

"¡QUÉ OVERDOSE!": SEXUAL IDENTITIES IN PEDRO ALMODÓVAR'S *LABERINTO DE PASIONES* (1982)

Cristina Sánchez-Conejero
University of North Texas

Por omisión, el sexo define al franquismo y a toda la dictadura. Ningún otro régimen de gobierno viste tanto al desnudo, acopia tanto eufemismo, niega, de forma violenta toda una faceta humana. En España y a su conjuro [. . .] crecieron por lo menos tres generaciones algo traumatizadas sexualmente.¹ (15)

So Oscar Caballero explains Spanish sexuality under the Franco dictatorship. It is not surprising, then, that reactionary attitudes emerged everywhere following Franco's death on November 25, 1975. Although Franco chose King Don Juan Carlos as his successor, he surely did not anticipate the transition to democracy from 1976 to 1981 that the King would support. This transition occurred during the years in which Adolfo Suárez occupied the presidency, corresponding with the period -according to Almodóvar "se refiere a los años que van de 78 al 83" (212)- when "la Movida" was cooking with a postmodern revolution that would mark Spain in the eighties and nineties.

In reactive fashion, this postmodern revolution was characterized by the display of anti-Franco sexualities, a key element of the Spain of the democratic transition as evidenced by the portrayal of the Spain of the eighties in such Spanish movies as *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980) and *Laberinto de pasiones* (1982), both by Almodóvar, and *El Calentito* (2005) by Chus Gutiérrez, among others. It is the second of these films which will be the focus of the following analysis, as it is an important contribution of Almodóvar's but one which has remained relatively critically overlooked. In it, the characters have suffered the oppression of censorship under Franco, and, following the death of the dictator, embrace the chance to do the things which were

¹ By its omission, sex defines Franquismo and every dictatorship. No other government regime dresses the naked form so much, turns so much to euphemism, and rejects with such violence every human facet. At least three generations grew up sexually traumatized in Spain.

before forbidden but do so in excess, taking everything to the extreme. They are the youth of "la Movida," of the young democracy, of liberal and anti-Franco attitudes. They are evidence of what in psychology is known as "labeling theory," defined in the words of Andrew M. Colman

As a self-fulfilling prophecy, profoundly influencing that person's behavior. [. . .] a person who becomes aware of the label begins to play the role of a mentally ill person, at first inadvertently and later often involuntarily, and this can have a profound influence. (409)

The labels of the youth in *Laberinto de pasiones* are those of "traumatized" and "repressed" by the Franco regime, leading them to exhibit behaviors that represent an extreme, and consequently limited reaction to the dictatorship of Franco, not because they consider themselves victims of trauma but rather because they simply represent the image of a happy, exuberant, and carefree Spain that ignores the trauma of the Franco dictatorship. In this respect, Alaska (Olvido Gara), the well-known singer of "la Movida" Spain, comments that

En el 85 [. . .] periodistas extranjeros [. . .] venían buscando a los españoles de después de Franco. Para Pedro sí tenía un significado un antes y un después de Franco. Para mí no, porque tenía 12 años y jamás fui consciente de que lo que hacía no lo hubiera podido hacer equis años antes. (372)

Other youths of "la Movida" -including Pedro Almodóvar, as Alaska notes- were aware of a before and an after in Franco's death, and they lived "la Movida" with an attitude of "reactionary amnesia", whether conscious of it or not. In the case of the youth in *Laberinto de pasiones*, this selective amnesia coincides with the time of Franco's death, effectively blocking from memory events that took place prior to his passing. This selectivity supposes a limited definition of Spanish sexual identities in the post-Franco period. In the following pages, I will analyze the representation of the pathological sexual identities of Spanish youth in Almodóvar's *Laberinto de pasiones* as a result of what I term the "reactionary amnesia

effect", focusing on sexuality and including its linguistic and aesthetic dimensions within the context of the Spain of the transition.

