sup>135</sup> graffiti with political slogans asking for “Amnistía y libertad ya”—amnesty and freedom now—and a newsstand full of issues of erotic magazines *Interviú*, *Lui*, *Climax*, or *Lib*, among others, and progressive newspapers such as *El País*.

As explained above, nudity in S-rated movies involved not only the use, or abuse, of female flesh depicted on the screen. In order to shock the audiences, the environment needed to be striking as well—either appealing or appalling, according individual taste or tendencies. One of the scenes in *Los años desnudos* will be shot in a women’s prison, with non-explicit rape. Another one will be set in a convent. Transgression was served. Something interesting during the shooting of the scenes is the lack of relevance of acting skills. As Eva has problems remembering her lines, she will be allowed to say numbers. Dubbing would take care of the rest.

Dubbing actors in Spain become a staple during Francoism. To avoid original dialogues in foreign movies that could spread messages against Francoism or Catholicism—which, in reality, could be anything—, actors were dubbed. This, which was a real affront against the freedom of speech, at the same time, developed artists with unbelievable voices and great delivery who, in cases, the general public never had a chance to know. Spanish audiences, for the most part, got used to hearing original movies in a dubbed version, which, in some instances, improved the sound of the actors—Constantino Romero vs. Arnold Schwarzenegger to name but one recent example.

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<sup>135</sup> *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, an anarchist labor union founded in 1910 in Barcelona.

Something interesting in the movie is the analysis of cinematography during the Transition. Male perspective is contrasted with female in a dialogue where real-life S-rated actress Susana Estrada has a cameo appearance. The director tries to justify the problem of eroticism in Spanish film and the use of women:

DIRECTOR. Hacer cine en España tiene el problema de que no estamos preparados para interpretar símbolos, porque estamos anestesiados de represión. Entonces mis películas no sirven sólo para desnudar mujeres. También sirven para desnudar conciencias.

SUSANA. ¿Y por qué no os desnudáis vosotros?

DIRECTOR. La libertad es una mujer. Tú crees que nosotros os utilizamos. Pero la cuestión no es lo que creas tú ni lo que crea yo, sino lo que piensan ellas. Y ellas no piensan como tú.

This dialogue reflects the criticism of the films during the period, where freedom was measured by the number of female bodyparts shown onscreen and actresses had no other option but to take off their clothes to be able to work. Male perspective is summarized in the final sentence uttered by the director: They are aware that with their nudity they are becoming the representatives of freedom. It is an ironic parody of what being naked meant for women.

The reception of these films by reactionary sections of the still repressed society was negative. An example is shown during the movie premiere of *Los años desnudos*. The three actresses and the director attend it, jammed in a taxicab—another parody of

Hollywood's luxurious ceremonies—, while Adolfo Suárez posters are shown on the walls. They are scolded and insulted by older female and male audiences. One of them throws a tomato at Eva and we see her exposed breast—any excuse is good to show flesh. In the same scene, another lady is waving a picture of *Santa Teresa*. Politics, sex, and religion as an example of the infamous *España cañí*.

Men, the image of the *macho ibérico*, are analyzed from different perspectives in the film, from the almost naïve director, to the lustful individuals in a club—ironically introduced as we hear Celi Bee's *Macho (a real real one)*—, the father, or the powerful alpha male Ángel Mota (Luis Zahera), the subtle (ab)user. In the movie, Mota will choose Eva, the beautiful model, over the other two—that, of course, will not prevent him from sleeping with all three. Once married, the rules of the patriarchal society will be imposed upon his attractive, but uneducated, spouse—the symbolic trophy wife—to force her to stop working; the man is the breadwinner. However, the (ab)user will be psychologically humiliated at the end of the movie and debunked from his macho status. He will be exposed as an awful lover and, even worse, as a premature ejaculator.

Sandra's father represents the head of the patriarchal state, the *caudillo*, the oppressor. For him, having a naked daughter for the world to see will destroy his infamous Spanish honor. He is another example of the stereotypical *macho ibérico*. However, in a critical movie that is about vindication, the mother will rebel against the oppression:

Cállate. Me he pasado la vida soportándote, sirviéndote y escuchándote hablar mal de mis hijos, hasta que has conseguido que se marchen todos.



Ahora ya sólo me tienes a mí, así que procura no poner a prueba mi paciencia.

Women begin to take their position in society, aware of their rights and their value against the suffocating and obliterating man. But the film, trying to depict an equal perspective, will show likewise, that not all men belong in this category. Director Marcos—actor Antonio de la Torre—represents the opposite side of the spectrum. He is the underdog, critical of the alpha male who, connivingly, attracts women. Falling for the ones who neglect him, Marcos is some sort of Sandra's counterpart, the male side of the actress, in need of love and recognition. Drugs and sex will be his road to perdition, as happened to some of the real actresses of the period. The man who wanted to love and be loved, but was condemned to failure. He will realize the end of the S-rated movie industry. His return to "el pueblo" will mean the journey back to his roots, when the transitional period is over.

Women in the film, the same as men, are represented in different ways, as mentioned earlier. Lina is portrayed as the hustler, the one who would do anything for money or her own pleasure. It is the counterpart of the alpha male and behaves as such. Her extreme sexuality, drugs, and AIDS will annul her life. Sandra, on the other hand, is the epitome of the woman who needs a man to find happiness. (Ab)used and left in several occasions, she will only find peace when she starts believing in herself. Her goal is to work in "normal" movies, as she calls them—therefore implying the abnormality of erotic movies. Eventually, she will become the actress she always wanted to be, above men and against all odds. Her price to pay: loneliness. Eva will trade in her desire for the possibility of a family. However, her husband, the sempiternal Casanova, will cheat on

her on any occasion. The man always has the *droit de seigneur*. Beautiful but uneducated, she will be repressed by her husband, who has become the patriarch of her “duo”—which could never be considered a family. Her desire to work after marriage will be smashed by Mota: she has a man now, an owner, and no longer needs to have a job. She has been annulled as a person, following the stereotypical Spanish popular saying: “La mujer en casa, con la pata quebrada”—women at home and with a broken leg. After having been abused since childhood, she will be condemned to live without a family.

Police, as in some of the movies reviewed, will also be criticized in this film. After an incident outside a club, where Lina references one of the typical phrases of the period—“Ustedes fascistas sois los terroristas,” you fascists are the terrorists—, she and Eva will be escorted by the infamous *grises* to the police station. There, the chief of police will regret not being able to arrest them for their lascivious behavior as erotic actresses; now they live in democracy. Given the circumstances, he will hint at the possibility of “doing something” to avoid the overnight stay in jail. As Eva starts taking off her clothes, his derogatory comment will be used to reflect both sexist and reactionary conducts: his wife would have chosen jail over the loss of her “honra”—the “purity” required of women in a castrating patriarchal society.

Homosexuality is also depicted in the film. Rafa Sevilla (played by actor Jorge Calvo) represents the stereotypical gay man from a male perspective, the loud and mannered effeminate. However, he will be the only one to whom women can turn, even when their own react against them—here is the criticism regarding the fact that, sometimes, women are women’s worst enemy. He will also criticize the phallacy of the period and the false change it entitled. Things have not really changed. Those who come

to see them now are the same repressed individuals of twenty years ago—not men enjoying freedom.

The end of the movie has a pseudomoralistic tone. Women who appeared in erotic films were, somehow, punished by fate. Sandra is successful but alone; Lina is dead; Eva without a family. On the other hand, it also shows the positive side of women who, after all, remain together before adversity—friendship may exist among women—in a patriarchal society that has (ab)used them and then left like broken toys. The last message onscreen pays homage to the women of the Transition: each one of them deserves a movie.

*Los años desnudos* is a critical, yet nostalgic, homage to the actresses—and the women in general—of the Transition. The movie analyzes the lives and circumstances of three archetypes in their pursuit of happiness during a Spain about to change, where freedom was measured by the amount of female skin shown in movies and magazines. The film is, at the same time, a barometer of the social and political turmoil that was taking place in a country in transition. Full of political slogans that follow the “show, don’t tell” trend, societal criticism involves different spheres of society, as well as the different gender roles played.

### **5.1.2. Els Joglars’s Grotesque Depiction of Late Francoism**

Even though the life of Francisco Franco has been reviewed and portrayed a number of times on the screen after the Transition, especially in movie theaters,<sup>136</sup> the last

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<sup>136</sup> *Madregilda* (1993), depicting post-Civil War Spain; *Dragon Rapide* (1986), the nation before the coup d’état; *Espérame en el cielo* (1988), about Franco’s double; *Operación Gónada* (2000), a grotesque film about Franco, Hitler, and thermal jockstraps; *Franco no puede morir en la cama* (1998), a satirical short film about a failed attempt to kill Franco in 1975; and *Hendaya 1940: cuando Adolfo encontró a Paco* (2009), both a short satire and a musical about the encounter.

days of the dictator and the beginning of the Transition have been specifically treated twice, from two different perspectives.<sup>137</sup> In 2003, Els Joglars premiered the film *Buen viaje, excelencia*. The motion picture, written and directed by Albert Boadella, and starring the actors from Els Joglars, presented, as Boadella himself explained, a senile, sick, and ridiculous *caudillo* trying to extend his life in El Pardo, a place full of sordid characters (“Els Joglars”).

The movie begins with an onscreen message:

Entre los años 1973 y 1975 un poder decrepito y senil siguió imponiendo los destinos de España, cuyos ciudadanos estuvieron mansamente sometidos a una ridícula dictadura, confiando en la acción irrevocable de la naturaleza. Esta película es un homenaje a la insólita paciencia de los españoles y a un puñado de moscas que fueron las únicas capaces de hostigar directamente a los protagonistas de la tiranía.

In pure Els Joglars’s incisive fashion, the film satirizes the last two years of Franco’s life and the events that led to the beginning of the Transition. Admiral Carrero Blanco’s murder is the first fact that falls under their caustic criticism, creating a surrealistic scene in a cafeteria. That place, during the movie, is always the antagonistic of Franco’s palace, always martial but plagued with flies. Their buzz is a constant noise throughout the movie, adding symbolism: flies, instinctively, always gravitate toward leftovers, feces, or the dead.

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<sup>137</sup> The second perspective, *20-N, los últimos días de Franco*, will be analyzed in the section on made-for-tv movies and miniseries.

Dr. Pozuelo, Franco's real-life physician, is played in the movie by a strange German pro-Hitler female psychiatrist, Dr. Müller, whom his son-in-law, Cristóbal Martínez- Bordiú, also a doctor, does not tolerate. This was the cause of constant discrepancies and grotesque tension between the two, especially when Müller wanted to declare Franco officially unfit to tend to his responsibilities. Here is the criticism of the situation, since Franco's health issues became a state secret almost till his death. Public admission would also mean for Bordiú—portrayed in the movie as a heartless, selfish, and self-centered individual—the end of his status as son-in-law of the *caudillo*.

Political and social comments abound in the film. Being Els Joglars a Catalanian group, one of them referenced their region, regarding their soccer team, Barcelona FC. When they win, the *Movimiento* loses—a hint at Catalonia as a nation, not as part of Spain. The same applies to some comments regarding Puig Antich—an indirect reference also to Els Joglars's *La torna*. Other allusions in the movie include Cardinal Tarancón, the executions of 1975, the Franco-Hitler Hendaya meeting, *judeomasones*, the behavior of the Military—as crooks, drinking and stealing—, Prince Juan Carlos, President Arias Navarro, the conflict in Sahara, and, of course, *destape*—as something distasteful in Franco's eyes.

