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Masculinities at Work: Men, Masculinities, and Employment in the  
Spanish Popular Comedies of the Late-Francoist and Transition Eras

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

Renee Patricia Rivera

2020

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Masculinities at Work: Men, Masculinities, and Employment in the  
Spanish Popular Comedies of the Late-Francoist and Transition Eras

by

Renee Patricia Rivera

Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor María Teresa de Zubiaurre, Chair

This dissertation examines the relationship between masculinities and work as it is represented in the Spanish popular comedies of the 1970s. In such films, work represents an important site of tension, not only in the wider struggle in Spain between tradition and modernity, but also in the context of the nation's changing economic landscape in the late-Francoist period, which saw capitalist reforms, the development of the tourism industry, and the rise of consumer culture. In the context of late Francoism, particularly, with the advent of capitalist reforms, film directors and screenwriters of the 1970s utilized formulaic plots with work-related narrative conflicts as a convenient means to explore the consequences and effects of Spain's timid economic and social liberalization. Through my examination of eight popular comedies, produced between 1970 and 1977, I analyze how the filmmakers of the period engage with the issue of work, through the specific generic framework of the comedy, in order to

interrogate larger structural changes in the national economy, as well as the personal consequences of such transformations at the level of the individual for the Spanish working man.

In the first chapter, I study how Pedro Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* (1972) and *Estoy hecho un chaval* (1977), as well as Mariano Ozores's *Manolo la nuit* (1973) utilize the *españolada*, including the representation of working men who resort to the performance and commodification of an exaggerated *españolidad* ("Spanishness") as a form of employment, in order to call attention to the fundamental ironies underlying Spain's tourism industry in the late-Francoist period. In the second chapter, I consider how Fernando Merino's *Los días de Cabirio* (1971) and *Préstame quince días* (1971) address forms of employment for men, such as *palanquerismo* and *chulismo*, that depend upon the participation of women as active consumers and/or workers in the economic and labor markets, thus, positioning women as an increasingly dominant economic force in Spain's economy. In the third chapter, I examine the representation of performative (homo)sexualities in Ramón (Tito) Fernández's *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970) and *Los novios de mi mujer* (1972), which present homosexuality as a potential asset in the world of work, despite the Franco regime's condemnation of homosexuality. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I explore the figure of the overworked and underemployed Spanish working man in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, films that call attention to the work-leisure relationship. In doing so, such films elucidate the increasing influence of capitalist values, such as consumption and productivity, which directly contradict the Francoist authoritarian cultural project.

The dissertation of Renee Patricia Rivera is approved.

Patricia Arroyo Calderón

Barbara Fuchs

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2020

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## Introduction

Until fairly recently, critics and scholars of Spanish cinema frequently dismissed the popular comedies of the 1970s as the by-product of what was at the time still a nascent (and, significantly, imported) form of capitalism, however, with clear consumerist leanings. In large part due to the genre's association with the popular and the commercial, critics and censors alike disparaged the popular comedy of the 1970s for what was perceived as a prioritization of commercial interests over aesthetic or ideological ambitions. Consequently, the genre was often regarded by the state censorship apparatus as the result of “el deseo de los productores españoles de ‘desbancar las taquillas’”<sup>1</sup> (“the desire of Spanish producers to sell out theaters”)<sup>2</sup> and by scholars of Spanish cinema as “un cine chabacano, listo para ser consumido por el gran público” (“tasteless cinema, ready to be consumed by the public at large”) (Caparrós Lera, *El cine español* 57), some even going so far as to interpret the more subversive elements of such films, not as an indication of any denouncement of Francoist social and political mores, but rather as “una fachada de pretendida liberalización de tabúes [...] [que] explotó al espectador con los recursos más ramplones” (“a façade of a supposed liberalization from taboos [...] [that] exploited its spectator through the use of tacky gimmicks”) (Caparrós Lera, *El cine español* 58). In this way, despite—or perhaps, precisely because of—the growing economic might of the domestic popular film industry, which attracted upwards of nearly four million viewers in the case of films such as *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Ramón [Tito] Fernández, 1970),<sup>3</sup> the top-grossing comedies of

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1 See “Nota para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos,” dated October 16, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

2 Unless otherwise stated, all translations provided throughout this dissertation are my own.

3 See Table 16.2 (“Top-Grossing Spanish Films, 1966-2009”) in Palacio and Vernon 2013.

the period suffered from “a lack of cultural legitimacy among certain cultural elites” (Palacio and Vernon 476), especially when compared to the “combative cinema” (Besas 46) of *auteur* directors such as Rafael Azcona, Juan Antonio Bardem, Luis García Berlanga, Luis Buñuel, Marco Ferreri, and Carlos Saura.

The critical distaste—if not explicit neglect—of the Spanish popular comedy exemplified in the works of scholars such as José Enrique Monterde, who have characterized such cinema as “un cine implícitamente o explícitamente oficialista” (“an implicitly or explicitly pro-government cinema”) (“Del nuevo cine” 60-61), of interest purely for its “valor sociológico” (“sociological value”) (*Veinte años* 32), effectively contributed to a long-held understanding of such films as lacking in “el ‘contenido profundo’ del cine de autor” (“the profound content of *auteur* cinema”) (Cáceres García, “Masculinidad disidente” 492) and serving only to reinforce the persistent influence of ultraconservative mores, despite dictator Francisco Franco’s waning health from the late 1960s until his death in 1975. Although many of the popular comedies of the period do, in fact, contain elements that seemingly reflect the “Catholic national-patriotic imaginary” (Laudo and Vilanou 442) characteristic of Francoist discourse, especially with respect to matters of gender and sexuality, traditional criticism’s refusal, particularly, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, to explore the significance of Spanish popular comedy outside of its sociological and/or sociohistorical value has overlooked the genre’s profound engagement with the changing economic, political, and social landscape of late-Francoist Spain. In short, the prevailing assumption that such films are merely “ínfimos productos comerciales” (“commercial products of poor quality”) (Monterde, “Del nuevo cine” 62) ultimately fails to acknowledge popular cinema’s greater relationship to its context and audience.

In response to these critical oversights, since the mid-1990s, the Spanish popular comedy, and mainstream Spanish culture in general, have begun to attract increasingly serious and systematic investigation, thanks in large part to the work of British Peninsularists engaged with the field of cultural studies, such as Barry Jordan and Jo Labanyi, in the company of Justin Crumbaugh and Tatjana Pavlovic,<sup>4</sup> whose work has effectively repositioned Spanish mass culture, especially popular cinema, as an important site of not only ideological work but also of critical engagement with the social and cultural developments of the period, including the development of mass tourism and Spain's national embrace of consumerism. In taking up comedy, with a keen interest in the highly formulaic and often repetitive techniques and stereotypes characteristic of the genre, critics like Jordan have effectively questioned the claim that commercial Spanish cinema "was somehow disconnected from society, unable to reflect social change, unresponsive to its audiences and merely a supine mouthpiece of the [Franco] regime" ("Revisiting the 'comedia sexy'" 169). On the contrary, Jordan contends that the popular comedies of the 1970s, particularly those directed by the likes of Ramón (Tito) Fernández, Pedro Lazaga, Fernando Merino, and Mariano Ozores, provided unique insights into the dominant anxieties and concerns of the Spanish everyman of the period:

On the whole, these films were obsessed with sexual gratification (or more accurately, its denial) and with variations on the theme of male sexual repression. At the same time, however, and inflected with their caricatured heroes, sleazy plots and toilet humour, they also addressed a series of real social and moral concerns which were of increasing importance in the late 1960s and 1970s in Spain. These included, inevitably, the consequences of (male) sexual repression, but also adultery, homosexuality, prostitution,

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Crumbaugh 2003, Jordan 1995, Jordan 2002, Jordan 2004, Labanyi 1997, Labanyi and Pavlovic 2013, Labanyi and Zunzunegui 2009, Pavlovic 2003.

adolescent sex, family morality and the awesome gap between a Spain “en vías de desarrollo”<sup>5</sup> and her industrialized, developed European neighbors. In short, the Iberian sex comedy was a startling index of Spain’s sexual, moral and political underdevelopment and an embarrassing sign of cultural backwardness. (“Genre Cinema” 129)

While Jordan leans into the sexual elements of the so-called Iberian sex comedy, emphasizing the centrality of “the typical, repressed Iberian male,” characterized in large part by a “hugely inflated but constantly frustrated libido” (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 64), the archetypal *macho ibérico* (“Iberian macho”) was also subject to the country’s greater social and economic transformation, which saw migration in search of work (both to the cities and abroad), the gradual increase of women in the labor force, the appearance of new consumer goods in an increasingly capitalist market, as well as Spain’s timid *apertura* (“opening-up”) to the liberal ideologies of its European neighbors, as well as the growing economic and political influence of the United States. More often than not embodied by Alfredo Landa,<sup>6</sup> “the unofficial symbol of the average Spaniard” (Vivancos Álvarez, “Failure to Deliver” 44), the male protagonists of films such as *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, *Los días de Cabirio* (Fernando Merino, 1971), *Préstame quince días* (Fernando Merino, 1971), *Los novios de mi mujer* (Ramón [Tito] Fernández, 1972), *¡No firmes más letras cielo!* (Pedro Lazaga, 1972), *Manolo la nuit* (Mariano Ozores, 1973), *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* (Mariano Ozores, 1974), and *Estoy hecho un chaval* (Pedro Lazaga, 1977) find themselves wrestling not only with taboo sexual practices

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<sup>5</sup> While Jordan’s text does not include an English translation of “en vías de desarrollo,” his use of such terminology implies an understanding of Spain at the time as a developing or undeveloped country in comparison to other European countries.

<sup>6</sup> According to Ernesto Pérez Morán, throughout the late-Francoist period, Landa participated in sixty productions, forty-one of which reached over a million viewers (20).

(adultery, premarital sex, etc.) but, significantly, with a changing labor market. In addition to issues of sex and sexuality, these films address themes directly relevant to the Spanish working man, such as employment in the tourism industry, immigration for work, the increasing presence of women in the labor market, sex work, unemployment and underemployment, and even the possibility of employment in traditionally female-dominated industries. Consequently, these films's respective explorations of the world of work, which take place against the backdrop of the nation's economic transformation into a system more closely resembling free market consumer capitalism, serve to highlight the centrality of work as a determining factor in the male protagonists's sense of self.

Drawing on the extensive corpus of popular comedies produced in Spain throughout the 1970s, this dissertation examines the relationship between masculinities and work as it is represented in eight films released during the period, a study that has not yet been undertaken despite increasing critical interest in the late-Francoist comedy and Spanish masculinities. In doing so, my objective is to scrutinize the representation of work as an important site of tension, not only in the wider struggle in Spain between tradition and modernity but also in the context of the nation's changing economic landscape, including capitalist reforms, the development of the tourism industry, and the rise of consumer culture. These changes were, in effect, directly opposed to the isolationist, anti-consumerist ethos of early Francoism and, Mary T. Hartson reminds us, "posed a most serious and specific challenge to the way that masculinity had been represented and lived up to that time" (8). In contrast to the image of "el perfecto español" ("the perfect Spaniard"), characterized by his "imponente e impostada presencia física" ("impressive and imposing physical presence"), as well as "un indeleble patriotismo" ("an indelible

patriotism”) (Pérez Morán 19),<sup>7</sup> the male protagonist of the popular comedies of the 1970s finds himself at the intersection of largely conflicting social and cultural influences, namely, the increasingly dominant influence of foreign capitalist mores, which prioritize commodification, consumption, efficiency, and productivity, often to the detriment of the protagonist’s financial stability and, in some instances, at the expense of leisure and the ideal of self-gratification so frequently associated with the genre of comedy in contemporary Spain. In the context of late Francoism, particularly, with the advent of capitalist reforms, film directors and screenwriters of the 1970s utilized formulaic plots with work-related narrative conflicts as a convenient means to explore the consequences and effects of Spain’s timid economic and social liberalization. For directors such as Ramón (Tito) Fernández, Pedro Lazaga, Fernando Merino, and Mariano Ozores, four of the most prolific directors of the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>8</sup> the general issue of work serves as a vehicle to address questions such as the potential commodification of Spanish masculinities and “Spanishness” in general (particularly, in light of the nation’s booming tourism industry), the increasing presence of women in the larger economy (both as participants in the labor market and as consumers), the stability of the traditional male breadwinner model, the work-leisure relationship, and even the nature of the domestic labor market. Through my examination of eight films produced between 1970 and 1977, in conversation with original scripts and censorship documents held at the Archivo General de la Administración, I analyze how the filmmakers of the period engage with the issue of work, through the specific generic framework of the comedy, in order to interrogate larger structural changes in the national

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<sup>7</sup> Here Pérez Morán points to Manolo Escobar as an example of “el perfecto español” (“the perfect Spaniard”).

<sup>8</sup> According to Caperrós Lera, between 1965-1972, Pedro Lazaga produced forty-one films, Mariano Ozores produced twenty-three, Ramón (Tito) Fernández produced eleven, and Fernando Merino produced eleven (*El cine español* 240).

economy, as well as the personal consequences of such transformations at the level of the individual for the Spanish working man.

In Chapter 1, titled ““MADE IN SPAIN’: *Españolada* as Employment and the Commodification of *Españolidad*,” I consider Pedro Lazaga’s *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* (1972) and *Estoy hecho un chaval* (1977), as well as Mariano Ozores’s *Manolo la nuit* (1973), as examples of both meanings of the *españolada*, that is, as works that exaggerate certain characteristics considered to be Spanish, as well as representative of a specific genre of Spanish film, characterized by its mainstream popularity, appropriation of stereotypical images of “Spanishness,” and generally unfavorable critical reception. In addition to falling under the generic classification of the *españolada*, Lazaga and Ozores’s respective films, significantly, represent working men that resort to the performance and commodification of an exaggerated *españolidad* (“Spanishness”) as a form of employment for explicitly economic motives. In all three films, the performance and commodification of “Spanishness,” specifically Spanish masculinities, is carried out specifically for the consumption and enjoyment of a non-Spanish, predominantly female, tourist consumer public. In doing so, *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, *Manolo la nuit*, and *Estoy hecho un chaval* call attention to the fundamental ironies underlying Spain’s tourism industry in the late-Francoist period, which gave in to a quintessentially capitalist impulse to construct and promote an image of Spain and, by extension, Spanish masculinities, as a site of folkloric intrigue and sexual activity, despite the Franco regime’s denouncement of consumerist culture.

In Chapter 2, titled “How to Live Off of Women: The *Palanquero* and the *Chulo*,” I consider the figures of the *palanquero* and the *chulo* as they are represented in Fernando Merino’s *Los días de Cabirio* (1971) and *Préstame quince días* (1971). In contrast to Chapter 1,

which considers the consumption of Spanish masculinities in a more symbolic sense through the tourism industry, my analysis of Fernando Merino's films explicitly addresses the commodification and consumption of the Spanish male body and male sexuality through the figure of the *palanquero*, whose principal aim is to seduce foreign women. In the case of *Los días de Cabirio*, the protagonist's participation in such work is motivated by a combination of unfavorable economic circumstances and his own personal fantasies of sexual gratification. Similarly, though the protagonist of *Préstame quince días* does not participate in the exchange of sexual and/or romantic services as a form of employment, he is, however, largely focused on the ideal of personal gratification, as well as the possibility of living off of women and, thus, negating the necessity of his own participation in the labor market. Despite the film's vastly different narratives, thematically Merino's *Los días de Cabirio* and *Préstame quince días* share a preoccupation with women as an increasingly dominant economic force in Spain's economy with direct implications for the nation's working men.

In Chapter 3, titled "'Coming Out' to Enter: Performative (Homo)sexualities for Career Success," I examine Ramón (Tito) Fernández's *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970) and *Los novios de mi mujer* (1972), both of which feature male protagonists that deliberately cultivate a homosexual working persona in order to actively participate in the fashion and entertainment industries, respectively. While the representation of homosexuality was largely restricted by the censorship apparatus, Fernández's films skirt this issue by portraying heterosexual male characters that merely *present* themselves to others as homosexual (as opposed to self-identifying as homosexual and/or indulging in homosexual sexual practices). In each of these films, a central element of the plot is the male protagonist's deliberate self-presentation to his community as homosexual in order to further his own career and professional ambitions. In both

cases, the appearance of homosexuality, which is ultimately achieved through the protagonist's strategic self-presentation, as well as the legibility of what Alejandro Melero understands as "signs of gayness" ("Gay Men" 1464), come to represent not only a concrete asset in the world of work, particularly in the entertainment and fashion industries, but also a socially sanctioned means of interacting with women in contexts and situations that would otherwise be socially impermissible under Francoism.

Finally, in Chapter 4, titled "Overworked and Underemployed: *Pluriempleo* and the Anxiety of Leisure," I return to Pedro Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, in conversation with Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* (1974), in order to explore what is ultimately an underlying issue in each of the films studied throughout this dissertation: the work-leisure relationship. Lazaga and Ozores's respective films represent working men who, due to unemployment or a lack of full-time employment, resort to multi-employment in order to make a living. These male protagonists are largely motivated by economic factors and/or goals that necessitate a measure of financial stability, goals that often double as indicators of personal and/or career success. Nevertheless, these men, despite, or perhaps because of, working multiple jobs, are not only unable to attain the stability necessary in order to achieve their personal and/or professional goals, but also find themselves increasingly stagnant and lacking in personal fulfillment. In this way, *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* explore the long-term consequences of privileging work and productivity at the expense of leisure. Leisure, in turn, comes to represent the antithesis of work and, by extension, the modern capitalist economy, which encourages overwork and overconsumption.

The films that I study in the following chapters are ultimately a testament to the critical value of the Spanish popular comedy of the 1970s. While the vast majority of the comedies

examined throughout this dissertation are characterized by double entendres, highly formulaic plots, and tacky gimmicks, often culminating in conclusions that seemingly confirm the enduring influence of Francoist ideals concerning gender, sexuality, and male-female relationships, these films also present a particularly vulnerable image of the Spanish working man. While some of the male protagonists in question are seemingly able to achieve at least some semblance of “success” or achievement in the realm of work by the film’s conclusion, often through the act of marriage or the (re)establishment of marital bliss, many of the comedies that I analyze point to enduring financial troubles, the delicate balance of the work-leisure relationship, and even the threat of imminent punishment for offenses committed throughout the film, all of which frame Spain’s economic transformation as a thoroughly gendered experience with contentious moral implications for the Spanish working man.