The characters in *Laberinto de pasiones* are presented as youths traumatized by Francoist censorship, which undoubtedly conditions their sexual behaviors. In reality, the youth of the time acted as a catalyst for the transition towards democracy. In the words of John Hooper,

The PSOE did not need to promise to change anything because its voters were already convinced that they were going to change everything. Just by being who they were —young men and women unencumbered by the intellectual baggage and ballast of a totalitarian past— they would be able to bring about a revolution in Spanish society when they applied to the nation's affairs attitudes regarded as normal in the rest of democratic Europe. (52)

It happens, however, that in a society controlled by the censorship of dictatorship for thirty-six years, as was the case of Spain, it is impossible to assimilate overnight to a democratic regime and all it brings with it. This can be appreciated clearly in the sexual attitudes of the youth in *Laberinto de pasiones*, who quickly assimilate to the form of new-found freedoms, but not to their content. It is for this reason that Juan Luis Cebrián defines "la Movida" as "un fenómeno cultural tan pendiente de la fachada que se ha olvidado de construir la casa" (4). We will see how these "fachada" identities are represented in the film.

We should remember that the film begins with a scene in Madrid's Rastro. In this scene appears the character Sexi who fixes her gaze on the crotch of all the men she encounters as they walk by, including that of Riza Niro. He is an Iranian character who, being the son of the Emperor of Tehran, is *incognito* in Madrid. In the next scene we see Riza at a patio of a bar in Madrid examining a newspaper title that reads: "El bioginecólogo español Doctor de la Peña logra por primera vez la reproducción asexual de seis periquitos genéticamente idénticos". This is followed by a shot that introduces the character Fabio, who is at the same patio drinking and snorting a substance with a girlfriend who is dressed in leather and with orange hair in imitation of Alaska. The first words of Fabio -played by the actor Fabio McNamara- are essential to

understanding the representation not only of his democratic identity, but also that of all the characters in *Laberinto de pasiones*: "Sin dinero, nena, no chica, no tate, no vicio, no rímel. ¡Estoy histérica! Voy a esnifar un poquito de esmalte. ¡Aaaah! [. . .] ¡Qué overdose!"

These first scenes reveal the key to the reaction of the film's youth to the Francoist trauma, that being a post-Franco "overdose". In the Spain of "la Movida," again in the words of McNamara, "lo principal era la autodestrucción, el pasoterío, el trasnochar, la degeneración, el vicio, follar cuanto más mejor, meterse todas las drogas que se pudiera" (318). So it is that we see in *Laberinto de pasiones* how Sexi is a nymphomaniac; Riza is not only *incognito* in Madrid but also in terms of his own sexuality, which remains enigmatic even for him right up to the end of the film; Doctor de la Peña -Sexi's father- defines himself as an asexual being until he goes to bed with Queti; Susana, in spite of being a psychologist, is herself a psychological case; and Fabio is a transvestite who takes everything to the extreme in an "overdose."² This is not surprising, especially if we keep in mind that for the homosexual, as Fernando Díaz-Plaja points out,

Durante cuarenta años ya el nombre fue "tabú" y no hablemos del hecho. El homosexual, al que sobran en español nombres peyorativos que aplicarles -marica, maricón, bujarrón, sodomita- al ser detenido antes de aplicarle la ley de "vagos y maleantes", resultaba un discriminado social que en algunos casos incluso era agredido físicamente. (120)

In the case of Sexi, the presentation of her nymphomania symbolizes the pathology that affected all Spaniards of the transition, in as much as all had to struggle with their past and their memory in order to define themselves. In the film, Sexi starts seeing a psychologist -a self-proclaimed "Lacanian"- named Susana for help because, as her father says, she has "una manía con la luz del día". This phobia to the light of day is a direct reference to Madrid's "Movida" of the eighties, the

² These sexual behaviors underscore the traumas of Francoist censorship, which Oscar Caballero explains as follows: "Durante más de treinta años la anatomía de los españoles y de las españolas no ha llegado oficialmente, por abajo, más allá de los muslos, y, por arriba, no más lejos de las clavículas" (17).