Surrealism is also a way to channel fears in the movie. In Franco's nightmares, his wife, Carmen Polo, is seen wearing black, mourning, and forced out of palace. In the same fashion, people are shown throwing out crosses and Franco's pictures, Catalanian and Basque flags are dividing the Spanish symbols, and the *Valle de los Caídos*, where the dictator will be buried, is destroyed. It was Franco's fear of the events that would take place after his death. The reference to germs opens another surrealiatic scene of Civil

War inside the body. Franco sees himself as an antibiotic for Spain. Likewise, Franco's visit to the San Blas reservoir is surrounded by surrealistic, bucolic, and somewhat pastoral images as they drive by or walk around a ghost town—seen by the dictator as full of life. At a deserted *Cuartel de la Guardia Civil*, the *caudillo* imagines scenes of torture—with a clear criticism of the repression conducted by the law.

If there is a surrealistic scene *per se* in the film is one that, unfortunately, was as real as life. It was the episode of Franco's operation at the palace, since he refused to go to the hospital. Having to transport the dictator to the first floor infirmary, and because of the size of the stretcher—too big to fit through staircases—, Franco will be wrapped up in Goya's tapestry; in real life, it was a rug. Blood and flies surround the scene, making it more grotesque than it actually was, with a feverish Franco dreaming of war inside his body. The blackout that took place at the palace during the attempted operation is worsened in Els Joglars's version too, with a band playing military marches outside. Eventually, as it actually happened, Franco had to be rushed to the hospital—and rushed he is in the movie, as we hear the *pasodoble* "Paquito el chocolatero"—, given the impossibility to operate properly in El Pardo. Before his death, Martínez-Bordiú will take pictures of the dying dictator—to sell them and show, once again, their criticism of the conniving individual who was also caught stealing. The end of the movie is a collage of images: Franco after operation, Müller on the beach with Castro in Cuba, Carmen praying, Franco dead, people dancing, funeral, burial, and a fly on top of his gravestone in *El Valle de los Caídos*.

In conclusion, Els Joglars's take on history follows their own trend and portrays a grotesque perspective of the last days of the dictator. Utilizing actual data as a foundation

for their story, Boadella and the rest of the members of the theatrical group spin real facts in order to remark the flaws of a decaying dictatorship, making them more surrealistic and ridiculous than they actually were. A movie that, even though does not contribute anything new to the rest of films commercialized on the subject, proves that, in democracy, any individual is free to narrate history—including the institutions in it—from his or her own perspective without fear of reprisals, as had happened in the case of *La torna* in the early Transition.

### 5.1.3. Other Films that Review the Period

In a similar fashion as *Los años desnudos*, although without going as deep into the topics as the previously analyzed movie, is *Días de cine* (2007). The comedy is also set against the backdrop of the Transition, in 1977. In the film, an anti-Francoist director (Alberto San Juan) is about to shoot a film of social denunciation using a former Spanish folk singer (Nathalie Poza). Also referencing the trend was *Torremolinos 73* (2003), an attempt by an ordinary salesman (Javier Cámara) to produce, on his own, a porn movie during late Francoism to be sold in Europe. Candela Peña plays his wife and star of the erotic films, repeating her approach from *Los años desnudos*. Regarding more political topics, we could include *La vida en rojo* (2008), a movie about torture during the last decade of Francoism—the 1960s—and the ideals of those trying to overcome the oppression in university environments. In 2009, Vicente Aranda loosely, and poorly, adapted the homonymous novel written by Argentinian writer Mempo Giardinelli, *Luna caliente* (2000). Aranda changed the scenery<sup>138</sup> and directed his movie now set in Spain and against the backdrop of the Burgos trial. The film is just a *Lolita* revisited, with the

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<sup>138</sup> The original novel takes place in 1970s Argentina.

political background as an excuse to criticize the regime and the intellectual elite, and full of explicit sex scenes between a man in his forties—Juan, played by Eduard Fernández—and a sensual teenage girl—Ramona, actress Thäis Blume.

The last attempt to review the Transition in theaters—at least, to date— was presented in 2011; it was another version of the moments that led to the the infamous 23-F. As I analyze in depth in the section on made-for-TV movies, both Antena 3 and TVE already broadcast in 2009 two miniseries centered on the failed coup, with different perspectives and results. Some producers, however, thought necessary to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary adding yet another movie, now for the big screen, narrating the events that took place in February 1981. The film was entitled *23-F* (2011), directed by Chema de la Peña and starring Paco Tous (in the role of Tejero), Juan Diego (as Armada), Luis Marco (Miláns del Bosch), and Fernando Cayo—who repeats his part as King Juan Carlos I. Even though a well-made story and a good source as historic document, it just exposes the same theories and plots that TVE's version offered, with the addition of a more conniving General Armada and an even more hotheaded Tejero—his eyes contribute greatly to the image.

In summary, those are the films that, up until now, have reviewed the circumstances of the Transition. Television, however, has had numerous productions that referenced the political and erotic aspects of the period, from documentaries to made-for-TV movies or miniseries. In the next section I will analyze the works released by the different networks over the years.



## 5.2. Television and the Revisionist View of the Transition

### 5.2. 1. The Documentaries: Politics and Eroticism

Television has had many examples after the Transition that reviewed the period. The first one was Victoria Prego's series *La Transición* (1995), a program that covered from 1973, and the murder of Admiral Carrero Blanco, to 1977, the year of the first General Elections after the dictatorship. It aired on TVE between July 23 and October 15, 1995, in thirteen episodes of between 52 and 86 minutes:

Por fin se estrena esta serie documental, con guión de la periodista Victoria Prego, que recoge la historia de España en el período clave que discurre desde el momento en que se inicia el desmoronamiento del franquismo, tras el asesinato del presidente del Gobierno, Luis Carrero Blanco, en diciembre de 1973, hasta que tienen lugar las primeras elecciones democráticas de los últimos 40 años, en junio de 1977. (“La Transición”)

The series recovers file footage from the period, some of it never released before. Among the many topics Prego addresses are Admiral Carrero Blanco's murder by terrorist group ETA in 1973, the *Proceso 1001*,<sup>139</sup> Tarancón and the distancing State/Church, Puig Antich, the execution of ETA and FRAP members in September 1975, the conflict in Sahara, Franco's death, Adolfo Suarez's appointment as President, the first General Elections in 1977, and the legalization of PCE.

The documentary, as mentioned earlier, was very visual, full of a plethora of images. In addition to national figures, people like writer Arthur Miller or Pete Seeger

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<sup>139</sup> 1973 trial against the leader of *Comisiones Obreras*.

were also featured. In a sense, however, even the series has an unquestionable historic value, there is a certain tendentious component, ideologically speaking. It presents the leaders of the time—from King Juan Carlos I to Adolfo Suárez or Felipe González—as the only “architects” of the Transition, using a building metaphor. It somehow infers that the rest of the society did not participate in the process, when, in actuality, the Spaniards of the period were an active part of the changes that were taking place in the nation. In 1995 Victoria Prego published the book *Así se hizo la transición*.

In the early twenty-first century, not only the political aspects of the Transition were reviewed, but also the *destape*, the (ab)use of eroticism in every aspect of life. The first perspective came from Canal + and aired on July 16, 2005; it was the 32-minute documentary entitled *Cuando España se desnudó*. Divided into three stages, the program analyzes the phenomenon from Francoism to the Transition years, completed with interviews and opinions from different scholars and protagonists of the process.

The documentary starts with a myriad of images of naked actresses—and some comedic actors—that overflow the screen, giving us an idea of what the process represented for Spain in the period. In brief, nudity was profitable and (male) audiences, previously repressed and extremely needy regarding sexual matters, demanded it. Thus, numerous and inexpensive films were made to fill the niche. The first part of the production goes deeper into the beginning of the change during late Francoism, the harsh censorship that, progressively, started to soften as a sign of *aperturismo*. Perhaps, the best example of the change was represented by the film *La trastienda*, as referenced earlier. Audiences’ reaction to the movie was overwhelming, elevating both actress and motion picture to cinematic stratosphere and starting the unstoppable process of *destape*. It was

also the beginning for the rest of the soon-to-be erotic movies divas, such as Nadiuska, Ágata Lys, Rosa Valenty, Sara Mora, Susana Estrada, or Blanca Estrada, among many others.

Nudity filled every field of culture, as I have stated throughout the pages of this dissertation. But that nudity was the actresses' realm and their only chance to find work. Women, in any case, were objectified as sources of profit and male recreation. On the other hand, men displayed in erotic comedies were, in most cases, unattractive<sup>140</sup>—epitomizing a below-average individual—, sexually deprived and consumers of eroticism, not providers. These male representations, the main users of these films, could, while enjoying the images depicted onscreen, dream of the possibility of having intimate relationships with a plethora of supermodels. Had men been as attractive as their female counterparts, the identification of audiences with movies and protagonists would have been nonexistent. In general, those motion pictures reflected a reality of the Spain of the moment and a number of archetypes that really existed.

But not all audiences were pro-nudity and exposure. Those individuals whose ideals were still in line with the former regime and traditional sectors of society, opposed it with a vengeance, as we could see in *Los años desnudos*. The way to express their view was, in many cases, violent, with insults and threats to the protagonists of the movies, especially the female stars—the double standar is always in place, especially when it refers to gender sexuality.

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<sup>140</sup> With the exception of actors like Patxi Andión—whose buttocks were shown in *El libro de Buen Amor*—or Máximo Valverde, to name two of the most usual exceptions, most male actors lacked sex-appeal to attract female audiences.

The second part of the documentary analyzes the beginning of the phenomenon during Francoism, brought, as it usually happens, from beyond the borders—evil always comes from the outside, as implied in Lorca’s *Bodas de sangre* (1933)—where, “las costumbres licenciosas” (*Tenorio* 53) gave way to bare skin on beaches and public places. In a way, tourism was the precursor of nudity since the regime needed to show the world signs of modernity, as explained earlier. During Francoism, nudity was more implied than explicit. Those Spaniards who felt the need to experience the display of female anatomy had to travel to other more liberal countries, as the movie *Lo verde empieza en los Pirineos* develops. And travel they did, even in organized trips, filled with repressed men, where the sights to be seen were the actresses in theaters.

But every process has a beginning and an end, as explained in the third part of the documentary. Those oversexed individuals became oversatiated and fed up with nudity *per se*. After years of exposure, by the end of the Transition, naked bodies had become the norm in Spanish society and erotic movies became redundant—as eroticism was now part of mainstream films. This moment represented also the beginning of the end for many of its protagonists, both actors/actresses and directors. Female performers who were just “flesh” and could not act were disposed of as broken toys. Some actors, like Andrés Pajares or Alfredo Landa, however, were able to recycle themselves and develop memorable roles in movies like Saura’s *¡Ay, Carmela!* or Mario Camus’s *Los santos inocentes*. For many, the end of the process turned their stardom into poverty. Arguably, the most famous case was, as mentioned earlier, German-born Nadiuska, who saw herself as an indigent, homeless, and with a psychological disorder.