## Chapter 1: “MADE IN SPAIN”; *Españolada* as Employment and the Commodification of *Españolidad*

This first chapter is grounded in a two-fold understanding of the term *españolada* as both any “[a]cción, espectáculo u obra que exagera ciertos rasgos que se consideran españoles” (“act, performance or work that exaggerates certain characteristics that are considered to be Spanish”) or anything that “en el aire, traje y costumbres parece español” (“in its appearance, dress, and customs appears to be Spanish”) (“Españolado, da”), as well as a specific genre of Spanish film, characterized by its popularity across mainstream Spanish society, appropriation of stereotypical images of Spanish culture, generally unfavorable critical reception (by film critics and Francoist censors alike), and perceived adherence to the dominant values, mores, institutions, and ideologies of the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. With this dual meaning of *españolada* in mind, I examine three films—*¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* (Pedro Lazaga, 1972), *Manolo la nuit* (Mariano Ozores, 1973), and *Estoy hecho un chaval* (Pedro Lazaga, 1977)—all of which fall under the generic classification of the *españolada*, and, significantly, represent working men that resort to the performance and commodification of an exaggerated *españolidad* (“Spanishness”), specifically for the consumption and enjoyment of a non-Spanish, predominantly female, tourist consumer public, as a form of employment with explicitly economic motives. This “Spanishness,” which we might understand as representative of an “esencia hispánica” (“Spanish essence”) (Navarrete Cardero 30), is informed not only by an amorphous “carácter genuinamente español” (“genuinely Spanish character”) (“Españolidad”), but also, as José Luis Navarrete Cardero emphasizes, by “la crítica del momento” (“the criticism of the time”). This “crítica del momento” is characterized by an “actitud subjetiva” (“subjective attitude”) (Navarrete Cardero

29) that, in the case of the popular cinema of the 1970s, finds itself filtered through the official state organs of the Franco regime, specifically, the censorship apparatus under the Department of Cinematography and Theater (later known as the Department of Popular Culture and Performances), housed under the larger umbrella of the Ministry of Information and Tourism.<sup>9</sup>

In this context, Lazaga and Ozores, in their respective films, exploit the double meaning of *españolada*, as well as the larger issue of “Spanishness,” specifically, the question of Spanish masculinity/ies, in order to call attention to the fundamental ironies inherent to Spain’s tourism industry under late Francoism. Despite the Franco regime’s ultraconservative attitudes towards gender and sexuality, as well as the dictatorship’s long-time resistance to capitalism, the nation’s tourism industry sold an image of Spain as a site of folkloric intrigue and sexual activity. In doing so, the tourism industry promoted a quintessentially capitalist impulse that encouraged the consumption by a foreign audience of a thoroughly commodified masculine self based in specific tropes of Spanish masculinity, such as the *bandolero* (“brigand”), the *celtíbero español* (“Spanish Celtiberian”), and the *majo* (or *manolo*).<sup>10</sup> This act of consumption ultimately extends beyond the immediate context of Lazaga and Ozores’s respective films, as the popular appeal of the *españolada* to local (domestic) audiences of the period in turn allowed for the consumption of the very same commodified masculine self by a Spanish audience.

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<sup>9</sup> The Francoist censorship apparatus would later be dismantled under the democratically elected government of Adolfo Suárez (1976-1981). Royal Decree-Law 3071/1977 effectively repealed Franco-era ministerial orders regulating the censorship and rating of films.

<sup>10</sup> While there is no direct translation to English for the terms *majo* and *manolo*, the *Diccionario esencial de la lengua española* defines “manolo” as a “persona de las clases populares de Madrid, que se distinguía por su traje y desenfadado” (“member of Madrid’s popular classes, characterized by their dress and self-assurance”). The *Diccionario de la lengua española* defines “majo” as “en los siglos XVIII y XIX, persona de las clases populares de Madrid que en su porte, acciones y vestidos afectaba libertad y guapeza” (“during the 18th and 19th centuries, a member of Madrid’s popular classes that in their demeanor, actions, and dress embodied freedom and attractiveness”). In this way, the primary characteristics of interest in any general understanding of the figure of the *majo* (or *manolo*) are their association with Madrid’s popular classes within a specific historical context, as well as their characterization as self-assured, free, and attractive.

My analysis of *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* focuses on the film's representation of working men in the tourism industry, which reveals the increasingly dominant influence of consumer capitalism, and emphasizes the Spanish working man's internalization of an overarching capitalist belief system, despite his public denouncement of consumerist culture. The film also considers the shifting responsibilities of the male breadwinner, who finds himself increasingly obligated to provide luxury commodities for his dependents *in addition to* basic necessities. Regarding *Manolo la nuit*, a film also deeply engaged with the tourism industry, I examine the film's portrayal of the protagonist's work in Torremolinos, a municipality on the infamous Costa del Sol, which goes beyond images of "Spanishness" rooted in the nation's popular cultures by absorbing an Orientalist, and thoroughly sexualized, portrait of the country's Moorish and Jewish past into Manolo's *españolada* performance. Although the nature of the protagonist's employment is reduced to a plot device that triggers the film's main narrative conflict (a convoluted marriage dispute), Manolo's work effectively characterizes the sense of Spanish difference inherent to the famed tourism slogan "Spain is Different" as not only sexual in nature but also thoroughly racialized (or, at the very least, ethnicized) and distinctively non-European. Finally, I interpret *Estoy hecho un chaval*, a film released in the early years of Spain's transition to democracy following Franco's death in 1975, as an implicit critique of the greater Spanish nation, which has effectively produced a labor market that is unequally accessible to working men. This inhospitable labor market ultimately necessitates a painful act of self-parody on the part of the Spanish working man, forcing him to take on an exaggerated, decontextualized, and, arguably, feminized masculine self for the delight and consumption of a modern European audience. In this way, Lazaga's film challenges any immediate sense of liberation or optimism that may have characterized the initial years of Spain's transition to democracy by emphasizing

an enduring sentiment of precarity and instability in the Spanish working man's experience of the domestic labor market.

### **1.1 "Spain is Different": Tourism in Late-Francoist Spain**

While in its first decades, the Franco dictatorship adopted an autarkical attitude that resolved to make Spain economically, politically, and culturally self-sufficient by abstaining from participating in the international economic arena, such plans, which included Spain's "withdrawal from the world market, the creation of import substitution industries, and state intervention to supplement the weakness of private capital" (Balfour 266), only further enforced the formidable economic problems facing post-Civil War Spain. After a decade of economic stagnation, inflation, widespread deprivation, and the growth of a black labor market, however, by the 1950s, the nation took its first steps towards abandoning its pretensions of autarky and economic self-sufficiency, a decision motivated in large part by the economic aid it received after signing off on the Pact of Madrid in September 1953, which ended a period of virtual isolation for Spain.<sup>11</sup> These developments, as well as a series of liberal economic policy reforms, substantial foreign aid, and hard currency remittances from Spanish workers abroad, steadily converted Spain's economic structure into one more closely resembling a free market economy, and, thus, ushered in an unprecedented era of industrialization and prosperity.

Coinciding with such efforts to stabilize the nation's economy, the tourism boom, which began in the mid-1950s, marketed Spanish difference to potential tourists and foreign visitors abroad under the slogan "Spain is Different," a campaign "aimed at an economic and ideological

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<sup>11</sup> The 1953 Pact of Madrid comprised three separate executive agreements that pledged the United States to furnish economic and military aid to Spain. The United States, in turn, was permitted to construct and utilize air and naval bases on Spanish territory, including the Naval Station Rota, the Morón Air Base, the Torrejón Air Base, and Zaragoza Air Base.

renovation of the country via tourism” (Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella xi), emphasizing the unique recreational assets of the Mediterranean coastline. Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Minister of Information and Tourism from 1962 to 1969, played a major role in the revitalization of the Spanish tourism industry by leading an initiative that played into the notion of the country’s reputation within Europe as a remote and isolated stepchild in the family of modern European nations as a source of exotic difference, which, in turn, made Spain a place of interest for international tourists. Although this strategy for promoting tourism (and, by extension, the influx of foreign capital) effectively reinforced Spain’s reputation as a traditional, backward nation in service of the cultivation of an image of the country abroad as an exceptional and festive tourist destination due to said difference, the importance of tourism for the Spanish economy, especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s, was substantial and served as a source of foreign exchange, as well as new employment opportunities for Spaniards, especially in the nation’s cities.<sup>12</sup>

The subsequent commodification of Spain as an object of consumption for foreign tourists, as well as the role of the Ministry of Information and Tourism in selling a specific image of the country to potential (cultural) consumers abroad, invited not only the promotion of Spanish sun and sea, but also that of an exaggerated portrait of traditional “Spanishness,” rooted in Romantic and Orientalist stereotypes in circulation since the late medieval and early modern period, present in domestic discussions of Spanish national identity, as well as in accounts of

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, tourism continues to generate the most revenue in Spain. The second most visited country in the world (after France) each year since 2013, more tourists have visited Spain than in the year before. In July 2019, Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism Reyes Maroto expressed optimism that this trend would continue, bringing with it benefits for the Spanish economy: “La tendencia es positiva, buena salud, incremento y record en flujos, mayor rentabilidad y dinamismo del empleo” (“The trend is positive, good health, growth, and record flows, increasing profits, and employment growth” (Salvatierra). The Ministry also predicted that Spain would see 29.6 million tourists (especially from its primary markets, the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as growing markets, such as the United States and China) between July and September 2019, a 1.7 percent increase from the previous year.

Spain written by foreign travelers and tourists.<sup>13</sup> With the popularization of Spain as a tourist destination, the commercialization of Spanish culture, however caricatured, represented a lucrative business venture for Spanish locals, even while such sources of employment apparently necessitated their own self-commodification and self-parody. This phenomenon is underscored in the films *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, *Manolo la nuit*, and *Estoy hecho un chaval*, all of which address issues such as mass tourism to Spain's cities (especially to Madrid, the nation's capital, and cities on the Costa del Sol), the perception of Spain and Spanish culture abroad (particularly, those related to Spanish masculinities and Spanish male sexualities), and the embodied performance of stereotypical tropes of "Spanishness," often based in Andalusian popular culture, for economic benefits (usually by men from Madrid for the delight of a predominantly female foreign audience).

In *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Manolo la nuit*, stereotypical tropes of "Spanishness" and Spanish masculinities, specifically, notions of Spanish male sexualities that characterize Spanish men as exotic (if not primitive) and passionate seducers of (foreign) women,<sup>14</sup> are shamelessly exploited by Spanish working men in order to profit from the country's burgeoning tourism industry, an enterprise that also conveniently represents—particularly, in *Manolo's* case—a convenient sexual outlet for the Spanish man reluctant to comply with the sexually monogamous conventions of marriage. While *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Manolo la nuit*

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<sup>13</sup> While in the Western imaginary, Spain often evokes stereotypes associated with the late 18th century, such as the *maja* (the female equivalent of the *majo*), often assimilated to the figure of the *bailaora* ("female flamenco dancer"), the *bandolero*, the *torero* ("bullfighter"), and bullfighting culture in general, Barbara Fuchs emphasizes the centrality of Moorish culture in "our perception of the nation that emerged in the place of al-Andalus" (1). Fuchs points to the significance of efforts to render Spain African, which contributed to "Spain's 'oriental' difference," and, by extension, "the sense of an exotic Spain" as early as the late medieval period (4).

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the title "el más importante seductor de mujeres" ("the most important seducer of women") is directly applied to Alfredo Landa's character, Alfredo, in *Los días de Cabirio* (Fernando Merino, 1971), which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

ultimately use the tourism industry, as well as the performance of exaggerated “types” of Spanish masculinities encouraged by said industry, as a vehicle through which to elucidate the moral consequences of a fledgling capitalist-consumerist culture in Spain, particularly within the interpersonal realm of marriage, *Estoy hecho un chaval*, produced in the early post-Franco period, presents the Spanish working man’s relationship to stereotypical images of “Spanishness” as fraught with internal conflict, presenting such performances as a last resort undertaken due to a lack of legitimate, “dignified” work opportunities with the country, especially for older working men accustomed to full-time employment in the professional services sector.

## 1.2 *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*

The treatment of *españolada* as employment in Pedro Lazaga’s *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* resists the impulse to blame moral corruption solely on the imported influence of foreign sexual mores, as well as the tendency of Spanish tourism to satisfy such desires for the sake of fomenting the country’s tourism industry and generating revenue, by contextualizing such tendencies against the explicit backdrop of what is ultimately presented as the far more sinister evil hiding behind the guise of tourism: consumer capitalism. Throughout the film, whose opening credits emphasize an understanding of debt as a crippling, if not deadly, force over man,<sup>15</sup> capitalism and consumerism come to represent influences that incite the moral dalliances of three key groups: foreign tourists, women, and Spanish men looking to cultivate the appearance of financial and/or career success. Sabino (Alfredo Landa), the film’s protagonist,

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<sup>15</sup> The film’s opening credits feature an animated montage of a man being attacked by bank notes, which take the form of various weapons and/or imagery suggesting violence and/or death, including a hammer, a monster, a guillotine, a cannon, an operating room table, a bottle of poison, and a tomb.

finds himself at the intersection of these groups's demands, battling the pressures of his wife, Elisa (Mirta Miller), and mother-in-law, Doña Ramona (Mari Carmen Prendes), who display a clear interest and investment in acquiring modern commodities, such as sophisticated washing machines and luxury apartments, as well as the purported business acumen of Sabino's acquaintance, Valentín (José Luis López Vázquez), a fellow Spaniard with extensive experience in the tourism industry, which he uses to prop up the supposed conveniences of *letras* ("installment contracts") and the promise of elaborate get-rich-quick schemes that seek to profit off of female tourists.

Throughout the film, the narrative implies a clear moral distinction between employment that is presented as "honest" or "dignified" work, such as Sabino's job as an accountant, and less "dignified" work, often characterized as immoral or exploitative in nature, surfacing throughout *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* mainly in the form of work in the tourism industry, however, also in the act of any man profiting and/or living off of the earnings of his female partner or spouse (which Valentín and Sabino both exemplify, knowingly, in the case of Valentín, who works alongside his wife and encourages her to earn money on her own, and, unwittingly, in the case of Sabino, who is unaware of his wife's employment as a model for a local boutique until the film's climax). This dichotomy is personified in the film's primary male protagonists, Sabino and Valentín, played by Alfredo Landa and José Luis López Vázquez,<sup>16</sup> respectively, who,

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<sup>16</sup> Alfredo Landa appears in every film studied in this dissertation. For his part, José Luis López Vázquez also appears in *Préstame quince días*, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

throughout the film, appear to represent two distinct “types” of working men.<sup>17</sup> While Sabino, often criticized by others throughout the film for being “antigüito” (“old-fashioned”) and too easily influenced by the “folklore manchego” (“Manchegan folklore”) characteristic of his upbringing, is an accountant, who insists on paying for large purchases upfront and in full “como su padre” (“like his father”), Valentín argues that in the modern economy “el dinero ya no sirve para nada” (“money is no longer good for anything”). In contrast to Sabino, who, at least initially, is reticent to buy (quite literally) into capitalist consumer culture, Valentín enthusiastically participates in a cycle of debt that permits his ability to work minimally and strategically, while feigning an appearance of wealth and financial stability. In spite of this apparent dichotomy, both men ultimately find themselves not only deeply invested in the capitalist system of credit, but also in Spain’s tourism industry, a venture that allows Sabino and Valentín to profit—albeit temporarily—from a female foreign consumer public eager to pay money in exchange for a purportedly “authentic” experience of Spanish popular culture that exploits specific images of Spanish masculinities in order to treat tourists to an attraction that, significantly, combines sex and suspense.

Before analyzing the specific characteristics of Sabino and Valentín’s joint business venture, as well as the nature of Valentín’s personal involvement in the Spanish tourism industry, it is important to consider the various factors that motivate Sabino’s gradual shift from a socially

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<sup>17</sup> While Sabino and Valentín are the primary male protagonists of the film, Sabino’s friend and coworker, Porriño (Manuel Summers), although a secondary character, exemplifies many of the same ideals as Sabino—in fact, he is, arguably, even more paranoid and cynical than Sabino regarding the future of the professional services sector and the incipient threat of technological advancements in the workplace. For example, Porriño is immediately unsettled by the implementation of an American accounting computer in the office and views such technologies as a profound threat to his and Sabino’s own job security. Outside of the workplace, however, Porriño, much like Sabino, has a deep appreciation for leisure activities, namely, fishing, and it is clear that he values the conveniences of the traditional work week, which allow him sufficient opportunities for personal recreation. That said, it bears noting that the viewer knows very little about Porriño’s personal life (i.e. whether or not he is married and/or has children) which for Sabino represents a significant influence inciting his increasing investment in consumer culture. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

and financially conservative accountant, determined to live according to the traditional refrains of his conservative rural upbringing in spite of his wife and mother-in-law's demands, to a multi-employed fully-fledged consumer, living in a luxury apartment filled with commodities that he cannot afford. Despite Sabino's initial misgivings, as well as his surprise at Valentín's enthusiastic and irresponsible use of installment contracts, the protagonist ultimately gives in to the influences of the so-called "modern economy" less out of any personal investment in the "capitalist dream" of accumulating wealth and possessions but rather out of a desire to live out a paternalistic fantasy of being the all-knowing provider, who gives without his dependents even having to ask, a role that is effectively eroticized through his wife's responses to receiving or being deprived of material goods.