protagonist of which was the night. In her therapy sessions with Susana, Sexi complains "¡ay el sol! ¡El sol de España!" in an overt allusion to her traumatic past. That past is symbolized in the flashback that follows this scene. In it we see Sexi as a child at the beach who, after being rejected by her father and by a young Riza, turns to nymphomania as a means of gaining male attention and power, as revealed when a group of boys on the beach ask her, "oye, ¿quieres jugar con nosotros al marido y a la mujer?" and she responds with, "sí, seré la mujer de todos". In this sense, "el sol de España" symbolizes the Francoist past come to accountability in the present. Sexi emerges in this manner as a young fatherless woman trying to find her own sexual identity in post-Franco Spain. This paternal orphanhood is two-fold: on the one hand, it alludes to the death of Franco as the father of all Spaniards under his dictatorship, and, on the other, to Doctor de la Peña's neglect of his daughter, relegating him to the status of a father in the biological sense only and nothing more.

Susana diagnoses Sexi's problem as follows:

Tú odias al sol porque estás enamorada de él, ¡muy enamorada!
 ¡Y te tiras a todo bicho viviente a ver si reacciona y se entera de
 que existes! ¡Pero tu padre está ciego, completamente ciego!

As previously noted, Susana proclaims herself a "Lacanian" psychologist, and her diagnosis of Sexi accordingly coincides with the ideas of Jacques Lacan. In his work, the French psychologist was influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure and Sigmund Freud. From his reading of the former Lacan derived the concept of the "other," rooted in the relationships of semantic dichotomies which define every being. According to his view, every being -the "one"- is defined in opposition to another -the "other"- which provides a clarifying contrast. Thus, Sexi would be the "one" who opposes and is defined by difference with the "other," that being the model of the submissive and sexually repressed Francoist woman. From Freud, Lacan inherits the concept of the "Oedipal complex" and, in the female case, that which is known as the "Electra complex," defined as the unconscious desire of a daughter for her father and the consequent desire for the death of her mother. As Susana explains to Sexi, "tú odias al sol porque te identificas con él, porque estás

enamorada de él, ¡muy enamorada!” Just as with Sexi’s paternal orphanhood, her Electra complex is also two-fold in as much as her unconscious desire is for both her father and for the figure of Franco. In this sense, *Laberinto de pasiones* can be considered a psychodrama, given the emphasis on the exploration of sexuality and of the subconscious through its characters, especially through Sexi.

The Electra complex can be described with the Freudian notion of “penis envy,” which is not a matter of physical envy but rather of the power which masculinity represents. As Raman Selden reminds us,

En el sistema de Lacan, el ‘falo’ (no el pene, sino su símbolo) constituye el significante privilegiado que contribuye a que todos los significantes completen la unidad con sus significados. En el reino simbólico, el falo es el rey. (200-201)

Sexi’s envy in *Laberinto de pasiones* is phallic envy: Sexi desires the power presented by the Franco male figure and the greater sexual freedom which Spanish males enjoyed under the dictatorship in contrast with women, despite the repression. It is for this reason that, after the double rejection by her father and by Riza on the beach, Sexi becomes a nymphomaniac.³

It is ironic that Susana, the psychologist, should be the person charged with helping Sexi with her nymphomania, since she herself is burdened with problems pertaining to her own sexuality. As a sexual obsessive who does not accept “no” for an answer, she confesses to Sexi from the start that “¡quiero tirarme a tu padre!” and she constantly pursues Doctor de la Peña to comic extremes. For example, after being rejected over the telephone, Susana one day follows Doctor de la Peña in the street, who upon seeing her greets her with “Hola, Susana. ¡Qué casualidad!” But she does not waste time getting to the point with, “¡Qué va! ¡De casualidad nada! ¡He venido a verle!” and, after much insistence, convinces him to have coffee at a nearby restaurant, where the dialogue continues as follows:

³ In addition, she openly rejects Francoist notions of femininity like fertility. When the Empress tells her “¿sabes que gracias a tu padre ya soy fértil?,” she responds with “¿Fértil? ¿Y para qué?”

SUSANA. ¡He venido a hablarle de sexo! ¡Quiero acostarme contigo!