Telecinco did something similar to Canal + in 2008, on a special edition of the show *Hormigas blancas* that aired on August 26. It was the 97-minute documentary entitled “El destape en España.” The content of Telecinco’s footage was in line with Canal +’s, but, given its triple length, the number of topics addressed was larger. One of the things added was the allusion to the adaptation of *La Celestina* (1969) for the big screen, where the first time female breasts were subtly shown in Spanish cinema. In addition to comments about *La trastienda* and other controversial movies of the time, the documentary references the 1977 film *Me siento extraña*, where, also for the first time, two actresses had explicit homosexual intercourse onscreen—Bárbara Rey and Rocío Dúrcal, as explained in the Film section of this dissertation.

As in the previous program, many of the same protagonists of the erotic process made appearances onscreen—Tortosa, Mora, Valenty, etc. This fact, which can be considered positive from a historic perspective, is, at the same time, a source of biased information. One of the most controversial actresses of the moment, however, was added to the list in an attempt to show two diverging ideas on the role of women in erotic cinema: Susana Estrada, whose comments and behavior always shocked audiences. Regarding the fact that many actresses complained about the obligation to perform nude scenes, Estrada’s view was somewhat harsh towards them, implying that it was just an excuse to try to dignify themselves and appear as victims, when, in reality, they slept with directors and producers to get parts in films. The Estrada phenomenon is seen as the opposite of most actresses, with her success in show business, her live performances, her antics, and her huge profits during the period. On the other hand, many of these women faced nothing but societal consequences for their involvement in this type of movies—

like Mirta Miller's broken relationship with Duke Alfonso de Borbón or Amparo Muñoz's drug abuse, which, eventually, would lead to her death in 2011.

Another addition to Canal +'s documentary was the allusion to the *double version* in movies. In order to play competitively in foreign markets, Spanish producers and directors needed to shoot a double version of their films, one for Spain, *sans* nudity, and one to be sold abroad, where actresses would have nude scenes. This was somewhat shocking for the female actresses who were hired oblivious to the fact of the second nude version. The documentary also referenced nudity in magazines, and the importance of *Interviú* in promoting actresses. Being naked seemed to be a way of modernity, of rebellion against the Establishment; and that included many men who showed their nude torsos in gay magazine *Party*.

On November 11, 1977, as explained earlier, censorship disappeared and *destape* reached its highest point. Congress also abolished the *Ley de rehabilitación y peligrosidad social* in 1979. Homosexuals were no longer criminals and gays and lesbians became part of the process. It also marked the beginning of the infamous duo Pajares-Esteso as leaders of the Spanish erotic comedy—a *machista* depiction of society. However, the hype had its days numbered, as it has been reviewed throughout this dissertation. In the early 1980s, Spain began the decline of erotic cinema. In 1982, pornography became legal. It was the end of the mere insinuation. For those left behind, the future did not offer possibilities—beyond prostitution or illicit activities. The system just (ab)used them and left them.

Some regional television networks also focused on the nudity during the Transition. One of them was Televisió de Catalunya, which, on its program *Dies de*

*Transició*, dedicated some of its footage to the topic. It was on episode 11, “El destape,” that aired in 2004 in Catalan language. The themes developed were in the same line as the ones from Canal + or Telecinco.

In conclusion, a number of documentaries have reviewed the Transition from different perspectives in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Some, like Victoria Prego’s *La Transición*, have focused on the political aspects of the process, highlighting moments and personalities—although forgetting the importance of the society in the changes that were taking place in the nation. Others, like the productions presented by Canal +, Telecinco, or Televisió de Catalunya, centered on the other controversial topic of the period: *el destape*. From late Francoism to the end of the Transition, these programs cover, with the aid of some of the protagonists of the process—and, obviously, with their own biased view on the issues—the ups and downs of erotic films. In addition to the motion pictures, they review the lives of the individuals involved in an extreme context that led them, in many cases, to marginalization, before the nation could reestablish its status quo and find equilibrium. But TV did not only use the documentary genre to analyze the period. During the last few years, a good number of made-for-TV movies have been broadcast by different networks offering audiences a variety of perspectives on how the Transition was developed.

### **5.2.2. Made-for-TV Movies and Miniseries: The Last Days of Francoism, 23-F, and Suárez Revisited.**

After Els Joglars’s view on the events leading to Franco’s death, Antena 3 produced a made-for-TV movie, or a two-episode miniseries, in 2008 entitled *20 N: Los últimos días de Franco*. It was done from a more serious and realistic perspective and far

from the previous satire, except from some surrealistic moments that, actually, took place in real life—as explained earlier in the case of the operation at the palace. The movie, just like the comedic version, starts with an onscreen message, in this case in reference to the events that unfolded on September 27, 1975, followed by the depiction of the executions of ETA and FRAP members.

All the political and social events that occurred in the period are also referenced in the movie: the September executions mentioned earlier with the Pope's disapproval, the conflict in Sahara, Franco's health deterioration and the lack of public information—the first heart attack officially admitted took place October 15—, the uncertainty of family and close friends regarding their future after the dictator's death, the lack of confidence in Prince Juan Carlos as the *caudillo*'s successor, or the complicated political situation, among others.

As in El Joglars's version, the cafeteria is also portrayed in the film, but, in this case, just to reflect the conversations between one of Franco's nurses and a waiter. The latter symbolizes the people of Spain, who want to know because their future, just like Franco's posse's, is at stake; the nurse, on the other hand, is the metaphor for the secrecy maintained by the State during the ordeal. The dialogues center on Franco's health and the government's iron fist, even in the last moments. Franco's operation in El Pardo is depicted as well, but without the previous sarcasm. This scene, however, is surrealistic *per se*, with or without Els Joglars's satirical perspective. The old rehabilitated infirmary, the problem with the size of the stretcher, the transportation of Franco's ailing body wrapped up in a rug—not in Goya's tapestry in this case—, the blackout, and the



candlelit surgery, are the real allegory for a regime in shambles that, days later, would end, giving way to the period we know as *la transición*.

After Franco's double death—depicted on both theaters and TV screens—, the networks focused on one of the most controversial social and political episodes of the Transition: the attempted coup d'état carried out by rebel sections of the military and the *Guardia Civil* on February 23, 1981—the infamous 23-F. Two different perspectives aired at the same time. One was produced by TVE; it was the 2009 two-part miniseries entitled *23-F: El día más difícil del rey*. The same year, Antena 3 broadcast *23-F: Historia de una traición*. Diverse takes on the events that led to the coup, the development of the plot, and the alleged involvement of the protagonists in this part of Spain's history that is, still to date, a mystery, due to the state secrecy regarding the trials.

TVE's account of the story was divided into two parts of 71 and 74 minutes respectively that aired on February 10 and 12, 2009, loosely based on the events that unfolded between February 23 and 24, 1981. The producers inform the audience with an onscreen message—trend followed in all these pseudo historical movies and, in this case, as a sort of disclaimer—of the foundation of the film:

Esta obra cinematográfica es resultado de una recreación histórica basada, principalmente, en un compendio de los datos e informaciones que sobre los hechos acaecidos fueron difundidos en los medios de comunicación y publicaciones de todo tipo y en la interpretación que, de los mismos, realizaron los autores de la obra . . .

Two words immediately stand out as we read the lines: *recreación* (re-creation) and *interpretación* (interpretation). There is, still, a plethora of minute details surrounding the

case that are largely unknown. No film can truly attest to be the whole truth on the matter. Thus, the only admissible fact is the re-creation and interpretation of the events based on what the authorities let the general public know.

There are many theories regarding the infamous 23-*F* and its main plotters, as Vázquez Montalbán stated:

Unos militares eran partidarios de un golpe moderado, otros de un golpe radical. Los primeros habían tratado de pactarlo oficiosamente con algunos políticos, los segundos no. Aún queda la duda de si unos y otros se pusieron de acuerdo para moderar el golpe radical o radicalizar el golpe moderado. (*Crónica* 239)

Spanish Public Television's version, as the title somewhat discloses, rather than theorizing on the possible ramifications and meaning of the coup, focuses on the importance of King Juan Carlos I in the events. His behavior and attitude contributed largely to the failure of the attack on democracy, having no part in the conspiracy regardless of the thought of the plotters—at least, as some had been led to believe.

The miniseries adheres to the “official version”—which, in any case, like any other perspective, is always biased—where General Armada (played by actor Juan Luis Galiardo), General Miláns del Bosch (Pepe Sancho), and Lieutenant Coronel Tejero (Manel Barceló) are the main individuals behind the planning and execution of the attack. However, Armada will be presented as the conniving character in the shadow, the one who, as a Machiavellian and cunning politician instead of a soldier, will try to gain more than just a change of circumstances, becoming the next President of the nation. In order to carry out his plans, he will involve the other two—and a good number of members of

the Armed Forces—promising the king’s support, believable theory given the fact that, for years, he had been Juan Carlos’s friend and advisor, as well as secretary-general of *La Casa del Rey*, the royal household. It will be one of the most difficult scenarios for the king, since Armada’s involvement did not imply just the betrayal of a General, but a close friend’s.

Armada, however, had already shown his true colors and personality while working at *La Casa del Rey*:

Tras las elecciones de 1977, en el despacho de don Juan Carlos, el presidente Suárez expuso sus agravios frente al general Armada, secretario general de la casa real. Compareció entonces Armada y ambos confrontaron sus posiciones. El Rey estimó mayor firmeza en el presidente del Gobierno y Alfonso Armada salió en octubre de la Casa a la Escuela Superior del Ejército y fue al ascender destinado a mandar la división de montaña Urgel número 4. Cartas con sello de la casa real habían sido remitidas por el general Armada pidiendo el voto para Alianza Popular (“Hubo careo Suárez-Armada”)

He, allegedly, used the official royal seal to request votes for *Alianza Popular* in the upcoming elections. This event and the constant clashes with President Suárez, appointed by the king, forced his dismissal—which would deteriorate even more the relationship between the two men. Armada’s plot, according to this version of the events, was unbeknown to the king. The conspiracy of the plotters involved Armada’s take of the Zarzuela Palace, with Juan Carlos’s consent. That fact would give credibility to the coup. His access to the palace, however, was denied by the king following Sabino Martínez

Campos's advice. On a phone conversation, Martínez Campos—the General who replaced Armada as secretary-general at *La Casa del Rey*—, after being asked if Armada was in Palace, will utter his famous words: “Ni está ni se le espera”—he is not here and he is not expected. That convinced the undecided members of the Armed Forces that the king was not behind the plotters.