Sabino's steadfast adherence to traditional values often associated with work (i.e. self-reliance, responsibility, hard work, financial prudence), traits most clearly represented in the enigmatic portrait of the protagonist's deceased father that hangs in the couple's home and speaks to Sabino and the viewer throughout the film, is effectively tested by Elisa's attitude regarding the prospect of acquiring commodities, such as home appliances and a luxury apartment, regardless of how such goods are ultimately purchased. In effect, Sabino and Elisa's marriage suggests a progressive transformation of the traditional male breadwinner model under the influence of consumer capitalism, a role that comes to extend beyond the perceived responsibility to provide basic necessities in order to also encompass the ability to provide the latest material comforts and conveniences offered by the market. This shift is largely visible in Sabino and Elisa's nighttime bedroom conversations, which tend to revolve around matters concerning the couple's recent purchases and overall financial wellbeing. Through such conversations, it becomes clear that Elisa is quick to interpret Sabino's hesitance to purchase

household commodities as needless frugality and understands her husband's initial refusal to buy new home appliances, specifically, a blender and a washing machine, as an act of withholding. Sabino's reticence to spend money, on the other hand, though grounded in the ideal of financial prudence, instantly dissipates when met with his wife's frustration and is even completely forgotten when he is rewarded with physical affection, as evidenced in the following scene, which details the aftermath of the protagonist's refusal to purchase the latest and greatest blender:

SABINO y ELISA están acostados. Ella se ha vuelto de espaldas a él, enfurruñada.

SABINO espía discretamente la reacción de su mujer. Pero ella no mueve. SABINO tiene una expresión desconsolada y opta al fin por marcar suavemente unos "pasitos" con los dedos índice y corazón por el brazo desnudo de ELISA. Esta no se vuelve y reclama:<sup>18</sup>

ELISA. Estáte quieto.

SABINO. Mujer... Si te vas a poner así por una batidora...

ELISA. ¡La primera cosa que te pido! ¿O es que soy como una de esas que siempre está pidiendo?

SABINO. No, no es eso. Tienes razón. Anda, vuélvete y hablamos...

ELISA. No tengo ganas de hablar.

SABINO. Oye, que he dicho hablar.

ELISA. ¡Déjame!

SABINO. No te pongas así, Elisita. Yo te compro la batidora pero vuélvete...

ELISA. Deja.

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<sup>18</sup> These stage directions are cited directly from the original script of the film written by Vicente Escrivá and Vicente Coello. See "No Firmes las Letras Cielo," dated January 1972, held in AGA,36,05592 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

SABINO. Y si quieres lavadora, lavadora.

ELISA. ¿Sí?

SABINO. Pues, claro, cielo. Lo que tú quieras. ¿Quién se va a comer esas orejitas?

ELISA. No sé...

SABINO. Sí, sí que lo sabes, morronguín. Sí que lo sabes. ¿Y quién se va a comer esa boquita?

(SABINO and ELISA are lying in bed. She has turned her back to him in moody silence.

SABINO discretely watches his wife but she does not move. SABINO wears a distressed expression and finally opts to softly traces a few “little steps” with his index and middle fingers along Elisa’s bare arm. She does not turn around but demands:

ELISA. Stop.

SABINO. If you’re going to get like that over a blender...

ELISA. The first thing I ask of you! Or am I one of those women that’s always asking for things?

SABINO. No, that’s not it. You’re right. Come on, turn around and let’s talk...

ELISA. I don’t feel like talking.

SABINO. Come on, I said just to talk.

ELISA. Leave me alone!

SABINO. Don’t be like that, Elisita. I’ll buy you the blender but turn around...

ELISA. Stop.

SABINO. And if you want a washing machine, I’ll get you a washing machine.

ELISA. Oh yeah?

SABINO. Well, of course, darling. Whatever you want. Who’s going to eat up those

ears?

ELISA. I don't know...

SABINO. Yes, you do know, kitten. You do know. And who's going to eat up that mouth?)

Although Sabino appears to hold the purse strings when it comes to the family's purchases, the couple's pillow talk, such as the conversation transcribed above, reveal the significant influence that Elisa's attitude and demeanor wield over her husband's promised spending habits. In fact, Elisa's response to her husband's refusal to buy the commodities she desires is to resort to her own form of withholding by depriving Sabino of her affection, namely, her refusal to reciprocate his attempts at physical intimacy. On the other hand, once Sabino does provide his wife with the material goods she asks for, gradually escalating to a luxury apartment with a price tag of 100,000 *pesetas*, the previous scene is entirely reversed, this time with Elisa initiating physical intimacy as a means of rewarding her husband's purchase. When Sabino gives Elisa the cold shoulder, she showers him with a series of compliments, ranging from how proud she is of him to proclaiming that she has "el marido más guapo del mundo" ("the most handsome husband in the world"). Significantly, the comment that pushes the protagonist to finally lower his defenses is Elisa's assertion that Sabino is a man "que le da a su mujercita todo lo que quiere" ("that gives his wife everything she desires"), confessing that she has always dreamed of an apartment such as the one the couple now live in and that Sabino has provided it for her "sin pedírtelo" ("without asking you for it"). While the protagonist and viewer alike know that this is certainly not the case, Elisa further reaffirms her husband by confessing that Sabino's ability to "guess" what she wants is, in effect, "lo que me vuelve loca de ti" ("what makes me go crazy for you"). In this way, the couple's relationship is arguably as transactional in nature as the protagonist's

purchases, functioning in such a way that both Elisa and Sabino participate in a circular exchange in which Elisa withholds physical affection until her husband provides her with material commodities, then volunteers such affection once the protagonist satisfies her wishes. In this dynamic, Elisa's effusive response to the protagonist's purchases, which emphasize her husband's uncanny ability to provide, compounded by her and Sabino's willful forgetting of the persistent appeals that led to such purchases, further encourage the protagonist to indulge his wife's petitions for material comforts, regardless of whether or not doing so constitutes a responsible financial decision.

While Elisa's cajoling, in addition to Doña Ramona's constant berating, represents a significant influence on Sabino's consumer habits, it is ultimately Valentín's praise of the benefits and conveniences of *letras*, or installment agreements, that solidifies the protagonist's commitment to consumer society. Such financial maneuvering, as well as Valentín's purported business acumen, which promises substantial financial gains, pushes Sabino to fully enter into consumer society, as his counterpart suggests, "por la puerta grande" ("in grand style"). Given the protagonist's ignorance of much of the intricacies and inner workings of installment contracts and the tourism industry, Sabino continually defers to Valentín's (often misguided) judgment, who presents himself as an expert not only in matters of "la economía moderna" ("the modern economy") and "la sociedad del consumo" ("consumer society"), but also on Spain's tourism industry and the desires of foreign tourists visiting the country. In fact, Valentín is both a vocal proponent of and direct and active participant in Madrid's nightlife tourism industry, a business venture based entirely around the promotion of Madrid *la nuit*: "el desenfreno nocturno de la city [...] organizado *for you*" ("the nighttime debauchery of the city organized for you"), that is, for

visiting tourists.<sup>19</sup> This image of the city of Madrid as a curated and customized experience of excess, marketed specifically to non-Spaniards, is ultimately the guiding principal for both Valentín’s work as an on-board guide for a bus tour that drives visitors through the heart of Madrid via Alcalá Street, as well as his eventual business collaboration with Sabino, an enterprise also thoroughly engaged with the tourism industry.

Like Sabino and Elisa, who are invited to join Valentín and his wife, Merche (Josele Román), on the bus tour, the viewer is also taken along for the ride as the camera follows the dizzying landscape of Madrid *la nuit* from the bus window, which Valentín presents, significantly, as “[el] panorama *typical Spanish*” (“the typical Spanish view”). Valentín’s comically incoherent multilingual script ultimately appeals to a rhetoric of representationality, that is, a discourse that attempts to (re)present aspects of what is effectively a curated tourist experience as representative of an “authentic” example of Spanish culture, if not representative of Spanish culture as a whole. The “typical Spanish view” begins with a clear nod to the consumerist dimension of the city’s nightlife, showcasing a brightly-lit advertisement for Cerveza San Miguel, which outshines—quite literally—all of the other landmarks in the frame. Shortly after, the bus quickly speeds past the iconic Plaza de Cibeles, which the camera gives merely a passing glance, confirming that the evening will not be an exploration of the city’s cultural assets but rather, as the viewer soon discovers, a night of club hopping and drinking, culminating in a stop at a *tablaó flamenco* (“flamenco show”), safeguarded by a bouncer in Andalusian-style dress holding a prop rifle, and hosted by a venue aptly named Los Camborios

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<sup>19</sup> The irony of this claim is that Valentín’s presentation of Madrid’s sight and attractions does not appear to be in any way customized for his audience other than through the protagonist’s haphazard attempts to provide rough translations of his Spanish language tour for the English, French, and German-speaking tourists in his group. These translations are heavily peppered with Spanish, as evidenced by the citation above, in spite of his wife’s boasting that “*todos esos idiomas los ha aprendido en un mes*” (“he learned all of those languages in a month”).

(presumably, a reference to Federico García Lorca's *Romancero gitano*). Though the viewer is not a direct witness to the flamenco show, the foreign visitors's frenzied exit from the club is a clear indication of the tourists's takeaways from the evening: the enthusiastic (and obviously inebriated) tourists emerge from the venue, each clasping a red rose, and performing (perhaps unintentionally) a parodic imitation of the spectacle they surely have just witnessed (clapping, skipping, stamping, waving their arms and wrists, some even clenching the rose between their front teeth). Significantly, Sabino, Elisa, Valentín, and Merche, who form the end of the line, also actively participate in the ritual, further reinforcing the image of Spanish popular culture presented in the flamenco show. In this way, the Spanish characters in the film are equally central, if not more so, to the construction and consumption of Spanish culture as the non-Spanish tourists visiting the country.

This impulse, combined with Valentín and Sabino's determination to replicate the success of Valentín's bus tour of Madrid *la nuit*, leads the pair to dream up a joint business venture that represents a different kind of evening attraction, one geared specifically towards female tourists: a dinner theater of sorts, which Valentín promises to be "un negocio muy serio" ("a very serious business"). In effect, Valentín's proposed nighttime attraction is based around two key principles that he believes, based on his purportedly extensive experience in the tourism industry, speak to the consumer demands of the foreign women visiting Spain: sex and suspense. In a business pitch directed at the local butcher, whose role in the dinner theater spectacular will require him to lend out his abandoned country house and participate in the performance in Andalusian-style dress, Valentín gives his assessment of the consumer desires underlying the greater tourism industry:

Que llevo diez años paseando suecas por el país. ¿Y sabe a la conclusión que he llegado?

¡Que estamos en calzoncillos! Aquí, mucho Museo del Prado, mucho Escorial, mucho Acueducto de Segovia. Pero de morbo—¡morbo!—nada. ¡Y a eso es a lo que hay que ir! ¡A eso! ¿Qué les enseña a los turistas en Miami? ¿Monumentos históricos? ¡Ja! Unos monumentos de diecinueve años que a ti no te espantan. ¿Y en Acapulco? ¿Qué les enseñan en Acapulco? ¡Todo! ¿Y en Hawái y en París? ¿Se da cuenta por dónde voy? [...] Que sólo le voy a decir una palabra compuesta: sexy-suspense. Es que hay que dar a los turistas la cosa racial... Y bueno, la otra.

(I've spent the last ten years taking Swedish women around the country. And you know what conclusion I've come to? We're out of our league! Here, a lot of the Prado Museum, a lot of El Escorial, a lot of the Aqueduct of Segovia. But excitement? Excitement! Nothing! And that's where things have to go. There! What do they show tourists in Miami? Historical monuments? Ha! Nineteen-year-old monuments that don't scare you. And in Acapulco? What do they show tourists in Acapulco? Everything! And in Hawaii and in Paris? Do you see where I'm going? [...] I'm only going to say to you one compound word: sexy-suspense. We have to give tourists the racial element... Well, and the other too.)

In much the same way that Valentín's bus tour of Madrid *la nuit* effectively relegates cultural assets such as the Plaza de Cibeles to the background, the protagonist's assessment of the Spanish tourism industry as it stands criticizes any impulse to promote significant cultural and historical sites such as the Prado Museum, the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, and the

Aqueduct of Segovia.<sup>20</sup> Instead, Valentín, appealing to fashionable tourist sites such as Acapulco, Hawaii, and Paris as models of tourism, essentially argues that tourists are far less interested in the cultural appeal of a given city's historical monuments and instead are much more intrigued by the promise of an affective sexual experience, specifically, sexual excitement. Although the protagonist offers little clarification regarding the concrete elements that supposedly draw tourists to sites of mass tourism such as Acapulco, Paris, and Hawaii, instead gesturing at a vague, yet apparently communally understood, notion of these spaces, he does, however, define a hybrid form of excitement that he believes foreign visitors look to experience. Ultimately, the sense of "morbo" that Valentín describes as key to an appealing and successful tourism venture implies a sense of interest that is, in effect, sexually charged,<sup>21</sup> that is, an experience of excitement that is as motivated by sexual arousal (the "sexy" in the protagonist's compound word) as it is by surprise or fear (hence, the "suspense"). Equally essential to this experience is what Valentín vaguely defines as "la cosa racial," absorbing an experience of the racial and/or ethnic elements of Spanish culture, which the protagonist neglects to clarify with any specificity, into the larger affective experience being marketed to visiting tourists. Although

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<sup>20</sup> Significantly, although Valentín dismisses popular tourist sites such as the Prado Museum, he and Sabino use the Prado Museum as a strategic staging ground for the promotion of their own tourism venture. The film features a montage of Valentín and Sabino handing out flyers to promote their new business outside of the Prado Museum, where a sizable group of foreign women has conveniently gathered. Although the viewer does not see the contents of the flyer, the original script clarifies that the flyer reads: "¡VENGA A LA OTRA ESPAÑA [*sic*] QUE USTED NO CONOCE! ¡PASE UNA NOCHE DE AMOR, DE MISTERIO Y DE VIOLENCIA! ¡EN EL ÚLTIMO [*sic*] RINCÓN [*sic*] DE LA SERRANÍA! ¡VERY TYPICAL LUXURIOUS!" ("COME TO THE OTHER SPAIN THAT YOU DON'T KNOW! SPEND A NIGHT OF LOVE, MYSTERY AND VIOLENCE! IN THE LAST CORNER OF THE MOUNTAINS!"). The script also notes that the flyer features "un bandolero andaluz que dispara un trabuco y una gitana bailaora con una flor roja en la boca" ("an Andalusian brigand that shoots a blunderbuss and a Gypsy flamenco dancer with a red flower in her mouth"). Both images, as well as the language of the advertisement, clearly appeal to an ideal of Spain that ironically claims to be different from what tourists might be familiar with, while simultaneously engaging with dominant stereotypes of Spanish popular culture as thoroughly Andalusian. See "No Firmes las Letras Cielo," dated January 1972, held in AGA,36,05592 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>21</sup> In its very definition, the word "morbo" carries an explicitly moralizing connotation, defined as an "interés malsano por personas o cosas" ("an unhealthy or unwholesome interest for someone or something"), as well as an "atracción hacia acontecimientos desagradables" ("attraction toward unpleasant events or circumstances") ("Morbo").

the bus tour may have alluded to the idea of selling Spanish culture (that is, a particular image of Spanish culture) to a foreign audience through entertainment venues such as the flamenco bar, Valentín's business pitch explicitly defines this practice as a fundamental aspect of any successful tourism venture.

In practice, the sexy-suspense dinner theater attraction combines three dominant Spanish "types," each of which are explicitly gendered and, to an extent, racialized, in order to appeal to the aesthetic interests and, perhaps more importantly, the sexual preferences of the female tourists visiting Madrid. These "types" include the "Latin lover" (an image that will resurface in Mariano Ozores's *Manolo la nuit*), the *bailaora* (in the assimilated form of the female flamenco dancer), and the *bandolero*. These "types" are ultimately embodied through Valentín, Merche, and Sabino's individual performances, respectively, which, when combined, work to establish a folkloric atmosphere that engages the female tourists through the tragic (purportedly true) love story of a fallen bullfighter, whose bereaved girlfriend, a *bailaora*, expresses her lament in the form of a flamenco song and dance. This narrative meets the delight of the female tourists, who interpret the fabricated tale as historical fact. While Valentín plays the role of the "Latin lover," a ringleader of sorts who acts as the master of ceremonies for the evening's events, Sabino is tasked with violently interrupting Merche's flamenco performance under the guise of a *bandolero* recently escaped from prison and sexually famished after "diez años en la cárcel sin amor" ("ten years in prison without love").

Sabino's appearance and performance, in particular, is constructed with the deliberate intention of casting the protagonist as an exemplar of Spanish masculinity, specifically, a rugged and unkempt masculinity characterized as "Celtiberian" in nature. In this way, the protagonist's role in the sexy-suspense tourist attraction is to act as "el gancho celtibérico" ("the Celtiberian

ruffian”). According to Valentín, Sabino possesses the inherent attributes necessary to draw in female tourists, qualities that can be further emphasized with a little roughing up: “Con esa cara que tiene de hombre, se le deja unos días sin afeitarse, se le frota con retama y tomillo para que huelga a español, y llenamos de suecas el autobús” (“With that manly face, a few days without shaving, a rubdown with Spanish broom and thyme so that he smells Spanish, and we’ll fill the bus with Swedish women”). Furthermore, Valentín ultimately justifies this casting, along with his own assumption of the role of the “Latin lover” master of ceremonies, as a necessary performance in order to sustain the sexy-suspense binary underlying the attraction as a whole. In essence, Valentín is meant to embody the “sexy,” while the goal of Sabino’s performance is to instill fear and suspense in the audience. When Sabino questions the division of roles, Valentín defends his decision through an implicitly racialized logic, claiming: “Yo no tengo cara de español, sino de europeo” (“I don’t have the face of a Spaniard but rather that of a European”). In doing so, the protagonist confirms a sense of non-European “otherness” that makes Spain and, by extension, Spanish men, a source of interest for tourists visiting from other distinctly European (read: modern) countries.