DOCTOR. Bueno, mire, le voy a hablar claro: nunca me ha interesado el sexo, ni siquiera cuando era joven. Hay algo sucio, repugante en la unión de dos cuerpos. Precisamente por eso me he dedicado a trabajar en la inseminación artificial.

SUSANA. ¿Pero cómo, cómo una persona tan, tan elegante, tan sobria, con esa mirada tan sugestiva, con esa voz, puede decir semejantes tonterías? ¡Eso es porque no has jodido como Dios manda!

DOCTOR (avergonzado). ¡Pero por favor!

SUSANA. Te puedo demostrar que estás equivocado. (cogiéndole las manos) Díme, dime, cuéntame.

DOCTOR. Por favor, Susana.

SUSANA. ¿Hay algo, hay algo que te gusta? ¿Tienes alguna especialidad en la cama?

DOCTOR. Por favor, Susana.

SUSANA. Cuéntame, cuéntame. Yo soy psicóloga. Puedes, puedes confiar en mí. Yo no soy escrupulosa.

DOCTOR. ¡Camarero, la nota por favor!

SUSANA. ¡A mí me gusta todo! Con toda la confianza, ¿eh? ¿Verdad que sí?

DOCTOR (levantándose para irse tras pagar al camarero). Bueno, creo que ya hemos hablado bastante.

Just as in the case of Sexi, Susana demonstrates both phallic envy and a sexuality which manifests itself in a compulsive pursuit of men who pique her interest. This pathology is underscored by the fact that Doctor de la Peña, instead of being the "Iberian male" promoted by the Franco regime, defines himself as an asexual being, and it is not until he goes to bed with Queti, a woman he believes to be his daughter, that his sexual identity is recovered.

Queti has herself been repeatedly raped by her own father who, having been abandoned by his wife Remedios, confuses the two.⁴ In this

⁴ Just like Sexi and Susana, Remedios represents a threat to the image of "ángel del hogar" from Francoist Spain. Not only does she flee the home and be unfaithful to her husband, but she also has

way an incestuous relationship is produced which culminates in an exchange of sexual identities between Sexi and Queti. The latter has always been a fan of Sexi and her band, and, with her support, decides to leave her father and undergo plastic surgery with the aim of looking as much like Sexi as possible and beginning a new life. This false feminism of Queti goes along with the "fachada" identities of "la Movida" earlier alluded to, since Queti is more interested in the form than in the content of what it means to be a woman in democratic Spain. She thus becomes a woman who modifies her body to conform to the dictates of feminine beauty of the moment (i.e., Sexi in Spain of the 80's), which, ironically, contradicts mainstream feminist discourse on the female body, which rejects the idea of a normative femininity. She is what I will here call the "facade woman" ("mujer fachada") who also shows up in other films such as *Acción mutante* (1993) by Álex de la Iglesia (in the character of Patricia Orujo) and *La mujer más fea del mundo* (1999) by Miguel Bardem (with the character of Lola Otero), just to name a few⁵.

After being operated upon, "fachada" Queti goes to a bar with Sexi, where both go to the bathroom to change clothes. At this moment the viewer is presented with two mirrors, one reflecting Queti and the other reflecting Sexi, both with an identical physical form. This shot is reminiscent of Lacan's mirror stage, which he defines in his essay "The Mirror Stage" as a stage prior to the subject's identity recognition in opposition to the "other." Therefore, in the mirror stage, when the child sees him/herself in the mirror, the mirror does not return a true reflective image but rather a *méconnaissance* or an erroneous recognition of his/her identity. In Lacan's words:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation -and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopedic- and,

the audacity to return to the arms of her husband after being left by her lover, saying, "¡carriño, he vuelto! ¡No podía vivir sin tí!"

⁵ For more information on the representation of women in these films, see *Novela y cine de ciencia ficción española contemporánea: una reflexión sobre la humanidad*.

lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity.
(4)

It is for this reason that Queti, once physically and mentally transformed, and Sexi, having exchanged her psychological identity with Queti, do not see themselves when looking in the mirror but rather who they have become: Queti no longer the submissive Francoist woman who allows herself to be abused by her father, and Sexi no longer the sufferer of post-Franco nymphomania.