The miniseries is presented almost in the format of a thriller, with a well-designed script and intrigue. The constant change of scenarios—Brunete, Valencia, Zarzuela, Congress, etc.—and the public figures portrayed show a good grasp on the events. However, private conversations among the characters are a re-creation of the writers. One of the most dramatic moments of the coup was the bursting into the Congress of Deputies by members of the *Guardia Civil*. The radio at the Palace broadcast Tejero's infamous words—“Quieto todo el mundo”— followed by the shooting and the comments on the military authority expected. Tejero, who had already been charged with an attempted coup in 1978—what was known as “Operación Galaxia”<sup>141</sup>—, truly believed in the king's support and the salvation of the nation. Eventually, the monarch will be informed of the circumstances and the names of the perpetrators. From here—and in real thriller fashion—, Juan Carlos I starts a race against the clock trying to stop the coup, contacting Tejero, Miláns del Bosch, and Armada—who will remain in the shadow for most of the miniseries. The rebel generals will expect the king's reaction to take sides. However, he, following Sabino's advice, will act cautiously. This is one of the aspects of the coup in real life for which the monarch was highly criticized and cast a shadow of doubt about his

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<sup>141</sup> *Operación Galaxia* was the codename for an attempted coup d'état to be carried out on November 17, 1978. It was named after a cafeteria in Madrid where the perpetrators, Major Ricardo Sáenz Ynestrillas and Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero, met to conspire against democracy. They were both court-martialed in 1980 and sentenced to six months—Saénz de Ynestrillas—and seven months—Tejero.

implication. However, in his mind, the wrong step could turn the events into the assault of La Zarzuela and, perhaps, a new Civil War—hence the alleged reason for the level of caution.

The general consensus among the Armed Forces at the time was the fact that they had been betrayed by democracy. Given the circumstances, the only solution for radical individuals like Miláns was to take the tanks to the streets and declare the state of siege. The coup was followed closely by Láina—played by Pep Muné—, the Head of *Seguridad del Estado*, who had Congress phones tapped. The content of the conversations between Tejero and the rest of the plotters is one of the secrets still not released by the authorities—they cannot be officially published until fifty years after the attempted coup or thirty years after the death of the last person involved in the attack. That would shed some light on the reality of the events that took place during the assault.

The movie re-creates some of those events. One of them is the words uttered by Tejero to President Suárez. Even though the phrases are not expressed verbatim—they cannot be—, they represent what many members of the Armed Forces felt about the president: he was seen as a traitor for legalizing the Communist Party in Spain and allowing ETA to cowardly murder soldiers and policemen. Also, the the military's idea to save Spain and the king, even without the king, is exposed in the production, especially in the re-creation of the conversation between Armada and Juan Carlos I:

ARMADA. Con vuestra actuación de hoy impidiendo que el ejército ponga orden donde tanta falta hace estais traicionando a España, Majestad.

KING JUAN CARLOS. Con mi actuación estoy defendiendo el orden

constitucional que España ha refrendado. Cualquier otra actuación, toma nota, Armada, va contra la Constitución y contra la Corona.

ARMADA. Por encima de la Constitución y la Corona esta España, Majestad.

The exchange represents an interesting document regarding the concept of “loyalty to the nation” of sectors of the military. The country is above any individual, including the king. However, given the fact that Armada is presented throughout the series as an opportunist, these are just empty words. For others like Tejero, however—at least, allegedly—, they were true and the reason for the coup: to save the nation from its own destruction at all costs. Democracy had failed and the soldiers had to protect the country against itself.

But Armada’s plans, in this perspective of history, were not the simple coup—the *golpe de timón*, *golpe a la turca*,<sup>142</sup> or *operación de Gaulle*<sup>143</sup>, as some called it—and the restoration of the former regime. He used the Armed Forces in his own benefit to fulfill his thirst for power and become the president of a coalition government that would include communists and socialists. The film re-creates the scene that, supposedly, developed between Tejero and Armada in Congress, when the latter showed the former the infamous list with the members of such new government; this led to the subsequent feeling of betrayal expressed by Tejero. Finally, the taping of the message by the king addressing the nation—late for some—represents the support of democracy and the eventual “defusing” of the plot. The miniseries ends, following the trend mentioned

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<sup>142</sup> Type of theoretical military intervention in the country’s politics where, the fact of the threat by the armed forces, is strong enough reason for the person in power to resign.

<sup>143</sup> Related to the previous note, it is based on French General Charles de Gaulle’s rise to power in 1958, taking over the country to save a failing Fourth Republic and to control the Algerian question.

previously, with another onscreen message relaying the end of the events and the sentences to the accused. None of them finished their time in jail, and were released between 1988 (in the case of Armada), 1990 (Miláns), and 1996 (Tejero).

Antena 3 used the coup as an excuse—unlike TVE's—, to narrate a story of love triangles, adventures, and betrayals against the backdrop of the *23-F*:

La historia está ambientada en el otoño de 2008. Leal, un sexagenario víctima de una grave enfermedad y condenado en el juicio del 23 F, recibe la visita de Zárate, antiguo compañero de armas en su juventud, el hombre al que salvó la vida y, también, el hombre que le traicionó. No se han visto en mucho tiempo; casi tres décadas. El motivo: hacer que Leal pague la deuda que contrajo el día que le libró de morir a manos de ETA. (“Antena 3”)

The triangle Alfonso Leal-his wife Pilar Castro-Ignacio Zárate, together with Arancha Leal—Zárate's daughter in present time—, and Gonzalo—Alfonso and Pilar's son— represent the main characters that will swim the troubled waters of political and military manipulation that led to the failed coup in 1981 and its aftermath. Antena 3, also unlike TVE's version, depicts the love stories as important as the plot to overthrow the legitimate government. They will comprise thirty years and two generations, with a non-linear format full of flashbacks between the beginning of the Transition—the movie starts in 1978 with a murder attempt by terrorist group ETA—, 1981, and present time. As the story develops, Leal will be sentenced for his participation in the plot, ending up in a wheelchair and, eventually, taking his life. Zárate, on the other hand, became part of

CESID<sup>144</sup> and, also in 2008, wins back his friend's wife's love—a romance that extended for thirty years. The love story will also follow Arancha and Gonzalo, who, predictably, fall for each other as well.

What is interesting in this miniseries for this dissertation is the development of one of the theories regarding the real coup, proposed by, among others, Jesús Palacios.<sup>145</sup> It refers to the orchestration of the plot by the CESID, not by the Armed Forces, from within the system, to reinforce the Crown and democracy and, at the same time, remove the hated President Suárez from office; he was considered, by some, responsible for the failure of the new democratic state. However, in the film, the implication of the Intelligence Agency will bring along the existence of secret documents that involve them and many others—a conspiracy theory that is still maintained today—in a pseudo romantic thriller that gives preeminence to the love stories over the political possibilities. The documents will never be recovered—the writers would have to really twist the story to concoct such a theory were they really found—, but the circumstances will bring both couples together in the end.

The topic of the coup has been revisited several times over the years as one of the most important political and social aspects of the Transition. In February 2011, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the event—and in addition to the motion picture mentioned earlier—, many networks aired documentaries focused on the *23-F*. Thus, La Sexta's "23-F. ¿Y tú dónde estabas?," with different public figures' recollection on that

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<sup>144</sup> *Centro Superior de Información de la Defensa*, Spanish Intelligence Agency between 1977 and 2002.

<sup>145</sup> His ideas are developed in *23-F, el rey y su secreto*. Libros Libres, 2010.



day in history; Antena 3's documentaries on phone taps—"Los pinchazos del golpe"—and different journalists's take on the events—"El 23-F y yo;" La 2's interviews to Carme Chacón and Alberto Oliart, Defense Minister and ex-Minister, respectively; or Telecinco's "23F: Un golpe a la española," with debates around the attack and its circumstances.

Not only the infamous coup and the last days of Franco have been revisited. Perhaps the most controversial and hated politician of the Transition, ex-President Adolfo Suárez, also had to find a way to TV stardom. In 2010, Antena 3 aired the miniseries *Adolfo Suárez, el presidente*. In two episodes, it comprised the life of Suárez from his college years until, once again, February 23, 1981. The film revisited his humble beginnings, his marriage, his ambition and thirst for power that took an unknown young man from Cebreros to be the first President elect of the Transition. Following a similar technique as the previous series on the coup, the story is full of flashbacks between Suárez's youth, and his resignation in 1981, where the series starts. It is, in essence, a more intimate perspective on the man, not only political, but also personal, his relationship with his wife Amparo, his setbacks, his rise and fall in different stages—from a charismatic man to a fallen individual—, his frustration, and the consensus on his inability to lead the country. Today, however, the society's perception on the ex-president has changed, now being considered by many one of the foundations of the Transition. As an example, Luis del Olmo paid homage to Suárez on his radio show *Protagonistas*, including Santiago Carrillo and the four Presidents of democratic Spain—Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Felipe González, José María Aznar, and Luís Rodríguez Zapatero ("Homenaje de todos los presidentes"). In 2007, he was appointed *Caballero de la*

*Insigne Orden del Tesón de Oro*. In 2009, the *Museo Adolfo Suárez y la Transición* (MAST) opened in Cebreros (Ávila). Many homages for a man that, today, suffers Alzheimer and cannot even remember who he is, or who he was.

As I have analyzed in the previous pages, the events that unfolded in the Transition—from the last days of Francoism to the failed coup in 1981— were visited and revisited by the different public and private networks. But, if there is a series that has taken over television, that is *Cuéntame*, the story of a middle-class family from 1968 that analyzes, closely, the history of Spain from a personal and individual perspective.

### **5.2. 3. Television and *Cuéntame*. The Subjective Revision of Francoism and the Transition**

One of the most comprehensive contemporary analyses of late Francoism and the Transition on television is TVE's *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (13 September 2001-present). The series, that started its "historical" journey in 1968, as the show's Web site states, follows the vicissitudes of a middle-class family in a pseudo *intrahistoria* of Spain, if we adhere, at least in a certain sense, to Miguel de Unamunos's concept.<sup>146</sup> The Alcántara family is strategically comprised by six—although eventually seven—members: the

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<sup>146</sup> According to Unamuno:

Todo lo que cuentan a diario los periódicos, la historia toda del "presente momento histórico," no es sino la superficie del mar, una superficie que se hiela y cristaliza en los libros y registros, y una vez cristalizada así, una capa dura no mayor con respecto a la vida intrahistórica que esta pobre corteza en que vivimos con relación al inmenso foco ardiente que lleva dentro. Los periódicos nada dicen de la vida silenciosa de los millones de hombres sin historia que a todas horas del día y en todos los países del globo se levantan a una orden del sol y van a sus campos a proseguir la oscura y silenciosa labor cotidiana y eterna, esa labor que como la de las madreporas suboceánicas echa las bases sobre las que se alzan islotes de la historia. Sobre el silencio augusto, decía, se apoya y vive el sonido; sobre la inmensa humanidad silenciosa se levantan los que meten bulla en la historia. Esa vida intrahistórica, silenciosa y continua como el fondo mismo del mar, es la sustancia del progreso, la verdadera tradición, la tradición eterna, no la tradición mentira que se suele ir a buscar al pasado enterrado en libros y papeles, y monumentos, y piedras. (27-8)

grandmother (born in 1901), the father (1926), the mother (1928), the older sister (1948), the older brother (1950), the younger brother (1960), and the younger sister (born right before Franco's death and, therefore, not present in the first seasons). Thus, the characters range from sixty-seven to eight years of age at the beginning of the series. This has a dual objective. On the one hand, from a commercial standpoint, using a variety of characters that fall into different age categories, help audiences with the personal identification and connection—which, in turn, may translate in number of viewers. On the other hand, the same age categories help writers depict a multiperspective and personal revision of history—thus the idea of *intrahistoria*. According to Paul Julian Smith,

*Cuéntame* exploits the unique temporal and spatial matrix of TV to show that it is only by passing through the private (passional) sphere that we can come to know the public (dispassionate) history of the nation. What I call the “emotional imperative” . . . is thus inseparable from the intellectual goal of understanding subjects and institutions (“The Emotional” 364-65)

In other words, the series “privileges the emotional over the social or political” (Smith, “The Emotional” 371). The story is narrated in a flashback by an adult Carlos, the family's third child, from some time in the present. Given this fact, some critics see a correlation between *Cuéntame* and ABC's Emmy-winning series *The Wonder Years*, that aired from 1988 to 1993, covering from 1968 to 1973 the history of the US. *Cuéntame* has already surpassed *The Wonder Years* in number of episodes and the years on which it focuses. At the same time, given the different situations in which both countries were involved at the time—a dictatorship versus a democracy—, *Cuéntame*'s political development is much more extensive than *The Wonder Years*'. When the story starts in

1968, Carlos is an 8-year-old boy, much more worried about the problems with *The Fugitive*, for example, than with the transformations Spain and the world were going through. Other members of the family, however—namely the older brother and sister, eighteen and twenty respectively at the beginning of the series—, had a different perspective of the events unfolding during the last few years before Franco’s death, ranging from an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, exile, and left-wing ideals and affiliation.