Ironically, what Valentín fails to anticipate in his assessment of the tourists’s desires is that it is in fact Sabino’s embodiment of the element of suspense, as well as the aforementioned “cosa racial,” that ultimately thrills and excites the tourist public in attendance, an audience of predominantly middle-aged, non-Spanish-speaking, fair-skinned European women. When Valentín delivers the news that an “hombre bandolero escapado [de la] prisión se ha escondido en estos montes” (“a brigand that has escaped from prison is hiding out in these mountains”), a figure he describes as the equivalent of a “Spanish gangster,” known for his reputation as a “tremendo asesino” (“dreadful killer”), the women’s reactions are divided between fear and

excitement. Although in the final version of the film this division is most clearly visible in the women's facial expressions upon hearing the news, the original script clarifies the range of responses to the threat of the escaped *bandolero*'s sudden appearance: while one concerned tourist resolves to leave ("I'm loaving [*sic*]") and another similarly alarmed woman asks "what is gonna happon [*sic*] with us?", a third tourist, in contrast, appears to be delighted, exclaiming: "Oh! What a thrill!".<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, when Sabino scales the exterior of the inn, wielding a knife, and breaks through the window of a room where two of the tourists are hiding, while one of the women faints and falls to the floor, the other tentatively emerges from the four-poster bed where the women have been hiding and approaches Sabino, clasping the red rose gifted to each of the women during Valentín's opening introduction, which she seductively twirls and places in her mouth. The woman, a blond, blue-eyed, fair-skinned English speaker, then suggestively slides back her jacket sleeve to reveal a bare shoulder and giggles before declaring: "A beautiful *bandolero*... for me!" While the viewer does not see Sabino's response to the woman's advances nor how the rest of the evening plays out (for both the "actors" and the visiting tourists), it is significant that the spectacle does in fact produce an affective experience in the women who attend the sexy-suspense attraction. Ultimately, this reaction is provoked not only by the novelty of the experience, but also by the supposed authenticity of the night's events, which presupposes the tourists's acceptance of the setting, characters, and occurrences of the evening as accurate and real, endowed with the "positive power" that Gilles Deleuze ascribes to the simulacrum

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<sup>22</sup> See "No Firmes las Letras Cielo," dated January 1972, held in AGA,36,05592 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

(53).<sup>23</sup> In effect, the sexy-suspense tourist attraction is ultimately constructed out of a series of decontextualized and exaggerated symbols of Spanish popular culture—from the presentation of the butcher’s abandoned country house as a “*venta typical Spanish siglo nineteen*” (“typical 19th-century Spanish inn”) to Sabino’s sudden entrance, unshaven and dressed in a raggedy black ensemble, an appearance meant to indicate his characterization as a “*bandido español*” (“escaped bandit”)—that both appeal to the tourists’s preconceived notions of Spanish culture and also suggest that such notions are in fact an accurate representation of Spain. Consequently, the female tourists, even those alarmed by the more suspenseful components of the evening, willfully engage with and participate in the night’s events, never questioning—at least not openly—the authenticity of the experience or of the characters that appear throughout.

While the sexy-suspense dinner theater attraction generates an enthusiastic response from the female tourists in attendance, so much so that the performance is repeated over the course of several nights, the moral domain of Francoism, that is, “the prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other” (Turiel 3), appears concretely in the form of the Civil Guard, effectively putting an end to Sabino and Valentín’s scheme and, along with it, the exploitation of stereotypical tropes of “Spanishness” for financial gain. Significantly, Sabino’s investment in the spectacle, which requires him on a nightly basis to scale the inn’s exterior using a ladder and “break in” to the inn so as to scare and excite the female tourists hiding inside, temporarily clouds his ability to interpret the sudden appearance of the Civil Guard as a legitimate threat of punishment for his criminal activity, whether or not such

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<sup>23</sup> In “Plato and the Simulacrum,” Deleuze affirms the significance of simulacra: “The simulacrum is not degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power which negates *both original and copy, both model and reproduction*. Of the at least two divergent series interiorized in the simulacrum, neither can be assigned as original or as copy. [...] There is no possible hierarchy: neither second, nor third... [...] Similarity and resemblance now have as their essence only the condition of being simulated, that is, of expressing the operation of the simulacrum” (53).

activities occur within the larger context of a performance. The evening's attraction is ultimately interrupted by the Civil Guard, who, much like the female tourists, understand Sabino's performance as a legitimate criminal act:

GUARDIA CIVIL 1. ¿Esa venta no estaba cerrada?

GUARDIA CIVIL 2. Yo creo que sí.

GUARIA CIVIL 1. ¡Alto! ¡Alto!

SABINO. ¡Chist! Llegáis tarde. Ya se acabó el número.

GUARDIA CIVIL 2. ¡Baje de ahí!

SABINO. Pero, ¿a qué viene esta tontería? Si queréis cobrar, dentro está el pollero.

GUARDIA CIVIL 1. Baje o disparo.

SABINO. Pero, ¿a ustedes no les han contratado Valentín?

GUARDIA CIVIL 2. ¡Obedezca!

SABINO. ¡Ay! ¡Que son de verdad!

(CIVIL GUARD 1. Wasn't that inn closed?)

CIVIL GUARD 2. I think so.

CIVIL GUARD 1. Stop! Halt!

SABINO. Shhh! You're late. The show's over.

CIVIL GUARD 2. Get down from there!

SABINO. What's the point of all this nonsense? If you came to collect, the boss is inside.

CIVIL GUARD 1. Get down or I'll shoot.

SABINO. Wait, Valentín didn't hire you two?

CIVIL GUARD 2. Do as you're told!

SABINO. Oh no! They're real!)

Although Sabino's understanding of the threat of the Civil Guard's appearance is delayed by his commitment to the performance at hand, the Civil Guard effectively stands in for the authority and surveillance of the greater Francoist state, ultimately charged, according to the Ley de 15 de marzo de 1940, with "el conocimiento, vigilancia y defensa de nuestras fronteras" ("the knowledge, vigilance, and defense of our borders") (1862), and assuming "las funciones de vigilancia y represión del contrabando y el fraude" ("the role of vigilance and the repression of contraband and fraud") (1863). Interestingly enough, the protagonist initially interprets the Civil Guards as characters themselves, understanding their sudden appearance as an attempt to participate in—and, ultimately, profit from—the sexy-suspense tourist attraction as yet another Spanish "type." It is not until the Civil Guards brandish weapons and threaten violence that Sabino finally recognizes that he is effectively disobeying the orders of a civil authority, thus rendering him vulnerable to the State's punishment. Consequently, Sabino quite literally falls out of his *bandolero* role, toppling from the ladder out of surprise, a descent that culminates in his and Valentín's arrest, landing the pair in the provincial jail for the night (though the film does not specify on what charges). While Valentín is seemingly unfazed by the ordeal, shown side-eyeing the Civil Guards and patting Sabino on the back as the duo leaves the jail the next morning, the incident ultimately forces Sabino's resignation from the enterprise, who, at the insistence of his wife and mother-in-law, is obligated to pursue employment that, in Doña Ramona's words, encourages "actividades más caseras y sin excursiones nocturnas" ("more domestic activities without the necessity of nighttime excursions"), culminating in his multi-employment in a series of part-time ventures (none of which involve Valentín).

Sabino's short-lived involvement in the Spanish tourism industry, facilitated in large part by Valentín's own investment in satisfying what he understands to be the desires of Spain's

intended tourism audience, ultimately represents a form of employment that encourages his embodiment of an image of (Celt)Iberian masculinity that implies a vision of Spain as dangerous, passionate, and, perhaps most significant, non-European. This image, especially when combined with complementary tropes of “Spanishness” such as Valentín’s “Latin lover” and Merche’s *bailaora*, as well as the construction of a “typical” Spanish setting meant to transport unsuspecting female tourists back to the 19th century, panders to a foreign consumer public that is effectively portrayed as solely interested in Spain as an exotic object of desire. While the intrusion of the Francoist state in the form of the Civil Guard puts an end to Sabino and Valentín’s collaborative enterprise, it does not, however, dismantle the larger Spanish tourism industry at work throughout the film, which woos non-Spanish tourists through the performance of self-parody and self-stereotyping as much as it does by catering to an assumed interest in cultural and historical monuments.

### **1.3 *Manolo la nuit***

Despite the fact that the narrative conflict of Mariano Ozores’s *Manolo la nuit* primarily revolves around questions of infidelity, deceit, and extramarital affairs (real in the case of Manolo, played by Alfredo Landa, and feigned on the part of Manolo’s wife, Susana, played by María José Alfonso), as well as the potential threat of a child born outside of marriage (a conscious act of deceit concocted by Susana’s sister, Martina [played by Josele Román], in order to punish Manolo for his moral indiscretions outside of the home), the impetus behind the film’s central conflict is the particular nature of the male protagonist’s work as part of a travel agency, Viajes Olé, based in Torremolinos, a Mediterranean resort town and renowned tourist destination on the Costa del Sol. In fact, before the viewer learns any details of Manolo’s personal life back

in Madrid the narrator firmly situates the film's narrative, as well as the protagonist's occupation, within the explicit context of Spain's tourism boom, emphasizing the influx of foreign, predominantly female visitors, enticed by the promise of sun and romance. As a consequence, Manolo's character is initially defined, not by his domestic life in Madrid but rather by his relationship as a Spanish man to the European women visiting the country's coastline. In effect, this relationship is not only directly tied to but essentially the basis of the protagonist's profession.

The film's opening scenes, which see the camera pan across a beach, following rows of foreign women as they lounge in beach chairs in bikinis and apply sunscreen to their tanned bodies, ground the protagonist's work as intimately tied to the consumer demands of the visiting tourists. The narrator of *Manolo la nuit*'s introduction serves to outline the motivations of the female tourists flocking to the Costa del Sol, which he argues are largely influenced by an image of Spain as an exceptional tourist destination:

Han venido porque saben que España es diferente. Y aquí encontrarán el sol, la paella, las corridas de toros y también—por qué no decirlo—algunas veces vienen buscando el romance, la aventura. Desde Rodolfo Valentino, los *latin lovers* tenemos mucho cartel (y ustedes perdonen la inmodestia). Claro que sobre gustos no hay nada escrito. Por eso, el que levanta más admiración a su paso es ese colosal producto que salió del cruce de dos pueblos fuertes, rudos y primitivos: los celtas y los iberos. Nos referimos al racial celtíbero español que en este caso se llama Manolo.

(They've come because Spain is different. Here they will find sun, paella, bullfighting, and—why not admit it—some come in search of romance and adventure.<sup>24</sup> Since Rudolph Valentino, we “Latin lovers” have quite the reputation [pardon the immodesty]. Of course, there's no accounting for taste. For that reason, the one who inspires the most admiration is that impressive product that came out of the cross between two strong, brutish, and primitive peoples: the Celts and the Iberians. We're referring to the Spanish Celtiberian, who, in this case, is called Manolo.)

Consequently, the film's opening scenes characterize Spain's tourism industry, at least in resort towns and communities on the Costa del Sol such as Torremolinos, as an enterprise that primarily attracts and caters to “otros seres en Europa” (“other Europeans”), namely, women from European nations with historically colder climates, such as Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, all apparently eager to don bikinis and frolic in the warmth characteristic of the Mediterranean's beaches.<sup>25</sup> The narrator's playful allusion to the country's tourism slogan—“Spain is Different”—not only emphasizes the perks of Spain's Mediterranean climate, but also references what serve as identifying symbols of Spanish identity and culture to a non-Spanish audience, namely, paella and bullfighting. The appeal of such cultural attractions

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<sup>24</sup> Here I have opted to translate “aventura” quite literally as “adventure,” which, in a general sense, denotes an “acaecimiento, suceso o lance extraño” (“strange event, occurrence, or moment”) or an “empresa de resultado incierto o que presenta riesgos” (“endeavor with an uncertain outcome or that presents risks”) (“Aventura”). It is important, however, to acknowledge the explicitly romantic, if not explicitly sexual, connotation of “aventura” in Spanish, which can also mean a “relación amorosa ocasional” (“casual romantic relationship”). Any ambiguity in the narrator's tone is quickly clarified by the female tourists's behavior on the beach, who display a clear sexual attraction to Manolo that strongly hints at the specific nature of his work.

<sup>25</sup> Corresponding to such demographics, Manolo has three recurring clients in Torremolinos that eventually follow him back to Madrid: an Italian, a German, and an Englishwoman. Although throughout the film, the three women are never referred to directly by name nor are their origins explicitly stated other than through their use of Italian, German, and English, respectively, the original technical information provided to the Dirección General de Espectáculos by the production company specifies that the women are named Ketty, Gretel (played by English actress, Nemi Gadalla), and Ingrid (played by German-born actress, Nadiuska Honczar). In the final version of the film, Ketty is ultimately replaced by an Italian character (played by Spanish-born actress, Carmen Platero). See “Manolo la nuit,” dated 1973, held in AGA,36,05132 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

is ultimately eclipsed, however, by the promise of romance and adventure with a “Latin lover,” cleverly underscoring the double meaning of “aventura” in Spanish, which can mean both an exceptional occurrence and a casual romantic and/or sexual encounter. In this way, the narrator’s description of what Spain has to offer visiting tourists highlights Spain’s cultural assets, as well as what we might understand as the nation’s sexual or erotic capital, that is, “the quality and quantity of attributes that an individual”—or, in this case, members of a given nation and/or cultural group—“possesses, which elicit an erotic response in another” (Green 29).

If there were any doubt concerning the sexual implications of the narrator’s characterization of Spain, Manolo’s triumphant entrance on screen, dressed in nothing but tight-fitting swim trunks, confirms that in the model of tourism represented in the film *Iberian* masculinity exists as a legitimate tourist attraction for the libidinous foreign visitors, a presence that is ultimately charged with an exoticism and raw sexuality that the narrator ties directly to the Iberian Peninsula’s indigenous past by characterizing the protagonist as an exemplar of the prodigious Celtiberian race. Although Manolo struts along the beach with a noticeable air of confidence, thus participating in and, to an extent, even encouraging his own transformation into an object of sexual desire, the responses of the female tourists that observe him as he walks down the beach play an equally important role in the construction of a Spanish masculinity meant to be consumed as a form of tourist recreation by the European female visitor. Following Eugenia Afinoguénova and Jaume Martí-Olivella’s view of Spanish identity as a construct that is consolidated in large part through the active participation of the figure of the tourist, whose act of “consumption plays a role that is equal or superior to that of production” (xvi), it is significant that the tourists’s responses to Manolo’s appearance serve to ground his character, from the very beginning of the film, in a Romantic and, by extension, exoticized, conception of Spain. Largely

uninterested in pursuing romance with their male compatriots, who also populate the beach and appear eager to fraternize with their fellow tourists,<sup>26</sup> the female visitors greet Manolo's appearance with squeals, whistles, and shouts of "¡Viva!" and "¡Olé!" (one woman even tosses her sun hat in Manolo's direction), clearly recalling an image of Spain informed by popular Andalusian tropes and stereotypes and, thus, rendering the protagonist an object of desire.

The particular nature of Manolo's work, despite the ambiguity of the film's opening scenes, is clarified in part by his own response to the women's enthusiastic greetings, which serves to confirm a pending transactional agreement with several of the lounging female tourists. As he strides past, he signals directly to several women one at a time, grunts, points at his wrist, gestures a number by holding up his fingers (which seems to indicate a time), and waves his hand, implying a standing agreement with each female tourist (this suggestion is later confirmed by the reappearance of each of the women throughout the film as Manolo's clients). It quickly becomes clear that the protagonist, independent of the service he offers, is in high demand with the female tourists, so much so that he dismisses an eager young woman who approaches him, presumably in order to arrange a meeting for herself or a friend, saying, "*Oh, no, darling. No admito recomendaciones, please. Yo sorry. Mucho sorry*" ("Oh, no, darling. I don't accept recommendations, please. I'm sorry. Very sorry").

Although the specific services that Manolo offers remain unclear even as the film progresses, the response he elicits from the female tourists in question, including the young woman who propositions him directly, indicates that his allure is constituted primarily by his

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<sup>26</sup> Before Manolo's first appearance on screen, two other, presumably Northern European men (based on their physical appearance) strut past the lounging female tourists, flexing and exercising with a resistance band. The men are characterized by their blonde hair, light eyes, tan skin, and muscular bodies. Their appearance, however, does little, if anything, to excite their fellow tourists, who scoff, turn over, and even roll their eyes at their compatriots as they walk past.

perceived sex appeal, which is based in large part in the stark contrast between his unique embodiment of a distinctly Iberian masculinity and male sexuality (framed by the narrator's opening monologue as the intersection between the "Latin lover" archetype and that of the *celtíbero español*) and that of his European counterparts. While Manolo is not traditionally attractive in his physical appearance (unlike the tanned muscular European tourists that walk the beach, the protagonist is relatively short and stocky, balding, and remarkably hairy),<sup>27</sup> this "difference" is what ultimately defines his appeal to the foreign women populating the beach, in this way, mirroring the larger principle of Spain's "difference" as a point of interest, if not explicit attraction, for non-Spanish tourists. What is more, the narrator's characterization of the protagonist as the product of the cross between "two strong, brutish, and primitive peoples," recalling the Iberian Peninsula's prehistoric populations, that is, the Celts and the Iberians, functions as a possible allusion to the Celtiberians as a cultural stronghold against foreign influences during the final centuries BCE (perhaps, according to a more conservative reading of the film, suggesting Spain's resistance to its total infiltration by foreign sexual mores), while also sidestepping entirely the Jewish and Moorish elements of the nation's past. Additionally, Manolo's claim to a distinctly Celtiberian lineage serves as a decontextualized reference to an unrestrained "caveman sexuality" rooted in sexual compulsiveness and high-intensity, if not

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<sup>27</sup> Alfredo Landa's physical appearance has been a point of interest in critical discussions of representations of Spanish masculinity in contemporary film. While, on the one hand, Landa's overall physical appearance renders him an exceptional subject in the world of the film, critics, such as Ana María Vivancos Álvarez, for example, have regarded Landa as an identifiable everyman, going so far as to dub the actor "the unofficial symbol of the average Spaniard" of the late-Francoist and post-Franco eras ("Failure to Deliver" 44). In any case, Landa's physical appearance is a defining characteristic of many of his filmic performances, so much so that the entry on Alfredo Landa in the *Diccionario del cine español* isolates his "particular físico" ("particular physique") and "fisonomía impar" ("odd appearance") (494) among his defining attributes.

potentially violent, sexual activity.<sup>28</sup> In any case, the female tourists's unabashed expressions of sexual attraction toward the protagonist, who are not afraid to approach him directly so as to arrange a formal encounter, grounds the film's introduction of Manolo's character in an explicitly erotic context.