Sexi's initial reactionary nymphomaniacal behavior as the means by which she finds her sexual identity runs parallel to the behavior of Riza, who himself experiments with men until he meets Sexi. In his own words to Sexi, "hasta que te conocí me gustaban los tíos. Tú me has hecho olvidarlos pero mi pasado me atormentaba." This reminds us of a previous comment Sexi had made to the Empress, "el amor de Riza me ha redimido." As the son of the Emperor of Tehran, Riza not only suffers the pressures of social status but also, as so happened with Sexi with respect to her father, suffers from an Oedipal complex toward his mother. That complex leads to sexual relations between Riza and the Empress, which symbolize a departure from the Lacanian concept of "the name of the father," since this concept alludes to the symbolic order and to the set of rules that regulate desire. In this case the father figure, as in the case of Sexi, is dual: it represents both Franco and his biological father, the Emperor of Tehran. Thus, through this break with Lacanian thought, Riza achieves the *jouissance* that fills the void or the *manque* of the social and sexual order established by "the name of the father".

Riza's rebellion toward the father figure is manifested in his homosexual experiences. In *Laberinto de pasiones* he first has sexual relations with Fabio, then with Sadec, and finally with the singer from the group "Ellos". His relations with the first are fundamental to understanding the linguistic aspect of the reactionary sexual identities of the film, which to a lesser degree appear in the characters of Sexi, Susana and Queti⁶.

It is important to keep in mind that in the film Fabio is played by Fabio McNamara who, besides having been an artist during "la Movida,"

⁶ We should remember, for example, the moment when Queti, as naturally as can be, asks Sexi about Riza: "¿y qué tal folla?"

formed part of a musical duo with Almodóvar himself. The two produced punk-glitter rock songs in the same comic style as that sung by the Fabio character along with Almodóvar himself in *Laberinto de pasiones*. In this sense, Fabio McNamara is in reality playing himself and Almodóvar appears in a similarly self-acknowledging cameo in the film. In an interview with Almodóvar published in 1987, Marsha Kinder points out how, at the end of the 80's, this musical atmosphere continued in the streets of Madrid: "This 'musical comedy' (for which Almodóvar himself wrote and performed some of the wildest songs) is still running on weekends as a midnight cult movie in Madrid" (35). In the film Almodóvar appears dressed in a black leather jacket and black hose which contrast with the red of his lipstick. Fabio appears in a long bright gold glitter-style dress with a slit along the right side that reveals his bare leg, his lips also painted red with lipstick. Matching belts and black sunglasses complete their outfits. The lyrics of the song are telling:

One, one plus one!
 Two, solo tú!
 Three, [...]
 Four, [. . .]
 Five, Jackson Five!
 Six, Kiss my Sex!
 [. . .]
 Cocaína, itonifica!
 Heroína, ite da síndrome!
 Marihuana, icomo loca!
 Dexedrina, ite enloquece!
 Sosegón, ialucina! [. . .]

Three factors are noticeable in the words to this song with respect to the sexual identities of "la Movida:" 1) the absence of Francoist censorship makes possible a freedom of expression of all things related to sexual themes (i.e. "Six, Kiss my Sex!"); 2) the drug culture related to the sexual freedom of "la Movida" is apparent; and 3) the influence of English -used for the expression of sexual matters or not- is a direct consequence of Franco's death and Spain's opening to international influences. These three factors are not exclusive to this scene in the film, but rather are