This marks the trend of the series, a combination of history and “intrahistory,” mixing real events of Spain and the world with the personal stories of the characters—something similar was done earlier in *Forrest Gump*. Many topics are discussed during the series; among many others, religion, contraceptives, sexuality, politics and censorship during Francoism, police repression, Franco’s death, the Transition, elections, and democracy. The series has been criticized, though, for a sometimes too benevolent approach toward the former regime and its methods:

En su versión del pasado inmediato, *Cuéntame* favorece una actitud conciliadora, aparentemente inclusiva. Por un lado, su representación de los últimos años de la dictadura es . . . bastante benevolente, lo cual puede atraer a los defensores de la “memoria franquista.” Pero, por otro lado, la serie trata temas tan incómodos para esa “memoria franquista” como la emigración (interna y externa, ambas consecuencias de las dificultades económicas), la falta de libertad política y social, las manifestaciones de protesta por parte de estudiantes y obreros, y la oposición clandestina al régimen. (López 138)

At the same time, however, the series is praised for addressing controversial topics for the regime, such as the implications of unemployment or the lack of freedom in every aspect of life. An interesting comment on the perspective of the Spaniards of the time regarding, for instance, single mothers and Church, was offered by one of Carlos's friends: "Las prostitutas no creen en Dios" (hookers do not believe in God, from episode 1.1). Even though a child's idea, it reflects one of the conceptions of ultracatholic Spain and sex, in this case, for money. A sinner, a prostitute, cannot believe in the kind of god depicted in the catechism they are taught in school.

Franco's death and the beginning of the Transition are portrayed from episode 153-4, in their ninth season. In episode 153—focused on November 19, 1975, and aired December 13, 2007—, all the conversations were centered around topics like eroticism, alluding to the fact that don Pablo wanted Antonio and his wife to come see the burlesque show *Las alegres chicas de Colsada*<sup>147</sup>, *Las turgentes de Albacete*; politics, regarding the possibility of Antonio's older son, Toni, of being "blacklisted" for being a member of the Spanish Communist Party, still illegal, and the return of daughter Inés from exile; divorce, legal in France but still not permitted in Spain; and all the dreams, and fears, some thought life without the dictator would bring—free love, well-being, etc.

Franco died at 4:58 a.m. November 20, 1975. At 6:00 a.m., RNE confirmed the news. Later, at 10:00 a.m., President Carlos Arias Navarro pronounced the famous sentence on TV: "Españoles, Franco ha muerto." Episode 154—aired December 20, 2007—opened with Arias Navarro's TV message and the subsequent images of

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<sup>147</sup> The show was named after Matías Colsada, impresario and the father of burlesque and varieties in Spain.

newspapers with the news. Silence and doubt were almost like characters on the streets on the morning of November 20, as classes and official activities were suspended. “¿Y ahora, qué?”—and now, what?— was the general question. For the kids, for instance—once again, the subjective perspective of history—, it might mean the possibility of free love in the new Spain:

Si queríamos que las cosas cambiaran, no debíamos caer en la tentación.

Lo que teníamos que buscar eran chicas como Karina, deseosas del amor libre y no de rosarios y misas. En ese momento yo no quería darme cuenta, pero, a mi manera, estaba llevando a cabo eso que en política se dio en llamar el *cambio de chaqueta*. Y eso que sólo hacía unas horas que Franco había muerto.

Here is the change of attitude, even in teenagers, and, at the same time, the error many made thinking that, after Franco, life would resemble paradise; hence, the disillusionment—*el desencanto*—that took place when the transformations did not come as soon as expected and, when they did, they did not satisfy most. For others, however, the end of the dictatorship will bring all the negative and they will reminisce of Franco’s regime—*con Franco estábamos mejor*. In any case, after the death of *el caudillo*, the series depicts the slow but gradual social and political changes the county was facing—i.e., the first demonstrations pro-amnesty to free political prisoners. An important case shown is the fight for gender equality against the patriarchal and *machista* society. It is the trial for adultery to Inmaculada Benito (Fall 1976, episode 170, “La mujer del César,” aired October 23, 2008).

Arguably, the episode that best summarizes the foundation of this dissertation is 162, first of the tenth season. It was entitled “. . . Y llegó el destape.” It aired on August 28, 2008, and took place in Spring 1976. As it is depicted, erotic magazines overflow newsstands and the homes of men of all ages. Movies like *La trastienda*, as previously explained, shocked audiences with the first full-frontal nudity of a woman—Maria José Cantudo’s—, a reason for everyone to see. The series, as mentioned earlier, combined history with personal perception in many aspects of life, as *The Wonder Years* or *Forrest Gump* had done before. On this episode, together with the perspective of the average Spaniard of the time—the Alcántara family—, the audience could hear, firsthand, the opinions of some of the real protagonists of history:

Además de la visión de la época a través de los personajes de la serie, en este capítulo especial se incluyen las entrevistas de mujeres como Susana Estrada—considerada una de las estrellas del cine de destape—que ofrecerá en primera persona su visión de aquellos años. Marisa Flórez, una de las primeras reporteras gráficas españolas y que ha captado con su objetivo los momentos más importantes de la Transición, las políticas Carmen Alborch , Celia Villalobos y Cristina Almeida; las periodistas Rosa Montero y Rosa María Mateo aportarán su visión particular de “El destape” y de la España de aquellos años. Participan además las actrices Victoria Vera, María José Goyanes y Silvia Tortosa junto a la abogada Lidia Falcón. (“Cuentame”)

In similar fashion as the documentaries on *destape* analyzed earlier, the episode relies on the ideas of some of those who had some relevance during the period. This, as mentioned

previously, even though of great historical importance, can contribute, likewise, to a biased conception of the events. An opinion is always a subjective perception of reality—including the so-called “official history.” The diverse background and views of the participants, however, level, in most cases, the perspective on the different topics.

The episode opened with a multitude of images, from beaches to newsstands and film, where women are shown naked or seminaked. In class, Father Frolian warns the students against devil, flesh, and sin, while Carlos and his friends read an erotic magazine. Being punished for it, Carlos complains how some people are not up for change, as they are used to forty years of chaste and pure National-Catholicism. The reference to the premiere of *La trastienda* reflects the controversy the film brought along at all levels and ages, from teenagers to adults. Carlos’s voice-over comments explain that, those who did not live in those years, cannot understand what a teenage boy felt when they saw the first naked woman onscreen. For them, it was the end of the innocence. The price to pay, however, was the objectification of women and the (ab)use of the topics in its quest for equilibrium.

The episode, as mentioned, alternates fiction with the participation of the real protagonists of the period. This is an interesting fact because it reflects, primarily, the women’s perspective—from politicians to writers, journalists, and the actresses who stripped onscreen—on different topics regarding Francoism and the Transition. Victoria Vera, María José Goyanes, Celia Villalobos, Rosa María Mateo, Marisa Flórez, Lidia Falcón, Carmen Alborch, Silvia Tortosa, Rosa Montero, or Susana Estrada, expose their own personal ideas on a variety of issues, from eroticism and its implications to the changes Spain experienced during the period, above all regarding the role of women. In



most cases, the consensus, once the wave of extremist behavior waned, is positive, pointing out how the transformations took the female citizens from total male repression to a more equitable society—although there are still issues to be solved to reach a complete equal-opportunity society.

In conclusion, TVE's *Cuéntame cómo pasó*—one of the most successful contemporary series in Spanish television—, in its over ten-year run, has reflected the changes that Spain underwent from the last years of Francoism—the series start in 1968—to the first moments of the Transition, including the (ab)use of politics and eroticism. Praised by some for its authenticity depicting the society of those years—“from quality casting to seamless special effects” (Smith, “The Approach” 65)—and for the portrayal of the diverse individuals that offer a multiperspective and personal revision of history; criticized by others for its benevolent approach toward the harsh circumstances of the dictatorship and its excessive biased nostalgia; and followed by many, as the numbers indicate over the years, the series, combining, in a certain sense, Unamuno's concept of “intrahistory” with “official” history, is a fictional but useful document to understand the most recent moments lived in Spain.

One of the aspects that *Cuéntame* indirectly reviews is the music of the time, from the *cantaautores* to the different festivals where Spain participated. Likewise, music has been another topic that contemporary critics and artists have revisited in recent years. Among others, Ismael Serrano and Rosario Flores have contributed to a better understanding of the musical compositions released during Francoism and the Transition.

### 5.3. The Musical Revision of the Transition

Ismael Serrano, born in 1974, is a well-regarded *cantautor* in Spain today. His controversial lyrics are in line with those written during late Francoism and the early Transition. Arguably, the best known is “Papá, cuéntame otra vez,” from his first album *Atrapados en azul* (1997):

Papá cuéntame otra vez ese cuento tan bonito  
de gendarmes y fascistas, y estudiantes con flequillo,  
y dulce guerrilla urbana en pantalones de campana,  
y canciones de los Rolling, y niñas en minifalda.

Papá cuéntame otra vez todo lo que os divertisteis  
estropeando la vejez a oxidados dictadores,  
y cómo cantaste “Al Vent” y ocupasteis la Sorbona  
en aquel mayo francés en los días de vino y rosas.

The song clearly references Raimon’s “Al vent” and the fight against oppressors. The end, however, has the dark perspective of those who lived the Transition and the disillusionment the process brought along:

Papá cuéntame otra vez que tras tanta barricada  
y tras tanto puño en alto y tanta sangre derramada,  
al final de la partida no pudisteis hacer nada,  
y bajo los adoquines no había arena de playa.

Fue muy dura la derrota: todo lo que se soñaba

se pudrió en los rincones, se cubrió de telarañas,  
y ya nadie canta “Al Vent,” ya no hay locos ya no hay parias,  
pero tiene que llover, aún sigue sucia la plaza.