Shortly after the opening scenes, Manolo's work, as well as the film's production itself,<sup>29</sup> are revealed to be directly tied to Spain's burgeoning tourism industry as he is shown to be an employee of a tourism company based in Torremolinos named Viajes Olé. Harkening back to the film's title (*Manolo la nuit*), the protagonist's workday appears to be divided into two halves: administrative activities by day and a recreational nightlife, a distinction that merely serves to further blur the boundaries of Manolo's personal and professional lives (try as he might to separate these spheres through a literal spatial separation between his home life in Madrid and his professional life in Torremolinos). During the day, Manolo mans the front desk at the tourism agency, shifting between assisting clients in need of practical travel-related services, such as car rentals and currency exchange, and scheduling female clients for what appears to be an extension of the agency's advertised tourism and travel-related services: an evening with the protagonist's alter ego "Manolo la nuit." As the protagonist's packed agenda demonstrates, the nighttime attractions he facilitates are extremely popular among the female tourists visiting Torremolinos,

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<sup>28</sup> I am, of course, dialoguing with cultural stereotypes regarding male-female gender relations in prehistoric cultures, however, Martha McCaughey discusses the idea of the "caveman mystique," that is, the tendency of men to "go caveman" as a response to perceived threats to men's power and authority in the postmodern age. On caveman sexuality, McCaughey writes: "The sexuality of the caveman is the quintessential episodic, genitally focused sexuality devoid of eroticism." She claims that caveman sexuality is characterized by "its narrow focus on genital sexuality, high-intensity but low-emotion sex, sexual compulsiveness, an unacknowledged emotional dependence, and even overt rage and violence."

<sup>29</sup> The film's opening and closing credits acknowledge the participation of travel and tourism outlets such as Iberia, Parque de Atracciones, Maxcali, Viajes Excelsior, Hotel Florida Norte de Madrid, Viajes Iberia, and Hotel Cervantes de Torremolinos, linking the film's production and representation of tourism to Spain's real-world industry.

the only common demographics uniting the women being their gender and their “non-Spanishness.” Furthermore, it is strongly implied that Manolo has a monopoly on the services he offers, as he remarks to a particularly pushy client that his availability is fixed and that he cannot entertain appointments outside of his schedule because he does not have a “corretornos” (“substitute”) to fill in for his position on his days off. In fact, even the narrator comments that “para Manolo esto del turismo era un bonito negocio” (“for Manolo, tourism was a nice business”), confirming that the protagonist’s involvement in the tourism industry has proven to be a lucrative venture.

Although the film is careful not to reveal too much about the specifics of Manolo’s nighttime business activities so as to avoid the wrath of the censors,<sup>30</sup> it quickly becomes apparent that the protagonist’s work is even further compartmentalized into two distinct phases: the first, chaperoning a curated tourist experience of the resort town’s nighttime activities and entertainment, not entirely unlike Sabino and Valentín’s own venture in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, and the second, hosting an “afterparty” of sorts that very clearly involves an exchange of some form of consensual sexual services, most clearly suggested by the recurring “NO MOLESTEN / DO NOT DISTURB” hotel sign that appears frequently throughout the first half of the film. It is specifically the first phase of the protagonist’s nighttime entrepreneurial activities, based entirely around showing female tourists an exciting and romantic night on the town, that is directly relevant to this chapter’s consideration of the *españolada* as a form of employment for the Spanish working man.

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<sup>30</sup> The original film synopsis provided to the Comisión de Ordenación de Guiones in 1973 merely specifies that Manolo is “un ‘play boy’ [...] cuyos encantos fascinan a las suecas, alemanas, francesas, etc.” (“a playboy [...] whose charms fascinate Swedish, German, French, etc. women”). See “Manolo la nuit,” dated 1973, held in AGA,36,05132 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

The film's opening credits take the viewer through a typical evening of work for the protagonist, which includes dancing the night away in local clubs, drinking, and witnessing a live flamenco show in the company of a female tourist. While Manolo initially declines to participate in the spectacle of the *tablao flamenco*, it does not take long before he jumps on stage with his Italian paramour, stamping around in circles in an exaggerated fashion along with the other women on stage dressed in Andalusian costume. Consequently, the protagonist's employment consists not only of his own self-commodification (as an object of desire to be enthusiastically enjoyed by female tourists), but also relies on the commodification of an exaggerated and questionably authentic version of "Spanishness" and Spanish culture for consumption by a non-Spanish consumer public. The particular image of Spanish culture presented in the film, specifically, the image of "Spanishness" marketed to tourists by companies such as that of Manolo's employer, Viajes Olé, is constructed out of identifiable staples of Andalusian identity and culture, which are viewed by foreign visitors as *the* Spanish culture *par excellence*, despite the culturally diverse nature of Spain as a whole, as well as the protagonist's own cultural distance from such constructs as a Madrilenian man.

Throughout the film, flamenco is arguably the clearest example of this trend, which is not only clearly associated with the festive nightlife environment of the *tablao flamenco* but is also consistently alluded to and performed by both Spaniards and non-Spanish tourists through physical gestures, such as exaggerated hand and wrist movements and the stamping of feet, as well as through vocal interjections, such as "¡Olé!". Such signs and gestures are frequently used by the female tourists as a sort of communicative shorthand in order to engage Manolo. In effect, flamenco, as an idea, comes to occupy a synecdochal role, standing in generally for Spanish culture as a whole but also for Spanish masculinity specifically, namely, the experience of being

with a Spanish man romantically or sexually. The most explicit example of this phenomenon can be seen in Manolo's interactions with Ingrid, a German tourist that is one of the protagonist's more persistent clients and who refers to him almost exclusively as "español ardiente" ("hot-blooded Spaniard"), as opposed to by name, a nickname that effectively reduces the titular protagonist to his nationality and his sexuality or sexual appetite. When one of Manolo and Ingrid's encounters is cut short by an unexpected phone call from Manolo's wife, Susana, who chastises her husband for forgetting the couple's anniversary, the protagonist races out of Ingrid's hotel room in an attempt to catch the first plane back to Madrid and make amends, throwing his wide-brimmed *sombrero cordobés* ("Cordovan hat") at the German tourist as he exits. Ingrid, clearly distressed and upset that her rendezvous with the protagonist has been interrupted, pouts, places the hat on her own head, and, in a direct address to the camera, laments, "No flamenco." In this way, flamenco, despite the fact that it, of course, refers concretely to a specific cultural tradition, is entirely decontextualized from its basic meaning, instead coming to signify, as Ingrid's comment suggests, romance, specifically, the enjoyment of Spanish male sexuality.

Significantly, the conflation of "Spanishness" with cultural stereotypes based primarily in Andalusian popular culture or, alternatively, Andalusian popular culture as a kind of stand-in for Spanish masculinity and male sexuality, is further defamiliarized from its original context through the proliferation of Orientalist tropes of race, ethnicity, and, specifically, sexuality. One of the most provocative—and, frankly, bewildering—examples of this phenomenon is "Manolo's Harem," presented as a communal evening attraction constructed for and, significantly, by the female tourists visiting Torremolinos. The protagonist's so-called "harem" is, in effect, an Orientalized fantasy of Spain's past and presents an image of the Iberian Peninsula's Islamic

roots that is entirely decontextualized from any historical perspective and characterized by both material and sexual excess. In sharp contrast to the preceding scene, in which the viewer pays direct witness to Manolo's wife, Susana, as she nostalgically longs for the early days of the couple's marriage, the introduction of Manolo's "harem" transforms the viewer into a voyeur, who follows the camera into the scene as colorful, transparent curtains pull back to reveal a group of women, scantily clothed save for solid-colored bikinis draped in sheer, sparkling fabrics, as they "belly dance," seductively swaying and rolling their hips. The scene is visually overwhelming, populated by several women in constant motion and enveloped in glittery, translucent curtains, as well as signs of material excess, such as jewelry, bright lamps, large metal incense burners, and trays of artificial tropical fruit. What is more, the space also features a seemingly decorative Star of David, which, although not exclusively a symbol of Judaism, constitutes a jarring reference to Jewish culture that effectively absorbs Jewish symbolism into an already excessive conflation of Orientalist tropes and stereotypes of Muslim culture. Finally, Ingrid, the German tourist, escorts the viewer to the main event: Manolo, seated beneath a canopy, dressed in a gold-striped tunic and gaudy oversized turban adorned with strings of pearls and large, colorful feathers. This image of Manolo confirms the commodification of an exaggerated Spanish masculinity even further removed from the traditional oversimplification of Spanish culture as an amalgamation of Andalusian stereotypes and entirely at odds with the Celtiberian ancestry exalted in the film's introduction. In doing so, the chaotic conflation of Orientalist allusions to Semitic cultures effectively appeals to an exotic difference rooted in the controversial legacy of Spain's Muslim and Jewish past, as well as the nation's geographic and cultural proximity to Africa and, by extension, the Islamic world.

This exoticized caricature is ultimately informed by an explicit eroticism due to the deliberate framing of the scene as “Manolo’s Harem.” As opposed to traditional ideals of the harem, that is, a private domestic space reserved for the women of the house in a Muslim family, typically associated with the notion of maintaining and protecting the modesty and privilege of women, “Manolo’s Harem” instead presents a distinct, imaginary vision of the harem that is more akin to Western notions of the harem as an inherently erotic and sexual space, constructed, specifically, as a site for the indulgence of male pleasure. In this way, the film taps into cultural representations of the harem “driven by male fantasies about the forbidden female world” (Cirovic 250), which Irena Girovic describes as imbued with a mythological and thoroughly eroticized feminine sexuality:

[H]idden behind the veils and in prohibited spaces, [the harem’s] representations were created with notions which were conceived primarily in erotic and sexual terms. So the orientalist cultural production featured the harem in an economic formulation, which centered the concept of sexually provocative and desirable beauties, hidden with the forbidden harem realm. The role of the women was accordingly reduced to a purely sexual aspect, especially stressing submission and obedience to their masters. And what is more, the very character of the harem women were imagined in accordance with their presumed role of sexual slaves. (250)

Similarly, in the film, “Manolo’s Harem” represents what appears to be a personal brothel of sorts, where numerous women suggestively lounge, directing their sexuality toward a single man—in this case, Manolo, the Celtiberian manifestation of the “Latin lover” archetype—in a

form of competitive lust.<sup>31</sup> In the film, this competitive lust is acted out quite literally through the act of drawing straws, which the female tourists select in order to determine which of the women will enjoy Manolo's services. Interestingly, the ritual plays with the traditional cliché of "drawing the short straw," signifying the bad luck of the person who has drawn the shortest straw and, thus, must perform a given task, by reversing the meaning of the short straw. In Manolo's game, the short straw is not a sign of being selected to perform a task but rather an indication of the women's disqualification from the contest to enjoy Manolo's services (in the protagonist's version of "drawing straws," all of the straws, with the exception of the "winning" straw, which is long, are short). When the same German tourist who led the viewer into Manolo's so-called "harem," Ingrid, is selected as the winner, Manolo ushers her behind a paisley curtain, presumably so that the couple can enjoy a measure of privacy, only to reemerge seconds later in order to stake a placard reading: "no molesten / do not disturb."

In clear dialogue with the other Orientalist imagery that contributes to the composition of the scene as a distinctively "non-European" place, the placard, in the shape of the Star of David, is tilted approximately forty-five degrees in such a way that the symbol is altered enough so as to be disassociated from its original context, however, still readily recognizable even to a non-Jewish audience. What is more, directly below the Spanish and English "do not disturb" messages, the placard features what appears to be Arabic script, presumably an additional

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<sup>31</sup> In its list of accepted definitions of "harem," the *Oxford English Dictionary* highlights that the term "harem," apart from its standard definition as a "separate, private part of a house reserved for the women of the household," the term also has a more derogatory usage, meaning "a group of people or things likened to the occupants of a harem; esp. a group of women closely associated with a particular man (sometimes with the implication of sexual attachment)." This is clearly the definition informing the film's representation of "Manolo's Harem," which is entirely devoted to the expression of an uninhibited and competitive female sexuality, centered around the enjoyment of the Celtiberian "Latin lover" as the object and recipient of such behavior.

translation,<sup>32</sup> despite the fact that none of the female tourists making up Manolo's makeshift "harem" seem to be of Arabic-speaking origin. In this way, the supplementary Arabic "translation" serves merely as a decorative extension of the hedonistic and exoticized playground created purely for the enjoyment of female European tourists. "Manolo's Harem" effectively caters to tourists's preconceived notions of both Spanish culture and of the East in general, perspectives that intersect directly with Spain's former and contemporary marginalization within the greater European community.

The scenes representing "Manolo's Harem," which are immediately followed by Manolo's individual encounter with Ingrid, the German tourist, ultimately are the last episodes of the film's narrative to take place in Torremolinos within the explicit context of the protagonist's work in the tourism industry. While shortly after the film's action is translated to the city of Madrid, with the narrative turning its attention to the exploration of whether or not Manolo and Susana's marriage can in fact be salvaged despite the protagonist's infidelity, the initial staging of *Manolo la nuit*'s plot on the Costa del Sol, as well as the film's explicit references to tourism to Spain as a form of romantic and/or sexual recreation for female tourists conceiving of Spanish masculinity and male sexuality as an untapped font of passion, underscore the centrality of an exaggerated and erotic, if not sexual, notion of "Spanishness" to the tourist experience.

#### **1.4 *Estoy hecho un chaval***

While in Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and Ozores's *Manolo la nuit*, the Spanish working man conscientiously and deliberately exploits the country's tourism industry as an excuse to commodify stereotypical representations of Spanish identity and culture and also to

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<sup>32</sup> While a viewer unfamiliar with Arabic would likely not know the difference, a simple Google search reveals that the script on Manolo's sign does not in fact translate to "Do not disturb."

indulge in morally suspect activities, particularly, in the realm of sexuality, under the guise of work, Lazaga's later film, *Estoy hecho un chaval*, released in 1977, two years after Franco's death, yet, still subject to censorship regulations, turns a critical eye to the Spanish labor market in general. While the film's conclusion sees the protagonist, Juan, and his family emigrate from Spain to Germany in order to open a souvenir shop named *Die madrileña Souvenirs*, which caters specifically to a German consumer public inclined to spend a great deal of money on handmade Spanish trinkets, *Estoy hecho un chaval's* concluding scenes characterize the commodification of a conventionalized and stereotypical image of Spain for the benefit of a foreign public as a frustrating last resort for the Spanish working man, who is ultimately forced to "sell out" due to the inhospitable domestic labor market.

In the case of *Estoy hecho un chaval*, the German consumer public eager to purchase Spanish souvenirs is not the same group as the sex-crazed predominantly female foreign tourists populating Madrid's nightclubs and flamenco shows in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and the beaches of Torremolinos in *Manolo la nuit*. Instead, it is a population that has become familiar with Spanish culture in large part through the presence of Spanish emigrants living and working in Germany. This relationship between the Spanish working man and the German nation is effectively woven into the film's early scenes with the introduction of Juan's daughter's boyfriend, Carlos, a Spanish emigrant currently working abroad for a German chemical company.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that Carlos never makes a direct appearance on screen, he ultimately plays a pivotal role in the family's decision to move to Germany and open up a souvenir shop,

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<sup>33</sup> In post-Franco Spain, Spanish migrant workers like Juan's daughter's boyfriend, Carlos, are not the same *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") that migrated to Germany in the 1960s and early 1970s. This trend, however, is an important antecedent and does find itself represented in late-Francoist films such as *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1971) and *Préstame quince días*. In contrast to Carlos's character, *Gastarbeiter*, including those that immigrated to Germany from Spain, were guest workers recruited to come to Germany in order to work for a limited time.

having shown Juan's wife's (Queta Claver) cross-stich work, which he was originally sent as a gift, to his boss, who unexpectedly offers to buy the hand-stitched image of a bullfight for "un equivalente de cinco mil pesetas" ("an equivalent of five-thousand *pesetas*"). In this way, not only is Carlos an intermediary between Juan's family and a German consumer public eager to purchase goods "hecha[s] a mano" ("handcrafted"), he is also the first to suggest that "con un poco de suerte se puede sacar diez mil pesetas por cada tapete" ("with a bit of luck you can get ten-thousand *pesetas* a piece for each tablecloth"), given the fact that "aquí [en Alemania] la artesanía se paga muy bien" ("here [in Germany] craftwork pays well"). What is more, Carlos's assessment of the economic value of Spanish goods in Germany is both an important factor in Juan's decision to move his family to Germany, as well as a beacon of optimism that suggests that the protagonist can finally reverse his precarious financial and employment situation. In a letter addressed to the family, Carlos writes: "Tenéis un porvenir muy bueno en Alemania" ("You all will have a very good future in Germany"). It is this apparent promise of financial and career success, as well as the monetary value afforded to handcrafted imported goods in Germany, that ultimately triggers the protagonist's own reassessment of his wife's handiwork, as well as its significance in the greater transnational European labor market, despite the fact that, throughout the film, he is often shown belittling and, in effect, devaluating such work.

While the film's culminating scenes confirm the displacement of the film's narrative action to the German city, the conclusion strongly suggests that the particular nature of Juan's new business venture has effectively compromised the promise of success originally ascribed to the family's relocation to Germany. *Estoy hecho un chaval*'s concluding scenes take place in the family's souvenir shop, in which the production process of hand-sewing, producing, and selling Spanish souvenirs is shared between the various members of the family, including Juan and his

wife Mercedes's four children, as well as the protagonist's mother-in-law (Rafaela Aparicio). Although the business appears to be doing well, the possibility of the protagonist regaining a sense of personal satisfaction through his new profession in Germany is, in effect, compromised by the fact that his newfound success is largely dependent on the family's appropriation and subsequent commodification of national iconography for a transnational European audience, which, in the process, apparently necessitates acts of self-parody in order to confirm the supposed authenticity of the business's souvenirs. Ultimately, Juan's recuperation of a sense of financial stability and career success, which eludes him throughout much of the film due to his forced retirement from the professional services sector, is established at the cost of "selling out" his national heritage and, by extension, his own Madrilenian (read: Castilian) masculinity, not only in the commodification of an exoticized national identity for an external European audience, but also in his own performance of an exotic difference explicitly associated with one of Spain's peripheral regions (Andalusia) as a man from the nation's central capital.