visible from the very outset of the film, as observed earlier. Fabio's first words attest to it: "¡Estoy histérica!" Voy a esnifar un poquito de esmalte. [. . .] ¡Qué overdose!" And he goes on to say: "¡qué síndrome! ¡Alcohol por un tubo! ¡Oooh, pásame el lipstick, querida!" And later he sends a note to Riza, who is seated but a few meters away at the same establishment. The note says: "SI, ME GUXTARIA HACERTE PHELIZ (taylor) EXTA TARDE". Again, these words assume a reaction to Francoist monolingual Castilian Spain. As we can conclude from these words, the lack of accent marks, the poor use of capital and small letters, the spelling errors and the reference to an American actress are clear testimony to the important role language played in the explosion of post-Franco sexual identities in the 80's. The irreverence to acceptable Francoist sexualities goes hand in hand with the irreverence towards Castilian Spanish imposed by Franco as Spain's "only" language, as the Catholic Kings had done five centuries before. Thus, the freedom to talk about sexuality and to do so through a linguistic break with the past creates a dual reaction to the censoring of sexuality by Francoist Spain, and besides its manifestation in music and the personal sphere this double linguistic-sexual break is clearly manifested in film through *Laberinto de pasiones*. Fabio is an actor in pornographic films, and, while working on a scene for a horror film under the direction of Almodóvar himself -representing the director's first on-screen appearance in the film- is instructed as follows:

¡Goza, goza, goza más! ¡Mírale a él con ojos lúbricos! [. . .]
 ¡Deseas tanto esa broca! Sí, sí, trata de lamer, trata de lamerla. [. . .]
 ¡Te gusta, te gusta su sabor! [. . .] Dí "¡me lo merezco!" Dí
 "¡soy lo peor! ¡Soy lo peor!" [. . .] Sigue fumando y gozando. Sí,
 sí, te excita. Te excita sexualmente.

Minutes later, when Riza comes to visit Fabio and asks him about his "look," Fabio responds "es mi look para una foto porno sexy killer."⁷ Again we notice the double linguistic-sexual break, along with elements

⁷ This linguistic freedom, as it refers to pornography, also shows up at the beginning of the film, when Sexi invites some men to an orgy-style party, telling them that "habrá música, alcohol, videos porno, drogas. . ."

of a reflexive cinema through the allusion to film within a film and the irony of an actor in dual roles -Fabio acting as an actor in the porno film while simultaneously being an actor in *Laberinto de pasiones*- which, alongside the previously mentioned psychodrama elements, create a space for reflection on the performance of the "la Movida" sexual identities.

Along with the linguistic aspect of sexual freedom, the aesthetic factor ought to be considered as well. In terms of aesthetics, I refer as much to the physical appearance of the characters in *Laberinto de pasiones* as to the aesthetics of the film sets. As previously mentioned, the aesthetic of the 80's postmodern revolution is clearly exhibited in characters such as Fabio and Almodóvar himself. Sexi and, after her identity transformation, Queti are other key characters in this sense. Far from simple, Sexi always appears dressed in very bright colors that draw the viewer's attention because, as Fabio himself says, "lo sencillo nunca fue moderno. Lo moderno siempre es futurista. El futurismo siempre es glitter". Among Sexi's outfits we find a red and cream striped shirt with a red miniskirt and black fishnet hose and a short black dress with orange flounces. Her shoes are black high heels, and her look is completed by red lips with short, curly hair of the type common in the period. The strong colors and overly short clothes proclaim sexual freedom from Francoist Spain and the absence of censorship. These are the sexualities of glitter and glamour that "la Movida" of the 80's explored. This same atmosphere of glitter and glamour is found in two of the sets which are the most representative of the film: the Chueca section of Madrid and Sexi's bedroom in her father's house. The Chueca backdrop is presented to us as the Empress traverses the homosexual sector in search of Riza. Though she does not find him, she runs across Said, several couples, and various homosexual men whose physical appearances simultaneously symbolize both the glamorous and the dangerous nature of the glitter culture, namely the wildly colored clothes and sexual freedoms of the Chueca characters set against the male prostitution and prominent drug use that accompanied the sexual liberation. Sexi's bedroom, on the other hand, represents the beauty and sexual fascination of glamour. It is a singular combination of rose, blue, and white walls with sexual scenes and motifs, among which a man's penis with two drops of semen on the floor stands out. Queti, entering the room for the first time, exclaims

"¡pero bueno, qué monada de paredes! ¡Qué colores más divinos! ¡Pero cómo quedan! ¡Ay, qué combinación más increíble, ¿no?!" As we see, alongside language, aesthetics is another instrument Almodóvar uses to explain the sexual revolution of "la Movida." It is an aesthetic that is postmodern, and, at the same time, *camp*, with this term being understood according to Patrick Garlinger's view "as a sensibility, as a style, as a desire for certain icons or figures" which in reality "bespeaks something other than a merely conscious, self-motivated rejection of high art and canonical taste or of normative modes of gender and sexuality" (107).