The alleged changes for which many had fought did not translate into tangible transformations—“there was no beach sand under the cobblestone.” Most of the fight took the country to a different set of leaders, but, in actuality, the ones who suffered then are the same who suffer now. The same as Raimon had referred in his interview quoted in the Music section of this dissertation, there is no such thing as enough democracy. The struggle for improvement must be a process, an endless process, since, as Serrano sings in the last line, the “square is still dirty.” Serrano also had, as many, a negative conception of the *Movida*:

Nosotros padecemos “La Movida,” que suponía destapar una olla a presión pero dejar de lado todo lo que tuviera compromiso político profundo. Fue superficial. No dudo de que diera aportaciones culturales artísticas, como en la música pop, pero echó tierra por encima de muchísimas cosas.  
(“Ismael Serrano: ‘La Movida’ echó tierra a todo lo que olía a compromiso”)

As analyzed previously, for many critics—Pavlović, for instance—the *Movida* had negative connotations, as a manipulated process by the socialist government. For some, it represented a period of extremes rather than a process of social and cultural improvement in the country. As Serrano himself argues, it was a superficial moment that left aside any kind of profound political commitment.

Rosario Flores also reviewed, from a different perspective, late Francoism and the Transition with her music. She did it with her album entitled *Cuéntame* (2010), like the TV series analyzed in the previous section. Her work includes the homonymous song that was originally played by Formula V. Flores's compilation is full of renditions of popular songs of the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to "Cuéntame que te pasó" (The Speak Up Mambo), the artist sings songs like Janet's "Soy rebelde," Hilario Camacho's "Pongamos que hablo de Madrid," or Julio Iglesias's "Gwendolyne."

But television shows and music are not the only sources that have focused on the late 1970s and early 1980s in Spain in recent years. Many writers have authored books and research regarding some of the most controversial topics of the period. One of them is the failed coup that took place on February 23, 1981, an example of the extremes the process underwent in Spain. One of the most recent books published is Javier Cerca's *Anatomía de un instante*. It will be analyzed in the following section.

#### **5.4. The Literary Coup: 23-F Revisited**

There are several studies on the cultural Transition in general. Among others, the ones carried out by Teresa Vilarós, Javier Gómez Montero, Jordi Marí, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Francisco Umbral, Brad Epps, Santos Alonso, Marta Altisent, José Colmeiro, Carlos Ardavín, Marsha Kinder, J.M. Caparrós, Jo Labanyi, or José María Ponce. There are, at the same time, those published from the late 1970s until the 2000s by the politicians and figures who played important roles in the Transition.<sup>148</sup> All of them have

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<sup>148</sup> Among them are: Laureano López Rodó's *La larga marcha hacia la monarquía* (Noguer, 1997), Manuel Fraga's *En husca del tiempo servido* (Planeta, 1987), Santiago Carrillo's *Memorias* (Planeta, 1993), Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo's *Memoria viva de la transición* (Plaza & Janés 1990), and José María de Areilza's *Diario de un ministro de la Monarquía* (Planeta, 1977).

covered different aspects of the period from diverse perspectives, analyzing in their studies society, literature, cinema, magazines, or *destape*. A topic, however, that has generated an immense interest over the years is the failed coup of 1981. Most books have focused on the journalistic approach to the subject.<sup>149</sup> But the only “seminovelistic” and last revision to date has been Javier Cercas’s *Anatomía de un instante* (2009), the author’s take on the coup d’état carried out by Antonio Tejero. Tejero had been part of another attempt in November 1978, the so-called “Operación Galaxia,” together with Ricardo Sáenz de Ynestrillas, commander of the *Policía Armada* murdered by ETA in 1986:

La fecha de la abortada conjura fue fijada para el 17 de noviembre, día en que debían estar fuera de Madrid, por diversos viajes oficiales, el Rey, el ministro de Defensa y los jefes de Estado Mayor de los Ejércitos de Tierra, Mar y Aire. Parecía que en aquellos momentos el objetivo final de la operación era tomar como rehén al entonces presidente del Gobierno, Adolfo Suárez, y forzar la formación de un Gabinete de salvación nacional opuesto al proceso político democratizador. (“Compañero de Tejero en la ‘operación Galaxia’”)

We can observe that Tejero’s idea of the salvation of the country had been part of his military career since the advent of democracy. Finding allies in different sectors of the Armed Forces and civilian society, his goal to eliminate the new system and return to a

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<sup>149</sup> For a review of many of the books published on the topic, visit <http://ecodiario.eleconomista.es/libros/noticias/1163601/04/09/Los-15-libros-fundamentales-para-conocer-el-golpe-de-Estado-del-23-F.html>.

state ruled by the ideals of the former regime took him, eventually, only to jail, without the fulfillment of his plans.

As we have seen in the different movies on the topic, many are the theories about the 23-F, from the mere military action, the leadership of Armada's, the implication of CESID, or the role of the king. Regarding the latter, Cercas himself had an opinion on the issue that he declared in an article published in *El País*:

El Rey no organizó el golpe, está claro, lo paró. Nadie podía pararlo si no era él, que tenía el poder de hacerlo. Pero eso no significa que tengamos que santificarlo. El Rey también se equivoca, e hizo cosas que no debería haber hecho. La verdad es que lo facilitó y en eso se equivocó, como se equivocó gran parte de la clase política . . . Nadie estuvo a la altura . . . El deseo de acabar políticamente a toda costa con Suárez obsesionaba a todo el mundo, desde la oposición hasta al propio Rey.

(“Cercas: ‘El Rey hizo cosas en el 23-F que no debería haber hecho’”)

The opinions exposed by Cercas represent a clear criticism of the king, the politicians, and the civilian society of the time. The only common goal was the dismissal of Adolfo Suárez, considered by many the source of all the problems of the nation. That idea took all of them, without restrictions, to act in a way that could have cost the country a return to the former regime.

Cercas's book is a hybrid between a novel and an essay, an investigative report regarding what happened prior to, on, and after February 23, 1981, the only coup taped on television in history (*Anatomía 14*). Cercas did something similar in *Soldados de Salamina* (2001), arguably his best-selling work to date. In the book, he went back in

time trying to solve the “truth” around the failed execution of Rafael Sánchez Mazas<sup>150</sup> during the Spanish Civil War. It was made into a movie in 2003, directed by David Trueba and starring Ariadna Gil. *Anatomía de un instante*, his new project, was, at first, based on Jesús Palacios’s theory in reference to the orchestration of the coup by CESID—Cortina and Calderón as their ultimate leaders—, as an attempt to get rid of then President Suárez and form a coalition government presided over by General Armada and with the participation of the different political forces. But, according to Cercas, his novel was based on a false foundation—Palacios’s theory. That made him want to know more on the topic, begin his own research, and make his book a hybrid of novel and investigative report. The reality of the coup seemed difficult to beat with a just a novel, since the facts themselves have more dramatic force than a fictional book. Reality is, sometimes, stranger than fiction, and even surpasses it. Therefore, his only choice was to re-narrate the reality. From the prologue, the writer declares that, even though it is not a history book, and nobody should try to find unpublished data on the topic, and it is not a novel, it can be read as both (*Anatomía* 25-26).

The starting point of the book is the image that was, and has been, aired a million times: the footage of Tejero’s burst into the Congress of Deputies on February 23, 1981—which is 34 minutes and 24 seconds long, as opposed to the only few minutes most people have seen. Only three men did not duck and hide when bullets began to whistle: Adolfo Suárez—the still deputy President at the time—, Manuel Gutiérrez

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<sup>150</sup> Rafael Sánchez Mazas was an important member of *Falange Española* during the Spanish Civil War and early Francoism. He was ready to be executioned by the Republican Forces in 1939, but he managed to escape. The novel reconstructs the story with the help of those involved in it. He was also the father of Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, a prestigious Spanish writer author of *El Jarama*, and Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio, a singer-songwriter analyzed in the “Music” section of this dissertation.

Mellado—First Vicepresident—, and Santiago Carrillo—Secretary General of PCE, the Spanish Communist Party. The three apparently *brave* men who did not do what the rest did, and considered heroes, were, at the same time, the most hated individuals in the Transition, and labeled as traitors. Gutiérrez Mellado had betrayed Franco, Francoists, and the military, for being on Suárez’s side; Carrillo had done the same in regards to communist ideology, signing pacts with Suárez and accepting monarchy; Suárez, the biggest traitor and the most hated of them all, had betrayed everybody, and, therefore, everyone wanted him out, being considered the culprit of the sociopolitical situation created: financial crisis, unemployment, terrorism and death of policemen and members of the military, communism, etc. The king, the political parties—including his own—, the military, Church, and society demanded his dismissal. Through the different chapters, Cercas analyzes the personalities of the three men. Gutiérrez Mellado, a man who had rebelled against the legitimate government of the Second Republic in 1936, when he was just a 24-year-old lieutenant. Now, being with Suárez, he had earned the hatred of the military. Carrillo, the sempiternal politician opposed to monarchy and democracy who had renounced his ideals to be part of the system. Suárez, the same as Carrillo, the politician who was able to transition to democracy but who could not lead the new democratic state and had to step down. For Cercas, both Carrillo and Suárez were consummate actors and all they were doing that day was to act for history; Gutiérrez Mellado, according to his personal perspective, just did it out of courage.

The book analyzes the political and social situation and labels it the “placenta del golpe,” the placenta of the coup. Cercas does not believe in a civil plot to get rid of Suárez. The situation motivated it. Regarding the coup itself, he follows the official



version and sees Armada, Miláns del Bosch, and Tejero as the ones who organized it, with the involvement of other sections of the military and Gómez Iglesias, who was part of OIME, the secret organization within the secretive CESID. He does not think the CESID itself was involved—the proof is Cortina’s acquittal. Cercas also reviews the coups within the coup—three in one, Tejero’s, Miláns’ and Armada’s. For him, the reason for the failure was Tejero’s rebellion within the rebellion, when he refused to accept Armada’s proposal of a coalition government, with him as a president, that included socialists and communists, and his own exile. The “operación de Gaulle,” or “golpe a la turca” failed there.

Cercas denies the “pacto de olvido” (108) to make the Transition posible—it is a lie or, simply, fragmentary truth (108). According to him, the Transition was just a pact in which the ones who lost the Civil War gave up the possibility to take revenge for what took place during the dictatorship (108). Left-wing parties had to, therefore, accept monarchy in Spain if they wanted to be part of the democratic process. The last part of the book is an epilogue, a personal identification between his father and Suárez, and a better understanding of the latter, of whom he had been ashamed.

In conclusion, Javier Cercas’s *Anatomía de un instante*, a book that, according to its author, is a hybrid between a novel and an investigative report, is, in essence, a very detailed review of the events that unfolded around the coup that occurred in Spain on February 23, 1981. Adhering to the “official version” —one that is, definitely, incomplete, due to the secrecy of the authorities—, the book analyzes circumstances and personalities, as a report would, without new contributions to the subject. It is just another approach, as the one cited in different sources, a compilation of data regarding a

troublesome episode of the recent history of Spain. An episode that, rivaling even the best Hitchcock movies, probably will never be thoroughly unveiled. Only time will tell.

In the Contemporary Revision of this dissertation, I have analyzed the current fascination with a small fraction of the history of Spain, the stage from dictatorship to democratic restoration we know as the Transition. Eroticism and politics are, once again, the staples of the process, together with the importance of the protagonists and the moment when democracy could have been stopped in its tracks by sectors of society in line with the ideals of the former regime; those who saw change as negative and evil, and a tool for the destruction of unity in the country. However, as we know, the Transition continued its path toward democracy, a system enjoyed by Spanish society today. Through TV series, music, literature, and film, the country, from scholars to institutions, has taken to review and revise—even more in the last few years, when we have reached the thirtieth anniversary of the beginning of the Transition— a fascinating period of Spanish history that is, in essence, the foundation for the social framework the country represents today, where a multiperspective society is the basis for understanding—at least, in theory.