The film's concluding scenes, then, detail Juan's self-presentation to his European customers as an exoticized caricature of Spanish masculinity based entirely in stereotypical representations of authentic "Spanishness," which he embodies through a costume that is a clear nod to traditional Andalusian dress. The conclusion sees the protagonist emerge from the souvenir shop's storeroom and production space dressed in what appears to be a *traje campero* or *traje corto*, complete with a wide-brimmed *sombrero cordobés*. Similarly, Juan's wife, Mercedes, also plays a role in the performance, dressed in a polka-dotted *traje de flamenca* ("flamenco dancer's dress"), as the couple enthusiastically greets and entertains the store's German customers. Significantly, the greater part of the couple's exchanges with their German consumer public occurs with Juan and Mercedes stationed behind the shop counter, periodically

clapping, throwing up their hands, and shouting “¡Olé!”, clearly situating their performance of an exaggerated—and, importantly, folk—“Spanishness” as an integral component of the economic transaction in progress, which is ultimately rewarded with the German customers’s purchase of material goods. Moreover, the goods available for sale in the family’s souvenir shop capitalize on the local fascination with kitschy Spanish popular folk culture, inspired, of course, by the enthusiastic reception of Mercedes’s hand-stitched depiction of a bullfighting scene.

Consequently, the store is filled with a variety of presumably handcrafted artisanal goods—or, at the very least, products that are *presented* as handcrafted artisanal goods—including the family’s cross-stitch designs and hand-crocheted blankets, as well as an assortment of novelty decorations and trinkets, including fans, saint figurines, matador dolls, and even the bust of a bull head, which hangs on the shop wall.

A stand-alone piece of artwork depicting the Plaza de Cibeles, the very same iconic fixture of the Madrilenian urban landscape briefly featured in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, comes to represent an important point of reflection, both for the protagonist and the viewer, ultimately representing Juan’s lingering attachment to and nostalgia for the Spanish fatherland, as well as a forum through which the Spanish nation is effectively held up as an object of scrutiny. Significantly, the painting, which functions as a metonymic representation of the Spanish nation, is the one object in the family’s souvenir shop that is both entirely devoid of exoticized imagery and seemingly exempt from commodification. When an interested customer inquires about the work’s sale price, Juan insists that the piece is not for sale, rather, its placement in the retail space is meant to serve as a symbolic reminder of the nation that the family left behind. Juan explains: “No se vende. Éste no se vende. Éste lo tenemos aquí porque es como la ventana que da a la plaza de mi pueblo. La Cibeles. *Spanien. Mein pueblo*” (“Not for

sale. This one is not for sale. We have this here because it's like a window onto the plaza of my hometown. The Cibeles. *Spain*. My hometown"). In effect, the canvas represents an indirect point of access to the protagonist's home country, underscoring Juan's persistent ties to the Spanish fatherland, specifically, to the nation's capital city of Madrid, which the protagonist attempts to communicate to the inquiring customer through the improvised German-Spanish adage "*Mein pueblo*." Juan's explanation of the painting's significance is at once an expression of pride and a seemingly apologetic gesture for the exploitative nature of his work in Germany, which sells an image of Spain that is in many ways the polar opposite of the vision of the Spanish nation presented in the canvas depicting the Plaza de Cibeles.

The jovial tone underlying Juan's enthusiastic explanation of the significance of the painting of the Plaza de Cibeles is immediately undercut by his direct address to the film's audience, which represents a dramatic shift in the scene's overall tone, which had previously implied the culmination of a narrative of success and resilience, as well as a stark departure from the film's dominant comedic mode. Standing against the backdrop of the framed painting of the Plaza de Cibeles, the protagonist breaks the fourth wall in order to share a sobering confession directly with the viewer: "Lo que son las cosas. Allí [en España] no podíamos vivir y aquí [en Alemania] nos morimos de ganas por volver" ("That's the way it is. There [in Spain] we couldn't survive and here [in Germany] we suffer dying to return"). Juan's concluding monologue ultimately confirms a set of unresolved concerns about the very nature of his own work, the national economy, and even the Spanish nation that are not alleviated by the reality (or even the appearance) of financial and professional success, in this sense, alluding to the "loose ends" that Barry Jordan understands as a fundamental characteristic of the Spanish popular comedies of the

period (“Revisiting the ‘comedia sexy’” 182).<sup>34</sup> Juan’s explanation of the painting’s greater significance as a symbolic link to his home country, as well as his unfulfilled desire to return to Spain, communicates not only a homesickness for a concrete geographical space (i.e. the Plaza de Cibeles, Madrid, Spain, etc.), but also a nostalgia for the masculine self he embodied in the film’s opening, defined in large part by his confidence, long-term career in the professional services sector, and his ability to serve as the sole breadwinner for his family.

Consequently, the protagonist’s concluding address to the audience disrupts any definitive sense of resolution offered by the apparent financial success and contentment suggested by family’s bustling business and Juan’s enthusiastic laughter and shouting in the film’s penultimate scenes. While the family’s decision to leave Spain for Germany with the express motive of securing work and accumulating wealth provides a superficial resolution to the film’s principal narrative conflict (the financial and existential dilemma generated by Juan’s sudden unemployment after his forced retirement), the protagonist’s final words concerning “lo que son las cosas” ultimately confirm that both his geographical and career moves have only served to make the terms of an already unpleasant personal and professional situation more clear. The financial stability afforded by the family’s relocation to Germany is, in effect, compromised by the protagonist’s continued feelings of personal dissatisfaction, in this case, brought on by a sense of homesickness and Juan’s own self-induced emasculation, brought on by both the necessity of his daily performance of an exoticized caricature of Spanish masculinity, based in large part in cultural stereotypes associated with one of Spain’s peripheral regions, as well as the family’s economic dependence on the ascribed value of traditionally female artisanry.

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<sup>34</sup> For Jordan, in the Spanish popular comedy, “loose ends” are the result of “acts of transgression” throughout a given film’s narrative that “produce an excess which cannot be contained, a set of subversive possibilities which cannot be entirely eliminated” (“Revisiting the ‘comedia sexy’” 182).

Ultimately, the film's conclusion, which culminates in an evocative close-up shot of Juan's face,<sup>35</sup> begs the question of which situation is more damaging to the Spanish male worker's psyche: persistent job insecurity in his home country, further compounded by the continued devalorization of his own contributions to the domestic labor market, or financial and career success abroad, however, at the cost of his sense of pride.

In this way, the conclusion of *Estoy hecho un chaval*, which revisits the displacement narrative of the Spanish working man who migrates to the German city for work characteristic of earlier comedies such as *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1970) and *Préstame quince días* (Fernando Merino, 1971), destabilizes the assumption that the protagonist's consolidation of job stability and financial success will, in turn, mean the end of his problems and represent a return to a sense of personal security. Instead, Juan's statement in the film's final moments, further intensified by his direct address to the camera, points to a lingering sense of discontent independent of the protagonist's achievement of financial security that is further reinforced by the protagonist's professional identity as a migrant worker in a European market with a specific understanding of Spanish consumer goods. Furthermore, *Estoy hecho un chaval* characterizes unemployment, underemployment, and emigration for work as national issues representative of

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<sup>35</sup> The visual composition of this close-up shot is also significant as the frame is essentially split into two halves, signaling a clear sense of opposition between competing influences: on the right, Juan appears, dressed in a wide-brimmed Cordovan hat, and, on the left, stands the painting of the Plaza de Cibeles. This image, which is "frozen" to create a freeze frame that serves as the background image for the film's closing credits, essentially summarizes the film's unresolved conflict at the close of the narrative: Juan's internal conflict between the pull of his home country of Spain and the caricature of "Spanishness" that he performs professionally in order to survive and thrive in Germany.

the state of the domestic economy and the greater Spanish nation in the late 1970s.<sup>36</sup> This understanding of such work-related phenomena as widespread social problems that can potentially generate destructive consequences at the level of the individual Spanish male citizen represents a significant change in perspective from the earlier cinema of the period, which tends to characterize such personal conflicts as the direct consequence of the moral indiscretions of the male protagonist, as well as the corrupting foreign influences of capitalism and consumerism.<sup>37</sup>

## 1.5 Conclusions

The films *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, *Manolo la nuit*, and *Estoy hecho un chaval* all engage in one form or another with the notion of Spanish exceptionalism suggested by the famed tourism slogan “Spain is Different,” with the latter of these films extending beyond the explicit context of the Spanish tourism boom of the 1960s and 1970s in order to consider the valorization of Spanish culture more generally, as well as the value ascribed to Spanish craftsmanship specifically in other European countries, such as Germany. The male protagonists in each of these films find themselves involved in sources of employment entirely predicated on the

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<sup>36</sup> Although the film does not include any explicit allusions to the end of the Franco regime nor the ongoing transition to democracy, *Estoy hecho un chaval*, released in 1977, is marked by this critical moment in contemporary Spanish history, as well as the extrafilmic economic context, which witnessed Spain’s precarious economic situation due to the oil crises of the 1970s, in addition to a decrease in productivity, an increase in wages, a reversal of migration trends, the swelling of government budgetary deficits, and a sharp rise in unemployment. This may, in part, explain Juan’s gradual loss of confidence in the domestic labor market throughout the film as he comes to realize just how limited his work opportunities are within his home country.

<sup>37</sup> It bears noting that Lazaga’s earlier film, *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, walks the line in terms of ascribing blame to the greater economic and social influences contributing to the protagonist’s personal conflict or rendering such conflict the consequence of Sabino’s own moral dalliances. Although Sabino is characterized in large part as a pushover, unable to more proactively resist the overwhelming influence of capitalist-consumerist culture, a character flaw further compounded by his inability to deny the requests of his wife and mother-in-law, the main antagonist of the film appears to be capitalism and consumerism in general. In fact, the synopsis provided to the Comisión de Censura de la Junta de Censura y Apreciación de Películas describes the film as “una sátira sobre la absorción del hombre por la sociedad del consumo” (“a satire about man’s absorption into consumer society”). See “No Firmes Mas Letras, Cielo,” dated 1972, held in AGA,36,04225 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

promotion of exaggerated and stereotypical images of “Spanishness,” Spanish masculinities, and Spanish male sexualities for the consumption and enjoyment of a predominantly, though not exclusively, female European audience. Across the three films, the possibility of securing significant financial gains by appealing to the desires of a foreign consumer public, either through the tourism industry or through the sale of consumer goods (i.e. souvenirs), attributes material benefits to performances of self-parody and self-stereotyping that would otherwise be considered offensive, insulting, or even humiliating. While in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Manolo la nuit*, such exercises of self-commodification are ultimately interrupted, if not fully halted, by external forces such as state intervention (in the form of the Civil Guard) or the duties of the institution of marriage, in Pedro Lazaga’s post-Franco era film *Estoy hecho un chaval*, such activities, while undervalued in Spain, represent a potential means of reinitiating the Spanish man’s active participation in the labor market, even if he does so at the cost of his pride. In the following chapter, I will consider another—in this case, quite literal—form of self-commodification as a source of work, that is, sources of employment for men that revolve around Spanish women’s participation as active consumers and/or participants in the labor market. To do so, I will consider the figures of the *palanquero* and the *chulo*, whose professional activities range from the suggestion of sex work to a deliberate decision to live off the earnings of a female partner, as is the case of the *chulo*, broadly defined as “[un] hombre que «vive de las mujeres»” (Del Amo 136).

## Chapter 2: How to Live Off of Women; The *Palanquero* and the *Chulo*

In the previous chapter, I examined three popular comedies that point to the increasing economic value of Spanish masculinities in the larger European market, specifically, an exaggerated *españolidad* based in stereotypical tropes of Iberian masculinity, such as the *bandolero*, the *celtíbero español*, and the *majo* (or *manolo*). In each of these films, directors Pedro Lazaga and Mariano Ozores engage with the extra-filmic reality of Spain's tourism-driven economy, as well as the nation's reluctant conversion into an economic structure more closely resembling free market capitalism, in order to suggest that, despite the Franco regime's ultraconservative attitudes towards gender and sexuality, the country's self-commodification via the tourism industry in turn encourages individual men's own self-commodification as a strategy of employment. This self-commodification, which in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, *Manolo la nuit*, and *Estoy hecho un chaval* amounts to deliberate acts of self-parody through the embodiment of exaggerated and stereotypical images of Spanish masculinities, comes to represent a lucrative form of employment given the enthusiastic foreign tourist public eager to consume any semblance of Spanish culture, however artificial said representations of "Spanishness" may be.

While in Chapter 1 I studied the consumption of Spanish masculinities in a more symbolic sense by analyzing the commodification of "Spanishness" through economic ventures such as Sabino and Valentín's sexy-suspense dinner theater attraction in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, Manolo's "harem" in *Manolo la nuit*, and Juan's family-owned Germany-based souvenir shop in *Estoy hecho un chaval*, in this second chapter, I explicitly address the issue of the commodification and consumption of the Spanish male body and male sexuality through the

figure of the *palanquero*,<sup>38</sup> a profession that directly informs the plot of Fernando Merino's *Los días de Cabirio* (1971). While the film has been previously studied with a specific attention to the representation of Spanish masculinities, such analyses have focused overwhelmingly on the protagonist's embodiment of what has often been interpreted as a dissident and/or defective masculinity without any extended analysis of the film's representation of Spanish masculinities as they relate to the institution of work.<sup>39</sup> Juli Cáceres García, for example, points to the film's protagonist, Alfredo, as an important alternative to the masculine ideal privileged by the Franco regime, emphasizing this perceived difference as an implicit contestation of existing power structures:

[L]as masculinidades que se concretan en los cuerpos de los protagonistas de estos filmes [de la comedia *sexy* como *Los días de Cabirio*] son no solo complejas, sino que además se revelan a menudo disidentes para con [sic] la noción de heterosexualidad compulsiva imperante en el momento de su producción y estreno. De hecho, esta ineptitud por parte del sujeto español de encarnar la masculinidad heteronormativa que se le impone puede leerse como cabos sueltos que se abren a nuevas posibilidades interpretativas, como auténticos desafíos a la imposición de un modelo ideal de masculinidad franquista; desafíos que ofrecen nuevas formas de entender la identidad nacional y sexual española y, por ende, la posibilidad de cuestionar las estructuras de poder dominantes. (“Masculinidad disidente” 494).

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<sup>38</sup> Although *Los días de Cabirio* avoids clarifying in any significant detail the particularities of the profession, Gabriel Cardona Escanero and Juan Carlos Losada González's understanding of the figure of the *palanquero*, known also by other names, such as the *picador*, depending on the region, offers additional clarity regarding the profession in the larger context of Spain's tourism boom: “Su especialidad es camelar a las chicas extranjeras en las playas y las salas de fiestas” (“His specialty is seducing foreign women on the beaches and in nightclubs”) (143).

<sup>39</sup> See Cáceres García 2008, Cáceres García 2009, Pérez Morán 2014, Vivancos Álvarez 2010, Vivancos Álvarez 2012.

([T]he masculinities epitomized in the bodies of the protagonists of such films [of the sexy comedy tradition such as *Los días de Cabirio*] are not only complex but also often reveal themselves to be in opposition to the prevalent notion of compulsory heterosexuality dominant at the time of their production and release. In fact, this ineptitude on the part of the Spanish subject to embody the imposed heteronormative masculinity could be read as loose ends that open up new modes of interpretation as authentic challenges to the imposition of a Francoist ideal of masculinity; challenges that offer new ways of understanding Spanish national and sexual identity and, consequently, the possibility of questioning dominant power structures.)

While this reading calls attention to the alternative masculinities that find themselves represented in the popular comedies of the period and contests critical tendencies to reduce such comedies to their “valor sociológico” (“sociological value”) (Monterde, *Veinte años* 32) or to interpret such films’s content as “un simple reflejo de la sociedad del momento” (“simply a reflection of society at that time”) (Cáceres García, “Masculinidad disidente” 503),<sup>40</sup> it locates the subversiveness of the so-called sexy comedy as a genre, which Barry Jordan calls “Spain’s own home-grown, ersatz brand of soft-core pornography” (“Revisiting the ‘comedia sexy’” 172), in the protagonist’s perceived inability to live up to the idealized image of Spanish masculinity present in the collective imaginary. Cáceres García’s analysis also emphasizes the unique

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<sup>40</sup> Cáceres García singles out José Enrique Monterde, as well as José María Caparrós Lera, as representative of a dominant tendency among scholars and film critics to overlook or even vilify the Spanish popular comedy as a form of cinema lacking in “contenido profundo” (Monterde 32). Caparrós Lera’s *El cine español bajo el régimen de Franco (1936-1975)*, *El cine español de la democracia: De la muerte de Franco al cambio socialista*, and *Historia crítica del cine español* exemplify this trend among critics.

performance and physical appearance of actors such as Alfredo Landa,<sup>41</sup> who has often been characterized as “the unofficial symbol of the average Spaniard” of the era (Vivancos Álvarez, “Failure to Deliver” 44) and is arguably best known for his embodiment of the *macho ibérico* archetype.<sup>42</sup>

Such interpretations, however, ultimately ignore the particular significance of the protagonist’s professional trajectory throughout the film, which sees Alfredo (Alfredo Landa) abandon his job in the banking sector in favor of an opportunity to participate in the informal economy as a *palanquero* in the coastal town of Sitges, a profession the film vaguely defines as the male equivalent of the work performed by “esas lindas criaturas que venden sus encantos a los hombres para poder vivir” (“those lovely little things that sell their charms in order to live”).<sup>43</sup> By appealing to such an ambiguous definition, the film avoids wrestling directly with the specific issue of sex work as a potential form of employment, however, without necessarily taking the possibility of such work off the table. Instead, the narrative’s refusal to explicitly

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<sup>41</sup> Although Landa’s career would eventually see a shift to more dramatic roles throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, starring in films such as *El puente* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1977), *El crack* (José Luis Garci, 1981), and *Los santos inocentes* (Mario Camus, 1984), he is most well-known for his comedic performances and particular physical appearance, so much so that the *Diccionario del cine español* emphasizes Landa’s “fisonomía impar” (“odd physical appearance”) as one of his most defining characteristics. In fact, recent monographs on the male body in contemporary Spanish cinema have given special attention to the figure of Alfredo Landa, including Tatjana Pavlovic’s *Despotic Bodies and Transgressive Bodies: Spanish Culture from Francisco Franco to Jesús Franco* and Santiago Fouz-Hernández and Alfredo Martínez Expósito’s *Live Flesh: The Male Body in Contemporary Spanish Cinema*.