All of these qualities make *Laberinto de pasiones* what Alaska, in agreement with Juan Luis Cebrián, calls a "subproducto cultural" (377). According to Alaska, with a "subproducto cultural,"

No pretendes exactamente ninguna reflexión, sino que sea un subproducto de la cultura destinado, por una parte, a que lo consuman las masas –sin saber que lo están consumiendo– y, al mismo tiempo, a una minoría que sabe conscientemente lo que está consumiendo. Lo que a mí me encanta de los productos basura es que todo el mundo accede a ellos si no les da una segunda lectura, mientras que si hay una segunda lectura descubre una lucidez que muchas veces influye más en el pensamiento de la gente que la cultura oficial. (377-78)

Laberinto de pasiones, can, in fact, be consumed as just one more entertainment product, or alternatively it can be studied more deeply through a second reading by means of which we discover that the sexual identities of post-Franco Spain represent a culminating moment in the country's history and, at the same time, should be understood within their sociopolitical context as a reaction to Francoist censorship under the guise of a reactionary amnesia. Following Franco's death, just as Queti, Spain needed plastic surgery, and this manifested itself in the sexual terms of "la Movida" resulting in a Spain that, far from assimilating the substance of democracy, instead focused on the "fachada" of democracy. This presented a Spain of, to borrow the words of Fabio from the film, the "reina de Halloween". As such, she celebrated the death of the dictator to the rhythm of disco, punk, and glitter rock music, and, above

all, with a sexual explosion in a world of alcohol and drugs. It is the Spain of excess. In the words of Fabio, "¡qué overdose!"

Translation: Richard K. Curry

Works consulted

- Alaska, Olvido. "Jekyll y Hyde" en *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la movida madrileña*. Ed. José Luis Galero. Madrid: Árdora, 1991.
- Almodóvar, Pedro. "Pleasure and the New Spanish Mentality: A Conversation with Pedro Almodóvar". Por Marsha Kinder. *Film Quarterly* 41.1 (1987): 33-44.
- . "Solo en la plaza" en *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la movida madrileña*. Ed. José Luis Galero. Madrid: Árdora, 1991.
- Caballero, Óscar. *El sexo del franquismo*. Madrid: Cambio 16, 1977.
- Cebrián, Juan. "Políticos y posmodernos" en *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la movida madrileña*. Ed. José Luis Galero. Madrid: Árdora, 1991.
- Coldman, Andrew. *Dictionary of Psychology*. Oxford: OUP: 2006.
- Díaz-Plaja, Fernando. *La España que sobrevive*. Washington, D.C.: GUP, 1997.
- El Calentito*. Dir. Chus Gutiérrez. Telespan y Estudios Picasso, 2005.
- Garlinger, Patrick. "All About Agrado, or the Sincerity of Camp in Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre*" *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 5.1 (2004): 97-111.
- Hooper, John. *The New Spaniards*. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Laberinto de pasiones*. Dir. Pedro Almodóvar. Cinevista, 1982.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative in the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience". *Ecrits: The first complete edition in English*. Trans. translated by Bruce Fink et al. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.
- McNamara, Fabio. "La ley de la calle" en *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la movida madrileña*. Ed. José Luis Galero. Madrid: Árdora, 1991.
- Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*. Dir. Pedro Almodóvar.

Laurenfilm, 1988.

Sánchez-Conejero, Cristina. *Novela y cine de ciencia ficción española contemporánea: una reflexión sobre la humanidad*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press. Forthcoming.

Selden, Raman. *La teoría literaria contemporánea*. Barcelona: Ariel, 2004.