## CONCLUSIONS

April 1, 1939, marked the beginning of a long process in which individual freedom in Spain was suppressed and subjected to the impositions of an authoritarian state. Following three years of Civil War—consequence of a partially failed coup d'état by rebel forces on July 18, 1936—, General Francisco Franco proclaimed himself Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Armed Forces. From this point in time, National-Catholicism and the ideals of the *Movimiento* would rule the lives of the Spaniards during a part of history that seemed, for most sectors of society, endless. As a result of the reactionary and conservative views of the state machinery, the issues that became a reason for condemnation by the Establishment were eroticism—opposed to the doctrine of a puritan country—and politics—especially those in line with leftist affiliation and against the regime. At the same time, in a patriarchal and sexist society, men were meant to be raised under the ideals of unity, leadership, and male power, avoiding any tendencies that could compromise their manhood—i.e., homosexual contact. Women, on the other hand, were to be faithful wives, mothers, or nuns—and, in any case, dependent on men for any social and private action; as Simone de Beauvoir expressed, the world belonged to men. But, as history proves, no process is eternal and, eventually, change is necessary to restore the status quo.

For some critics, among them Ramón Buckley, changes began in Spain in the late 1960s as the regime entered a process of false *apertura*, trying to emulate the outer layer of other liberal Western societies—without reformulating social or gender roles— and appear in front of them as a modern state. Thus, the country went “from autarky to consumerism” (Morcillo 14). However, political and sexual restrictions were still in place

and the only possibility to give free rein to diverse ideals or eroticism was to either join clandestine parties or travel to neighboring and more permissive countries. For other scholars and observers, the beginning of the change was brought along by the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco, at the time President of Spain, by Basque terrorist group ETA in 1973—this marks the beginning of the series *Así se hizo la transición*, created by Victoria Prego. But, even though adjustments began to take place with the afore-mentioned events, Franco's death on November 20, 1975, signaled the possibility of the restoration of a democratic state.

With Franco's death, Spain starts a process of democratic restoration known as the Transition. Its length—as well as the the discrepancies regarding its beginning previously stated—, is marked by a diversity of opinions. For some historians, the Transition ended with the promulgation of the new constitution in 1978. Others, however, consider the process finished with the electoral triumph of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in 1982. Regardless of dates, the Transition was a period marked by excessive hope, extremes, disillusionment, catharsis, and, eventually, restoration and balance.

Because of the repressive nature of the former regime during almost four decades regarding sexual and political matters, when the restrictions were socially and politically lifted, both subjects went from constrained to overly (ab)used. Some, like José María Ponce, saw the radical change as necessary (11). I argue that the process was more a reaction, a chain reaction if you will, to a lengthy repressive action, a consequence of the puritan authoritarian state. It was full of flaws, since it was a learning course—learning by doing, as educational reformer Dewey proposed—in a new society. In any case,

eroticism and politics became the two most commonly (ab)used topics in every section or facet of culture, from literature to film, theater, music, and popular media. So much so that the cultural transition to democracy would not have been possible without the inclusion of both. That inclusion, its use, and abuse, were an almost required *asignatura pendiente*—as expressed in Garci’s film—that Spaniards had to make up, with all its flaws, excesses, and mistakes, in order to “graduate” as a more mature, accepting, and tolerant society.

From this point, during the seven years the Transition lasted, the display of female bodies and political criticism were seen as an intrinsic part of the democratic restoration process; so much so that,

Democracy was measured by the amount of flesh displayed. Democracy was on display, naked, like a woman. Nudity was presented as an act of rebellion on the part of women against the prudish Francoist past and the prerogative of heterosexual men, self-proclaimed free thinkers. (Morcillo 271)

Still being a patriarchal society, women became the object of public desire for men, passive voyeurs and main consumers of the new “product” presented to them, without restrictions. Now, “Franco’s subdued era with its disdain of any excess was replaced by the exteriorization of passions” (Pavlović 97). Four decades of repression led to (ab)use and transgression of former and puritanical societal rules. It was, following Foucault, a return to the sexual laxity of the Western societies prior to the dawn of the seventeenth century (*Sexuality Vol 1: 3*).

The (ab)use of eroticism and politics in the different sections of culture was not only done in poor taste. In any case, taste, as Bourdieu explains, is always imposed upon the individuals by the “dominant class” (*Distinction* 310) and is, primarily, subjective. Together with the commercial narrations and creations of the period, a plethora of critically acclaimed artists added touches of eroticism and expression of political ideals to their production. It was a time to explore, test, shock, (ab)use before the completion of the cathartic process.

Regarding the narrations during the period, several critics consider that there is no such thing as *novela de la transición*, and Franco’s death did not translate into an unstoppable publication of masterpieces (Rafael Conte, qtd. in Martínez Cachero 383). The same as with the political process, too many expectations led to disillusionment. Some scholars have a higher regard for the metaphorical creations during Francoism. However, among the over fifty novels analyzed in this dissertation, I have found—along with works destined to just join the trend, and even abuse it—, an array of stories by awarded writers that, even though in line with the inclusion of eroticism and politics, also had an artistic and literary interest. From Nobel-Prize winners Mario Vargas Llosa or Camilo José Cela, to Juan Benet, Miguel Delibes, Luis and Juan Goytisolo, Eduardo Mendoza, Francisco Umbral, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, or Juan Marsé, to name but a few, the topics of the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition with, in many cases, erotic innuendo, filled the Spanish production of the period. And, as a sign of the change of times—although still in a society ruled by men—, women writers also became part of the trend. Important writers such as Esther Tusquets, with her analysis of heterosexual and homosexual relationships and human conflict; Carmen Martín Gaité and her

approach to Spain's social and political past; Ana Rossetti's erotic poetry; Rosa Montero's study of women and their development; feminist leader Lidia Falcón and a close depiction of female search of fulfillment despite men; and, after the Transition, Almudena Grandes, whose *Las edades de Lulú* (1989) became the all-time best seller of "La sonrisa vertical," have all explored different avenues of politics and eroticism in literature.

Transgressive stories—once again, according to a puritanical society—during the period abounded, as a way to explore new turfs, shock the audiences, and try to profit from the new trends. Topics like incest, zoophilia, necrophilia, lesbianism, homosexual intercourse, onanism, or sexual awakenings were part of some of these narratives. This was reflected, above all, in the above-mentioned "La sonrisa vertical," the erotic collection published by Tusquets Editores and whose first number was Camilo José Cela's *La insólita y gloriosa historia del Cipote de Archidona*, published in 1977. In the collection we find one of the novels that best represents the intermingling of eroticism and sociopolitical commentary in the period: Leopoldo Azancot's *Los amores prohibidos* (1980). The story establishes a parallel, a correlation between the illegal "practices" during Francoism and the early Transition: homosexuality—still punishable under the *Ley de peligrosidad y rehabilitación social*—, prostitution, and left-wing political affiliation. The narration is a societal analysis of the Transition from female—patient and hopeful—and male perspective—radical and with a lack of understanding towards the "Other."

The other novel that best represented the previously mentioned mixture was Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's *Los mares del Sur*. The inclusion of a private detective—

Pepe Carvalho, in essence, an alter ego of its creator—in a non *novela negra*, is the perfect excuse to become a Baudelairean *flanêur*, a sidewalk botanist, and dissect the Spanish society of the Transition, commenting on political parties, real estate corruption, literary theory, cuisine, and sexual tendencies—using a prostitute as part-time lover, to add the transgressive touch.

Something similar to what we saw within the novel happened during the period with film productions. Spain left behind movies like *Raza* or *Alba de América*, epitomes of Francoism, and characters like Joselito or Marisol—who, however, would be used now as symbol of a changing country—to approach more diverse tendencies. These went from commercially profitable stories, but with lack of cinematographic quality—Jorge Grau's *La trastienda* or the films directed by Ozores, trying to mimic the surface of what was being done in other Western societies—, to products that recreated the trend with an artistic goal in mind.

But if the novel recreated the thirst for eroticism and politics only in the minds of the readers, the movies of the period were, in many cases, the embodiment of the transgression and, for many, the (ab)use of female nudity, the objectification of women—for some, “lowered to the rank of a thing” (Beauvoir 89)—to satiate the sexually repressed minds of the male members of a patriarchal society. This became even clearer with the new S-rated motion pictures and directors like Jesús Franco or Francisco Lara Polop, who found the perfect excuse to strip actresses in transgressive environments—cemeteries, prisons, schools, etc. However, and once again, as happened with the written word, an array of critically acclaimed filmmakers followed the trend with a more artistic perspective in the over a hundred films referenced in this dissertation. Luis Buñuel,



Carlos Saura, Vicente Aranda, Imanol Uribe, José Luis Borau, Jaime Camino, Fernando Trueba, Fernando Colomo, or Pedro Almodóvar—although in later movies—could be fine examples.

Women filmmakers appeared during the period as well, but, unlike their novelist counterparts, in a lesser amount. This, once again, proved that females were still behind in directorial and managerial positions; however, at the same time, shortening the distance. The best example was Pilar Miró, who, after the Transition, was appointed Director General of the only television network in the country, TVE. During the period, Miró and her film *El crimen de Cuenca*—a clear social criticism of the sacred *Guardia Civil* and the legal institutions—suffered the wrath of censorship. The film was banned and Miró was subjected to a court-martial—the film finally premiered in 1981. In addition to Miró, Lina Romay, life-time partner of Jesús Franco, explored the world of S-rated movies, both in front and behind the camera.

Two movies were the best examples of the combination of sexual innuendo and politics on the big screen: José Luis Garci's *Asignatura pendiente* and Eloy de la Iglesia's *El diputado*. Garci's production was a generational movie, a nostalgic review of all the possibilities lost during Francoism, the failed course—*asignatura pendiente*—Spaniards should have passed and now had to make up due to repressive impositions. Using an adulterous relationship as a thread, the film establishes a parallel between the sexual fling and the end of the dictatorship—which, just like bicycles, *cuando se paran, se caen*. *El diputado* also establishes a correlation, but similar to the one referenced in the novel *Los amores prohibidos*. A homosexual socialist politician has an affair with an underage gay

prostitute—a *chapero*—, making both the outlaws of a puritanical and reactionary society who, eventually, will pay for their “crime” at the hands of a band of radical right-wingers.

Theater, the live representation of a story, saw similar tendencies as film. Many playwrights learned quickly how to include nudity and political connotations in their creations, in an attempt to be part of the new and modern tendencies—with a monetary interest in mind—that went from plays, to musicals, and burlesque. However, the Transition also meant the return of a good number of exiled authors, such as Rafael Alberti or Fernando Arrabal. Many important writers premiered their plays during the period; thus, Antonio Gala, Adolfo Marsillach, Alfonso Paso, Antonio Buero Vallejo, Salvador Espriu, or Torcuato Luca de Tena, to name a few.

The best example of a play that suffered a similar ordeal to Pilar Miró’s *El crimen de Cuenca* was Els Joglars’s *La torna*. The story criticized the execution by the authorities of Heinz Chez together with anarchist Salvador Puig Antich to cover the political assassination—*el redondeo* or the rounding up the title references. Both Els Joglars and their play faced legal actions; the performance was banned and the members subjected to a court-martial, although Albert Boadella managed to escape.