<sup>42</sup> Justin Crumbaugh defines the figure of *macho ibérico* as the “quintaessencia del supuesto carácter español [...] un sujeto nacional masculino que tiene plena capacidad para ignorar por completo o suspender las normas sociales y permitirse todos los placers prohibidos, tanto los sexuales como los materiales” (“the quintessence of the supposed Spanish character [...] a masculine national subject that has the capacity to completely ignore or cast off social norms and allow himself all prohibited pleasures, both sexual and material”) (5). For Crumbaugh, this understanding of the *macho ibérico* is directly linked to another stereotype of Spanish masculinity—that of the “Latin lover”—which sees the figure of the Spanish man “fetichizada como un objeto erótico según las mismas convenciones de representación asociadas, sobre todo en aquella época, con la mujer” (“fetichized as an erotic object according to the same conventions of representation associated with women, especially at the time”) (13).

<sup>43</sup> See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

characterize Alfredo's employment as sex work allows for a more general consideration of forms of employment that encourage, if not obligate, men to cultivate a working persona that is romantically and/or sexually desirable and to market such appeal as a commodity to be sold in the local market.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the protagonist's decision to pursue work as a *palanquero* is largely motivated by the unfavorable economic circumstances that have prevented his marriage to his long-time fiancée, Mari Carmen (Teresa Rabal). Although Alfredo assures his fiancée and future in-laws that his relocation to the Catalan coast is strictly for business motives (he claims to be on assignment from his current job at a local bank), in reality, he pursues employment as a *palanquero* on the direct advice of an old friend, Florencio (Simón Andreu), who boasts of having made a fortune in Sitges through his involvement in the profession. In addition to these promised economic benefits, Alfredo's potential professional success as a *palanquero* depends entirely on his ability to successfully present himself as an object of desire to a female consumer public and, therefore, represents a potential outlet for the protagonist's unreciprocated sexual advances towards his fiancée back in his hometown. Despite this possibility, the protagonist is able to make a living in Sitges, not by indulging his sex-crazed impulses through the exchange of romantic and/or sexual services, but rather, by catering to the consumer demands of married Spanish women, who solicit Alfredo's business without any serious intention of pursuing romantic and/or sexual activity in order to feign revenge against their cheating husbands. This particular arrangement, while it allows the protagonist to participate in a morally ambiguous sector of the informal economy without expressly violating Francoist discourses of sexual morality prohibiting non-marital sex, still necessitates Alfredo's deliberate self-presentation and establishment of a reputation as a worthy object of sexual desire and, by extension, a commodity

of interest for what appears to be an exclusively female client base.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence, any personal fantasies of sexual gratification on the part of the protagonist are ultimately rendered secondary to the demands of the female consumer public that he courts, which supersede entirely Alfredo's preconceived expectations regarding the reality of work as a *palanquero*.

Although Fernando Merino's *Préstame quince días*, also released in 1971 and also starring Alfredo Landa in the role of protagonist, does not address the exchange of sexual and/or romantic services as potential source of employment, I have chosen to discuss the film in conversation with *Los días de Cabirio*. In contrast to *Los días de Cabirio*, which follows the protagonist's move to Sitges in order to pursue work as a *palanquero*, *Préstame quince días* focuses on a Spanish emigrant's return to his hometown after several years working in Germany, including his attempts to convince his mother and fellow townspeople of the success he has achieved since being away. While the film's narratives are vastly different, *Los días de Cabirio* and *Préstame quince días* are thematically linked by a shared preoccupation with women as an increasingly dominant economic force in Spain's economy with direct implications for the nation's working men. While *Préstame quince días* focuses primarily on the developing relationship between Galdino (Alfredo Landa), recently returned from Germany, and Iris (Conchita Velasco), a cabaret performer that he hires to accompany him to his hometown for the holidays and to pose as his wife in order to appease his meddling mother, Flora (Lola Gaos), the film's subplot—the dynamic between Iris and her freeloading boyfriend, Alfonso (José Luis López Vázquez)—underscores the general principle underlying the respective occupations of the *palanquero* and the *chulo* as they are presented in Merino's comedies. Ultimately, through such employment, these men live off of and, thus, depend on the active participation of women either

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<sup>44</sup> It bears noting that the film does not entertain the possibility of appealing to potential male clients, despite the fact that male sex workers, historically, “service a predominantly male cliente” (Minichiello and Scott xv).

as consumers or as participants in the labor market. While, unlike Alfredo of *Los días de Cabirio*, *Préstame quince días*'s Alfonso does not attempt to offer sexual and/or romantic services in exchange for compensation, his deliberate decision to not work (at least not in the traditional sense) leaves him equally dependent on women for financial resources. In fact, the little professional activity that Alfonso does perform is as a headmaster of sorts for an impromptu *escuela de chulismo* ("school of *chulismo*"), an organization through which he indoctrinates other men on the necessity to abandon their work in favor of living off of women. While the resolution of *Préstame quince días* ultimately condemns such activities, correcting Alfonso's previous behavior by forcing his marriage to the daughter of one of his male pupils and, thus, formally mandating the necessity of work, the worldview that Alfonso's character embodies throughout the film, which presupposes the total abandonment of the male breadwinner model, is a lifestyle that that he practices with great enthusiasm and relative ease thanks to Iris's steady—and apparently lucrative—employment in the entertainment industry.

In this context, Álvaro del Amo's understanding of the figure of the *chulo* is a useful theoretical concept that allows us to link Alfredo and Alfonso's respective careers, despite their differences. As opposed to dominant understandings of the term "chulo," which tend to emphasize men's protagonism in the sex work industry and subsequent financial gain from the work of another (often the work of the female sex workers under their supervision), as well as the defective moral character often associated with such an occupation,<sup>45</sup> Del Amo instead proposes a broader conceptualization of the figure of the *chulo* as "el hombre que «vive de las

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<sup>45</sup> The *Diccionario de la lengua española* lists "rufián" ("ruffian, pimp") as one of the accepted definitions of the term "chulo," clarifying that the term stands in for "[un] hombre dedicado al tráfico de la prostitución" ("a man dedicated to the facilitation of sex work"). Similarly, "rufián" is defined as a "persona sin honor, perversa, despreciable" ("person without honor, depraved, despicable"), solidifying the link between deficient moral values and such work.

mujeres»” (“the man that lives off of women”) (136). Parting from this definition, Del Amo’s subsequent analysis of the figure of the *chulo* in Spanish popular comedy is largely categorical and separates manifestations of the *chulo* into two main archetypes: “el que lo es” (“he who is [a *chulo*]”), that is, “un hombre violento, brutal, que supone un peligro, una amenaza de la que hay que librar a las mujeres” (“a brutal, violent man that constitutes danger and poses a threat from which women need to be freed”), and “el que no lo es” (“he who is not [a *chulo*]”), meaning “un personaje ridículo, que es en el fondo un infeliz [...] y más que chulo es, a menudo, un hombre que acabará casándose” (“a ridiculous character that deep down is a fool [...] and more than a *chulo* is often a man who ends up getting married”) (136, 137).

While this dichotomous categorization is not entirely useful, Del Amo’s definition effectively reframes the figure of the *chulo* outside of the exclusive parameters of the sexual economy, which tend to reduce the *chulo* to an intermediary between parties involved in a (gendered) economic-sexual exchange. Instead, “chulo” is defined more generally as any man whose economic wellbeing is dependent on the financial and professional interventions of women. Significantly, the particular manifestation of the *chulo* exemplified by the character of Alfonso in *Préstame quince días* emerges as the antithesis of the male breadwinner model in the sense that *by choice* his livelihood depends entirely on his female partner’s active and consistent participation in the labor market. Furthermore, Alfonso’s limited engagement with the world of work is ironically in service of halting the necessity of his own employment, given that his *escuela de chulismo* espouses the virtues of living off of the wages of working women while also extolling the importance of conserving the existing gender hierarchy that privileges masculine authority.

In this way, Merino's films share a common focus on sources of employment that depend directly upon the participation of women either as consumers, as is the case in *Los días de Cabirio*, or as members of the workforce, as we observe in *Préstame quince días*. What is more, in both cases, women, specifically, Spanish women, ultimately serve as the vehicle responsible for correcting—or, at the very least, resisting—the morally ambiguous behavior associated with Alfredo and Alfonso's respective professions. While Alfredo's inability to satisfy his own sexual impulses through work in the tourist-laden coastal city of Sitges only further emboldens him to demand premarital sex from his fiancée upon his return to the *pueblo*, perhaps in an attempt to address his mixed professional success as a *palanquero*, the conclusion of *Los días de Cabirio* seemingly confirms Mari Carmen's steadfast resolve to fend off such advances until Alfredo can accumulate the funds necessary to carry out the couple's marriage. As for Alfonso of *Préstame quince días*, who eventually abandons Iris in order to marry “una millonaria huérfana” (“an orphan millionaire”) (Mirta Miller), with the understanding that her supposed financial status will finally enable him to permanently abandon the institution of work and, thus, live out his *chulo* fantasy, he ultimately finds himself the victim of his own scheme:<sup>46</sup> his heiress wife turns out to be fortuneless and Alfonso is forced to comply with Francoist laws, such as the 1938 “Fuero del Trabajo,” mandating work as a “deber social, [que] será exigido inexcusablemente, en cualquiera de sus formas, a todos los españoles no impedidos estimándolo tributo *obligado* al patrimonio nacional” (“social responsibility, to be required, in whatever form, of all able-bodied Spaniards as an *obligatory* tribute to the country's national patrimony”) (6179; emphasis

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<sup>46</sup> Alfonso's storyline shares a number of similarities to Miguel de Cervantes's *El casamiento engañoso*. In Cervantes's novella, Campuzano, a soldier recently discharged from the hospital in a sorry state, relates the circumstances that have brought him to his current place and condition: Campuzano marries Estefanía, entranced by the promised economic advantages of taking her as a wife, only for Estefanía to flee with Campuzano's most valuable possessions, thus out-tricking her husband.

added).<sup>47</sup> In this way, both *Los días de Cabirio* and *Préstame quince días* define work, particularly as it relates to the relationship between men and women, as an institution with inherent moral responsibilities directly tied to issues of gender and sexuality and, by extension, to the social and legal expectations of the State.

### 1.1 Censorship and *Los días de Cabirio*

While the film would eventually be approved for exhibition by censors on October 29, 1975, it bears noting that prior to its final approval, *Los días de Cabirio*, co-written by Juan Miguel Lamet and Alfonso Paso, generated a great deal of controversy and debate, including a spirited defense of the film contesting its suppression from producer José Frade.<sup>48</sup> The ongoing dialogue between Frade and the state censorship apparatus prior to the film's theatrical release represents important context not only for our understanding of *Los días de Cabirio*, specifically, but also for the larger debates surrounding popular comedy as a filmic genre in Spain throughout the 1970s. In fact, written correspondence exchanged between Frade and the General Director of Department of Popular Culture and Performances, as well as within the Department of Popular Culture and Performances itself, reveals censors's changing attitudes—and growing fears—

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<sup>47</sup> Though the film does not mention this law explicitly, the 1938 “Fuero del Trabajo,” later replaced by the “Ley Orgánica del Estado del 10 de enero de 1967,” which introduced legislation meant to solidify the institutionalization of the Franco regime, describes “la producción española en la hermandad de todos sus elementos” (“Spanish production and all of its components”) as a “unidad de servicio a la Fortaleza de la Patria y al bien común de todos los españoles” (“unity of service to the strength of the nation and the common good of all Spaniards”). In this way, work and production are framed as a civic duty performed in service of the State.

<sup>48</sup> Active since the late 1950s, Frade has seen success in the worlds of theater and television, as well as in film. In the realm of film, Frade was a prominent producer of many of Spain's spaghetti westerns (which were often co-productions between Italy and Spain), however, with the release of *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Ramón [Tito] Fernández, 1970), his productions would pivot largely to popular comedy, at least throughout the 1970s. In recent years, Frade continues to be an active producer of film and television, having released the film *Por un puñado de besos* (David Menkes, 2014) and the television series *La sonata del silencio* (2016), with several additional projects currently in pre-production.

regarding popular comedy as an increasingly significant cultural influence, particularly, in light of the enormous commercial success of Ramón (Tito) Fernández's *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970).<sup>49</sup>

Although censors reserved the right to reject a given film at any stage of its production, *Los días de Cabirio* suffered the surprising fate of not facing rejection until *after* the film's production had been completed, a decision that surprised and rattled Frade's production company given the censors's previous approval of the film's script in the initial stages of the censorship process. In effect, the synopsis provided to the Ministry of Information and Tourism by the film's producer made no attempt to hide the film's intentions to address the unsanctioned informal economy, as well as its resolve to do so through the specific lens of Spanish masculinity. The synopsis reads:

Cada hombre nace con un sino claramente marcado. Y Alfredo Velázquez no iba a ser una excepción a la regla. [...] Pero Alfredo Velázquez se diferenciaba de los demás en una cosa: al menos una vez trató de salir de la "fosa común" del aburrimiento hispánico. Y así se fue a la costa para ser palanquero... ¿Qué es eso de palanquero?... Vamos, señores, pero, ¿en qué mundo viven? Palanquero viene de palanca... ya es una profesión... bueno, un oficio que se trata de... tiene gracia que ahora no voy a saber cómo explicarlo... Bueno, ¿ustedes conocen a esas lindas criaturas que venden sus encantos a los hombres para poder vivir?... Pues, el palanquero hace lo mismo pero al revés. Es decir, vende su "palmito" a las extranjeras pasionales que invaden cada año nuestras costas a cambio de dólares, libras o cualquier otra moneda de cambio fuerte.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This topic will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>50</sup> See "Los Días de Cabirio," dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

(Every man is born with a clearly marked destiny. And Alfredo Velázquez would not be an exception to the rule. [...] But Alfredo Velázquez was not like all other men in one aspect: at least he tried to escape the “mass grave” of Spanish boredom. And for that reason he left for the coast to be a *palanquero*... What is this about *palanquero*?... Come on, folks, what world do you live in? *Palanquero* comes from the word “palanca”... and it’s a profession... well, a trade that consists of... it’s funny, now I don’t know how to explain it... Are you familiar with those lovely little things that sell their charms to men in order to live?... Well, the *palanquero* does the same thing but the other way around. That is, he sells his “beautiful body” to the passionate female foreigners that invade our coasts each year in exchange for dollars, pounds or any other currency.)

Significantly, the film’s synopsis centers in on the question of how Alfredo, the film’s protagonist, compares to other Spanish men, especially in matters of personal wealth and employment. Like his compatriots, Alfredo is faced with the issue of accumulating enough savings in order to marry, a process that not only drags on for “años y años” (“years and years”)<sup>51</sup> but also leads to unfulfilled sexual urges due to his fiancée’s firm refusal to engage in premarital sex, a resolve that she shares with the vast majority of the nation’s women. In this way, employment, personal wealth, marriage, and, by extension, male sexuality, are presented as inexorably linked, leaving Alfredo to live “tan reprimido como al 80% de sus compatriotas ya que su novia, como las del 80% de sus compatriotas, era pobre pero honrada” (“as repressed as 80% of his compatriots since his fiancée, like those of the 80% of his compatriots, was poor but

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<sup>51</sup> See “Los Días de Cabirio,” dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

decent”).<sup>52</sup> With this relationship established, it quickly becomes apparent that the “aburrimiento hispánico” from which Alfredo seeks to free himself, which the synopsis’s narrator likens to a mass grave,<sup>53</sup> is at once a personal, financial, and romantic (i.e. sexual) boredom, one that prevents the protagonist from living to his fullest potential. In this context, then, the possibility of informal employment as a *palanquero* in a coastal city, an environment populated by female tourists not unlike those described in Chapter 1, comes to represent a dually advantageous opportunity for the male protagonist: in theory, pursuing such work in a popular tourist site on the coast would not only allow Alfredo to profit financially off of a perceived demand for “[el] palanquero celtibérico” (“Celtiberian *palanquero*”),<sup>54</sup> which appears to represent a popular desire of female tourists visiting the country, but also, in the process, to indulge in an economically advantageous expression of male sexuality, significantly, outside of the confines of the marital institution.

Despite the fact that film’s synopsis goes on to clarify that Alfredo’s attempts to “luchar contra su sino” (“fight against his fate”)<sup>55</sup> are ultimately a lost cause, leading to his return to the *pueblo*, arguably, no less sexually repressed than when he left it, censors originally voted to prohibit *Los días de Cabirio*’s exhibition upon their evaluation of the completed film, citing “Norma 18” of the 1963 “Normas de censura cinematográfica” as their formal justification,

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<sup>52</sup> See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>53</sup> While censors often criticized popular comedies such as *Los días de Cabirio* for their “mal gusto” (“poor taste”), the synopsis’s off-color characterization of Spanish boredom as a mass grave is certainly in bad taste given the presence of mass graves throughout Spain stemming from the Civil War, as well as the years following the close of the war in 1939, in which numerous victims of the Franco regime were buried.

<sup>54</sup> See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>55</sup> See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated September 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

which suppressed those films in which “la acumulación de escenas o planos que en sí mismos no tengan gravedad, cre[a], por la reiteración un clima lascivo, brutal, grosero o morboso” (“the accumulation of scenes or shots that in and of themselves are not of concern create, through their repetition, a lewd, brutal, vulgar or unwholesome climate”) (3930). Significantly, this decision on the part of the censorship apparatus would lead to an extended dispute between the Ministry of Information and Tourism and producer José Frade, who openly questioned the perceived arbitrariness of the censors’s sudden application of “Norma 18,” especially in light of their original approval of the film’s script. Of particular relevance in Frade’s appeal, which insists that the film had not only not deviated from the approved script “ni en escenas, ni en imágenes, ni en diálogos” (“neither in its scenes, nor in its images, nor in its dialogues”), but also that the production company had taken great care to avoid the possibility of “doble interpretación o sugerencias equívocas” (“double entendres or ambiguous insinuations”),<sup>56</sup> is the producer’s concrete explanation of the economic implications of the censors’s sudden decision to prohibit the film’s exhibition:

[N]os encontramos en el momento presente ante una película absolutamente sin problemas y cuyo guión fue debidamente autorizado y que es prohibida para su exhibición. Y por ello nos preguntamos: ¿Qué garantía van a tener ahora y en adelante los productores si la actual prohibición prospera, puesto que hasta la fecha esa Dirección General ha informado continua y públicamente que la censura previa de guiones existía precisamente como garantía para los productores, es decir, como salvaguardia y tranquilidad del dinero invertido?