Women playwrights and stage directors during the period were even scarcer than filmmakers. Arguably, the best representative of the period was Josefina Molina who directed Josep Maria Benet’s play *Motin de bruja* (1980), a story about feminism, politics, and religion, as we follow the misadventures of a group of cleaning ladies who rebel against a corporation, represented by a man. She also directed Miguel Delibes’s adaption of *Cinco horas con Mario*. Along with Molina, Ana Diosdado was another familiar face both in theater and on television. During the Transition she wrote and

directed *Y de Cachemira, chales* (1976), a political and existential review and criticism in a post-apocalyptic play.

Music, both during Francoism and the Transition, was used to channel discontent, frustration, and to express feelings and ideals. The best example was the figure of the *cantautor*, a folk singer-songwriter whose tools were the protest songs against injustice and repression. But, in addition to the genre, most musical trends followed the same path and marked with their lyrics the criticism against the lack of freedom and the disillusionment with the process. From rock to punk or rumba, voices were heard around the nation spreading political messages and pointing out the flaws of the system. Singers like Joaquín Sabina, Luis Eduardo Aute—with his profound “Al alba,” first recorded by Rosa León, and his erotic lyrics—, Raimon and his “Al vent,” Ovidi Montllor, Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio, Joan Manuel Serrat, Víctor Manuel, or Jarcha—whose *Libertad sin ira* became an anthem during the period—were joined by the likes of Leño, Topo, or Triana. Likewise, Los Chunguitos, Los Chichos, and Bordón 4 used rumba to chronicle the lives of juvenile delinquents, like *el Vaquilla* or *el Torete*, and social injustice; Semen up, La Polla Records, or Almodóvar himself filled their songs with erotic innuendo in their quest for freedom of speech and provocation. Women, unlike in previous cultural fields analyzed, became an important part of the musical Transition. María del Mar Bonet recorded “Qué volem aquesta gent?,” a song that exposed the assassination by the police of 23-year-old student Rafael Guijarro Moreno. Rosa León lent her voice to the song written by Aute “Al alba,” a metaphorical cry about the last executions of Francoism. Together with them, Alaska or Cecilia expressed their concerns and ideals through their lyrics.

The mass or popular media during the Transition experienced as many changes as the society they reflected in the different sources. Television, due to its public status during the period—only one network owned by the state—was the slowest to reflect the transformation, more obvious in the number of director generals that were appointed in the period studied, some lasting less than a year. After the Transition, however, and as already explained, Pilar Miró became the first woman in charge of Spanish public television. Series—*Curro Jiménez*, *Cañas y barro*, or *Verano azul*—, talk and variety shows—*Esta noche* or *Si yo fuera presidente*—, or comedy—*Tip y Coll* or *Martes y Trece*—reflected some of the events taking place in the nation, and facing, in some cases, censorship and cancellations. But the epitome of the Transition in the medium was Paloma Chamorro's *La edad de Oro*, an irreverent show whose content covered from the new trends—music, fashion, art, sex, etc.— to harsh criticism against the Establishment and religion. Its new and open approach granted it the eventual exclusion from TVE's lineup. Radio personalities like Luis del Olmo, José María García, Jesús Quintero, or Encarna Sánchez were the voices of the masses, criticizing political and social corruption. But the most obvious and fast changes in the media came with the plethora of new newspapers—like *El País* or *Diario 16*—magazines—*Interviú*—, comics and satirical magazines—*El Víbora*, *El Jueves*, or *El Papis*—, and publications that reflected the feminist trend, such as *Vindicación feminista* or *Poder y Libertad*. They became *el parlamento de papel*, the paper Parliament, the chronicle of the changes that were sweeping the nation, the target of censorship and right-wing terrorist attacks, the trampoline for many actresses, and the epitome of the (ab)use of eroticism and political commentary the society was experiencing.

The image of the child prodigy of Francoism—Pepa Flores, a.k.a. Marisol—on the cover of *Interviú* in September 1976, over a year before the lifting of censorship, marked the beginning of a moment seen by many as rebellion against the puritanical former regime and a sign of modernism; for others, the example of a, still, patriarchal society that, regardless of the political change, objectified women and considered them as second-rate citizens, subjected to the desire of repressed men.

In the twenty-first century, artists, scholars, and historians alike seemed to have found a new fascination with those seven years of the history of Spain. After the year 2000, television networks have produced more series, miniseries, and made-for-tv movies on the period than ever. The best examples are those centered on the failed coup d'état that took place on February 23, 1981. Also, the long-running *Cuéntame cómo pasó*—that premiered in 2001 and that in 2011 is still one of the most successful productions by TVE—is a close historical and “intra-historical”—if we adhere to some of Unamuno’s definitions—analysis of the last years of Francoism and the Transition, including an episode dedicated to *destape*.

A number of documentaries focused on *destape* have aired on different networks in recent years—Canal +’s *Cuando España se desnudó* in 2005 or Telecinco’s *El destape en España* in 2008. S-rated movies were reviewed in movie theaters in *Los años desnudos. Clasificada S*, a film produced in 2008 that reflects on the lives of the protagonists and their fate once the erotic motion pictures became mainstream and were no longer attractive for audiences.

Many authors have also felt an urge to write about some aspects of the period. In addition to a number of cultural studies—by Teresa Vilarós, Santos Alonso, or Jo

Labanyi, to name a few—, many critics and writers have been attracted to the failed coup that took place on February 23, 1981. Among them, Javier Cercas, who, in 2009, published his hybrid *Anatomía de un instante*, a “seminovelistic” analysis of the attempt carried out by the Armed Forces.

But *destape* during the Transition years, as reflected in the introduction of this dissertation, is not just a reference to nudity. Etymologically speaking, the term alludes to the unveiling, the uncovering of new forms of expressions in all aspects of art. The Transition represented the freedom to portray and depict any topic in artistic productions, regardless of taste imposed by the dominant classes, as Bourdieu mentioned. It brought along the premiere of previously banned films, the access to Brecht’s plays, or the possibility of a strike at *El Corte Inglés* (Córdova-Claure 21-22). As a consequence and reaction to almost forty years of repressive authoritarian state, especially regarding sexual and political matters, the topics heavily censored had to find a safety valve to give free rein to inner desires and frustrations. As with any other body subjected to involuntary pressure, when let free, it explodes. It is nothing but a chemical reaction. That is what happened in Spain during the Transition years. Political and sexual references went from non-existent to (ab)used. The radical changes that Spain undertook were part of the rebellion against the Establishment, as Altisent argues:

El “desmadre” y el “alboroto español” de fines de los setenta fue una revancha del individuo sobre el grupo, de la libertad sobre la regla, de la anarquía revolucionaria de cualquier signo sobre el orden austero del trabajo, y del consumismo sobre el compromiso político, interrumpido allí donde el antifranquismo aglutinó y aplazó proyectos más clarificadores de

emancipación. Era un fenómeno que anticipaba la eclosión de libertad y orgía sexual que una década más tarde iba a acompañar la caída de la dictadura comunista en los países del este europeo. Quioscos y librerías se vieron saturados de colecciones pornográficas que, más que provocar escándalo, invitaban a erotopías narcotizantes, aludiendo a un mundo vacío de afectos y humanidad, en el que la mujer seguía siendo objeto funcional del deseo. (25)

It was, in essence, the (ab)use of an anarchic reaction as a revenge<sup>151</sup> against oppression that, as any excess, had positive and negative consequences. But the temporary extreme behavior, including the objectification of women in a patriarchal society, was merely a process toward a social, political, and psychological catharsis to find measure and equilibrium. Eventually, erotic and political displays became mainstream. Women, the sometimes victims of the societal excesses and the patriarchal ideals of the former regime and the early Transition, after the process, became integral parts of society. As the book written in 1999 by Mary Salas *et al.* pointed out, Spanish women went from *excluidas a protagonistas*.<sup>152</sup> Women contributed to the modernization of the country, leaving behind the male legal obligations imposed during Francoism—to work or open bank

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<sup>151</sup> Other critics, like Isolina Ballesteros (qtd. in Altisent 24)—and as I have argued in, for instance, the TV section of this dissertation—, state that sex was also used to distract individuals from other far more serious problems that plagued the society of the period.

<sup>152</sup> *Españolas en la transición: de excluidas a protagonistas, 1973-1982* (1999). The chapter topics covered in the book are: Asociaciones de mujeres y movimiento feminista (Mary Salas, Mercedes Comabella), Cambios legislativos (Mar Pérez-Serrano, Teresa Rubio), Las mujeres y las instituciones (María Alonso Jordana), La participación política de las mujeres (Cecilia Raposo), Mujer y educación (Rosa María Capel Martínez, Mabel Pérez-Serrano), Las mujeres en el mundo laboral (María del Mar Vanaclocha Bellver), Mujer y salud (Suzel Bannel, Mabel Pérez-Serrano), Comunicación e información de mujeres y para mujeres (Isabel Blas), and La transversalidad de la presencia femenina (Valentina Fernández Vargas).

accounts, for instance—and moving up to occupy the highest ranks in society. As expressed earlier, after the Transition, Pilar Miró was appointed Director General of TVE. In 2002, Teresa Viejo was hired as director of *Interviú* magazine. Soledad Becerril, Celia Villalobos, Cristina Alberdi—politician, writer, and feminist—, or Esperanza Aguirre, to name a few, became ministers under different governments. Following the information gathered by the *Federación de Mujeres Progresistas* on their Web site, the female representation in the Congress of Deputies has risen steadily, going from 4.57% between 1982 and 1986 to the current 36% . In 2008, the number of women ministers surpassed men.<sup>153</sup> The “woman of the magazine ads and movie screens [that]seduced a new generation of Spaniards into thinking that life held more for them than the austerity of their recent past” (Morcillo 14) was now an equal to those previously seduced men. Spain, during the process, has become a more mature and equal opportunity country. Victoria Camps, however, declared that, in democratic Spain,

Legal equality has been largely achieved . . . but a “change of register” is needed if remaining egalitarian feminist demands—such as parity of pay and promotion opportunity, and more equitable distribution of domestic tasks—are to have resonance for women born after the feminist boom of the 1960s and 1970s. (Jordan 233)

Rosa Montero, on the other hand, stated that, “Spain is no longer a fiercely *machista* society: our level of sexism is now comparable to that of any other EC country” (Graham 318).

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<sup>153</sup> Nine in total: Mercedes Cabrero, Carmen Chacón, Magdalena Álvarez, Elena Espinosa, Elena Salgado, Cristina Garmendia, Bibiana Aído, Beatriz Corredor, and María Teresa Fernández de la Vega.



In essence, the cultural Transition to democracy in Spain, the *destape* and its excesses, the (ab)use of political and erotic display that gave way to a great part of the cultural production of the Transition, brought along as well the consequent uncovering, the unveiling of feelings and ideas without fear of reprisals, the road to a new freedom that, even though radical in its first stages, abusive to some extent—above all towards women—, and transgressive according to puritanical rules, was part of a catharsis and learning process; the learning process of a country *en route* to the reestablishment of the status quo, to a more equitable and mature society where eroticism and politics are, simply, two more topics to be enjoyed, at will, by men, women, heterosexuals or homosexuals, in a plural world.

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### PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

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