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<sup>56</sup> See “Los Días de Cabirio,” dated October 13, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

(We find ourselves at the present moment before a film without any problems whatsoever and whose script was properly authorized and yet is prohibited from exhibition.

Therefore, we ask ourselves: What guarantee are producers going to have from now on if the current prohibition stands, given that to date the Directorate-General has continually and publicly communicated that prior censorship of scripts existed precisely as a guarantee for producers, that is, as a safeguard and protection of the money invested in the film?)

In effect, Frade's defense of the film appeals to both the financial implications of the censors's sudden prohibition of the film—which he insists “supone el borde de la ruina para [el productor]” (“signifies the brink of ruin for the producer”)<sup>57</sup>—as well as the production company's existing relationship to the censorship apparatus, having produced eleven films in the two years prior to *Los días de Cabirio*'s intended release in 1971.<sup>58</sup> Although the “Normas de censura cinematográfica” clearly specify that the concrete interpretation and application of said norms is ultimately at the discretion of the censorship apparatus,<sup>59</sup> Frade emphasizes a collective understanding among filmmakers and producers that films would be guaranteed approval for

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<sup>57</sup> See “Los Días de Cabirio,” dated October 13, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>58</sup> Along with the letter, Frade provided a list of the eleven films produced by José Frade Producciones Cinematográficas since 1969, including *Marta* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1971), *Los compañeros*, (Sergio Corbucci, 1970), *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Ramón [Tito] Fernández, 1970), *Una lagartija con piel de mujer* (Lucio Fulci, 1971), *Préstame quince días* (Fernando Merino, 1971), *Días de angustia* (Luciano Ercoli, 1970), *No desearás la mujer del vecino* (Fernando Merino, 1971), *Los fríos ojos del miedo* (Enzo G. Castellari, 1971), *Los días de Cabirio* (Fernando Merino, 1971), *La muerte camina con tacón alto* (Luciano Ercoli, 1971), and *Historia de una traición* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1971).

<sup>59</sup> The last two norms of the 1963 “Normas de censura cinematográfica,” “Norma 36” and “Norma 37,” state that “[l]a interpretación de las Normas, su aplicación a los casos concretos y la resolución de los no previstos, corresponden al Organismo encargado de la censura de películas cinematográficas” (“the interpretation of the norms, their application in concrete cases, as well as the resolution of unforeseen cases, corresponds to the body charged with the censorship of films”) (3930). Furthermore, “[e]l Organismo encargado de la censura de películas podrá proponer las modificaciones de estas Normas que aconseje la experiencia de su aplicación” (“the body charged with the censorship of films can propose modifications to these norms based on experience”) (3930).

exhibition so long as the film's script was approved and any further modifications or suppressions specified by the Comisión de Censura were observed. The producer explains that the censors's decision, if enforced, would effectively squash any possibility of gaining returns on the 12,000,000 *pesetas* invested in the production of *Los días de Cabirio* and would essentially prevent the production company from making good on any outstanding contracts with actors, screenwriters, and crew members, much less from pursuing any additional productions. In this way, Frade's appeal, while it problematizes the seemingly arbitrary decision on the part of censors to suddenly prohibit *Los días de Cabirio*'s exhibition, privileges the financial repercussions of the film's unexpected prohibition as a justification for the film's reevaluation, perhaps in an attempt to encourage censors to consider the potential consequences of José Frade Producciones Cinematográficas's potential demise for the nation's larger economy.

Furthermore, a note addressed to Enrique Thomas de Carranza, Director General of Popular Culture and Entertainment from 1969-1972, from a representative of the Sub-Directorate of Cinematography, referencing the reevaluation of *Los días de Cabirio*, as well as that of Alonso Paso's *Ligue Story* (1972),<sup>60</sup> reveals a growing sense of anxiety on the part of censors regarding "la enorme comercialidad" ("the enormous commerciality") of such comedies, not only as it related to the cultural influence of said films, but also in relationship to the film industry's contributions to Spanish industry as a whole.<sup>61</sup> Characterized in large part by "la

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<sup>60</sup> Another comedy of the period, *Ligue Story* (Alfonso Paso, 1972) follows Dámaso (Tony Leblanc) as he attempts to build a relationship with Maribel (Paca Gabaldón), a young woman he meets via an ad in the newspaper. Dámaso convinces his friend, Jerónimo (Manuel Alexandre), to pose as his father so that Maribel will believe that he is a respectable young man with strong family ties.

<sup>61</sup> See "Nota para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos," dated October 16, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

grosera zafiedad de su tema” (“the crude uncouthness of their subject matter”),<sup>62</sup> it appears that the unexpected commercial success of such films, which censors may have been tempted previously to dismiss as inconsequential, contributed to a more rigorous evaluation of popular comedies, even from producers with a lengthy list of credits, such as Frade. According to the note’s author, the debate amongst censors surrounding *Ligue Story* and *Los días de Cabirio*’s respective reevaluations was “laboriosísimo” (“extremely laborious”), resulting in the Comisión de Censura en Pleno de la Junta de Censura y Apreciación de Película’s ultimate decision to grant the films its conditional approval, contingent upon the implementation of concrete suppressions “realizadas con la debida corrección técnica, y sin afectar a la continuidad e inteligibilidad del desarrollo argumental” (“carried out with the proper technical correction and without affecting the continuity or intelligibility of the narrative”).<sup>63</sup> In doing so, censors took full advantage of the jurisdiction granted to them by the “Normas de censura cinematográfica,” requiring *Los días de Cabirio*’s producer to make an additional sixteen modifications, most of which, significantly, discouraged referring to the protagonist, Alfredo, as “macho” (“masculine,” “manly”), perhaps in an attempt to avoid any interpretations of his character as representative of an ideal Spanish masculinity, before granting the film’s final approval.<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding the censors’s tentative approval, in the same exchange, the Sub-Directorate of Cinematography, on behalf of the Comisión de Guiones, also expressed a

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<sup>62</sup> See “Nota para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos,” dated October 16, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>63</sup> See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated October 19, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>64</sup> Censors requested the suppression of phrases such as “Yo soy un macho” (“I’m a man”), “Qué macho” (“How masculine,” “How manly”), “Esto es un macho” (“This is a man”), spoken by or referring to the protagonist within the explicit context of Alfredo’s work as a *palanquero* in Sitges. See “Los Dias de Cabirio,” dated January 12, 1972, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

newfound sense of concern for “la postura de los productores y por el mal gusto y ríjosa zafiedad con que dichos temas se llevan a la pantalla” (“the producers’s stance and for the bad taste and sexually suggestive uncouthness with which such themes are brought to the screen”). Having identified such tendencies, the Sub-Directorate of Cinematography promises Carranza’s office that those charged with evaluating scripts would proceed with “la debida cautela y rigurosidad” (“with due caution and rigor”) as they considered future projects, especially those that dealt with themes addressed not only by films like *Ligue Story* and *Los días de Cabirio*, but also other previously authorized films that had been previously released, such as *No desearás la vecina de enfrente*<sup>65</sup> and *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, which the note mentions directly. The note’s author also identifies “el deseo de los productores españoles de ‘desbancar las taquillas” (“the desire of Spanish producers to sell out theaters”) as an increasingly dominant ideal in the Spanish film industry,<sup>66</sup> a trend that would have an increasingly direct impact on the censors’s evaluation of popular films due to the unignorable reality of popular cinema’s growing appeal to domestic audiences.

Ultimately, this consciousness serves to reveal a growing interest in the economic contributions of the film industry to the Spanish nation, a concern not entirely unlike that expressed by Frade in his original appeal to the Director General of Popular Culture and Performances. Though the Sub-Directorate of Cinematography does not elaborate on these claims in any significant detail, the note’s author clarifies: “En la decisión de autorizar en

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<sup>65</sup> Despite the title, this appears to be a reference to *No desearás la mujer del vecino* (Fernando Merino, 1972), which follows Pedro (Alfredo Landa) and Mariano (Aldo Giuffrè) as they pursue the young women who also work at the same advertising agency. In response, their wives, Inés (Ira von Fürstenberg) and Susana (Sylva Koscina), decide to teach their husbands a lesson by participation in their own extramarital activities.

<sup>66</sup> See “Nota para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos,” dated October 16, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

principio las dos películas que arriba se citan [*Ligue Story* y *Los días de Cabirio*], han jugado también su papel los trascendentes problemas que se crean a la industria española e incluso a la propia Administración con unas drásticas prohibiciones” (“The significant problems created for Spanish industry and even for the very government with a few drastic prohibitions have also played a role in the decision to authorize the two aforementioned films [*Ligue Story* and *Los días de Cabirio*]”).<sup>67</sup> While the note ends without any additional clarification regarding the particular nature of the “trascendentes problemas” threatening Spanish industry and, by extension, the Franco regime, such a statement implicitly acknowledges the film industry’s economic contributions to the Spanish nation, as opposed to characterizing the medium as a strictly cultural influence with no direct impact on the country’s economy. Such preoccupations suggest that the growing commercial appeal of popular comedies, which brought with them not only revenue, but also, as Frade’s original argument explains, jobs, appears to have put increasing pressure on the censorship apparatus to consider the economic repercussions of its rulings for the nation’s industry with the same weight as the moral consequences of such films for the Spanish population.

## **1.2 *Los días de Cabirio***

In much the same way that the censors’s concerns regarding the increasing popularity of comedy as a filmic genre reveal an uncomfortable blurring of moral sensibilities and financial interests, Fernando Merino’s *Los días de Cabirio* considers the personal consequences of financial instability, namely, in the realm of romance and sex, through the film’s protagonist, Alfredo. Although Alfredo is employed at a local bank and spends his days busy exchanging

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<sup>67</sup> See “Nota para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos,” dated October 16, 1971, held in AGA,36,04222 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

foreign currency for visiting (usually female) tourists, such work has apparently not generated enough income to facilitate his marriage to his long-time fiancée, Mari Carmen. Significantly, the couple's delayed nuptials also serve to effectively postpone any possibility of sexual activity between the pair as Mari Carmen, noticeably influenced by the continuous warnings of her conservative parents,<sup>68</sup> whose values are perfectly aligned with the moral customs imposed by Francoist ideological norms, refuses to indulge Alfredo's repeated attempts at seduction until the couple officially ties the knot.

It is precisely this conflict that draws the protagonist to informal employment as a *palanquero*, an opportunity that presents itself through a chance run-in with an old friend, Florencio, who encourages Alfredo to pursue work in Sitges, a coastal city near Barcelona that he promises is teeming with tourists. While the protagonist's relocation to the coast for work does not successfully guarantee his marriage to Mari Carmen nor does it result in his own sexual gratification, Alfredo's brief tenure as a *palanquero* is ultimately an exploration of what happens when "el cuerpo del macho ibérico es cosificado al ponerse a la venta y entra así en la economía del capitalismo tardío como un nuevo bien de consumo") ("the Iberian macho's body is objectified upon being offered for sale, entering, in this way, into the late capitalist economy as a new consumer good") (Cáceres García, "Masculinidad disidente" 497). While Alfredo's body is not consumed in the way that we might expect (i.e. in an economic-sexual exchange), his work in Sitges requires him to perform male sexuality with the specific intent of attracting a female client base and also subjects him to a form of sexual objectification that renders his body a

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<sup>68</sup> Mari Carmen is under the constant vigilance of her aptly named mother, Doña Pura (Mercedes Barranco), who strives to uphold "una familia decente" ("a respectable family") and, throughout the film, makes frequent pleas to the Virgen del Perpetuo Socorro (Our Lady of Perpetual Help), often in a state of anger and/or in tears. Despite Mari Carmen's steadfast resistance to Alfredo's frequent advances, Doña Pura often scolds and berates her daughter, insisting that "esa niña me va a matar a disgustos") ("that girl will be the death of me").

commodity with economic value, whether or not the male body, in this case, is consumed via the act of sexual intercourse.

The film's introductory scenes clarify what will come to represent the protagonist's primary (and largely intertwined) preoccupations: money and sex. Presented in succession, the opening of *Los días de Cabirio* couples the small-town *pueblo*'s collective interest in La Quiniela, a long-odds high-prize betting medium based on correctly forecasting the outcome in a number of soccer games,<sup>69</sup> with Alfredo's particular resolve to force the issue of sex with his fiancée, Mari Carmen, to whom he has been engaged for nearly four years. Disheartened by unfavorable results in La Quiniela, Alfredo decides to try his luck with Mari Carmen, who he hopes to successfully seduce while her characteristically vigilant mother is asleep in the other room. While the protagonist's advances are initially playful, approaching his fiancée in the guise of "el hombre-lobo" ("the wolfman") as an excuse to claw at and jump on her, his insistence becomes more and more aggressive in spite of Mari Carmen's emphatic refusal to indulge him. The confrontation that ensues establishes several key elements of the couple's relationship: they have been together for several years; they have yet to marry and, as a consequence, have not yet had sex; and the circumstances preventing their marriage seem to be predominantly economic. The couple's increasingly physical squabble, which sees Alfredo tackle Mari Carmen to the ground as she attempts to wrestle him off of her, serves to clarify the protagonist's understanding of the couple's relationship as it stands in terms of an uneven exchange. In doing so, Alfredo

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<sup>69</sup> La Quiniela is perhaps the most popular example of sports betting in Spain and is essentially "a mutual bet in which the betters make predictions about the results of 15 football games that appear in competitions authorized by the Royal Spanish Football Federation or other national or international institutions" (Vázquez, López, and Pintó 737). La Quiniela officially started in 1946 and became property of the Spanish state with the creation of the Patronato de Apuestas Mutuas Deportivas Benéficas, which reported directly to the Tax Department until the restoration of democracy in Spain after Franco's death in 1975. La Quiniela now falls under the authority of the Sociedad Estatal Loterías y Apuestas del Estado.

implies that marriage and, by extension, sex are due recompense for the commodities that he has provided for Mari Carmen:

ALFREDO. ¡No puedo aguantar más! ¡Parece mentira que no lo comprendas! Llevo cuatro años a pan y agua.

MARI CARMEN. Tres y medio. Además, ya será menos. ¡A saber lo que harás tú por ahí!

ALFREDO. ¡No digas tonterías! ¡Tú eres la única mujer de mi vida! Lo que pasa es que lo quieres todo y no das nada a cambio.

MARI CARMEN. ¿Yo?

ALFREDO. ¡Sí!

MARI CARMEN. ¿Qué es lo que te pido yo?

ALFREDO. La lavadora, la televisión. Siempre estás hablando de comprar y nunca de casarnos.

MARI CARMEN. ¡Pero si ni siquiera tenemos el dormitorio!

ALFREDO. ¡Ay! ¡No me lo menciones! ¡Que me da algo!

(ALFREDO. I can't take it anymore! It's incredible that you don't understand! I've spent the last four years living off of bread and water.

MARI CARMEN. Three and a half. Don't exaggerate. Who knows what you're doing out there!

ALFREDO. Don't be ridiculous! You're the only woman in my life! The thing is you want everything and don't want to give anything in exchange.

MARI CARMEN. Me?

ALFREDO. Yes!

MARI CARMEN. And what is it that I ask of you?

ALFREDO. The washing machine, the television. You're always talking about shopping and never about us getting married.

MARI CARMEN. But we don't even have a bedroom set!

ALFREDO. Ay! Don't get me started!)

We learn that Alfredo's increasing impatience is ultimately the result of the couple's extended engagement, which has gone on for nearly four years, seemingly with no end in sight due to the couple's economic circumstances. Consequently, this delay in the couple's marital union has had a direct impact on the protagonist's own sexual gratification as his fiancée refuses to engage in premarital sex. While the protagonist's claim that he has been "living off of bread and water" implies that he has been involuntarily celibate (though he avoids saying so in such terms), Mari Carmen's retort suggests a level of skepticism about her fiancé's activities outside of the relationship. Although the couple's argument is ultimately brought on by Alfredo's decision to force the issue of sex, it appears that the root of the conflict in question is, in fact, money. While Alfredo does not mention sex directly, addressing instead the issue of marriage, his assertion that his fiancée wants everything but is unwilling to give anything in return points to a conception of female sexuality—specifically, women's participation in the act of sex—as a valuable form of currency in male-female relationships. The protagonist's comments, in effect, reflect an understanding of the couple's relationship in largely economic terms, that is, as a system in which sexual activity is negotiated by men and women in much the same way that a buyer and seller might negotiate in the marketplace. In this context, men seek to acquire sex from women by offering other resources in exchange, which function as material investments. In this way, when sex does occur, Baumeister and Vohs explain, "it will often be in a context in which the

man gives the woman material gifts, consideration and respect, commitment to a relationship as desired by her, or other goods” (340).

In this way, Alfredo’s mention of the purchase of a washing machine and a television, which he complains has not brought the couple any closer to marriage, not only suggests a diversion of funds, but also a pending transactional exchange that has yet to be completed. Nonetheless, Mari Carmen’s assertion that the couple cannot begin to seriously discuss marriage until they have their own home clarifies the dynamic regulating the couple’s relationship: the protagonist, it appears, cannot afford to provide his fiancée with material commodities while simultaneously saving for a home, a home that is, in turn, necessary for the couple to get married. What is more, marriage represents a fundamental prerequisite for Mari Carmen’s reciprocation of Alfredo’s sexual advances. It is precisely this conflict that drives the film’s narrative, linking money and sex in such a way that the protagonist’s sexual gratification is essentially impossible without a level of economic self-sufficiency (at least under the current moral regime, which strictly prohibits extramarital sexual activity).

Although in his waking life Alfredo shows little patience for Mari Carmen’s resistance, an extended dream sequence speaks to the underlying anxieties motivating the protagonist’s frustrations, namely, the fear that he may never be able to afford marriage and, by extension, will never be able to enjoy sex. Having dozed off during his lunch break at the bank, the protagonist dreams of his and Mari Carmen’s eventual wedding day. While in Alfredo’s dream, the bride retains her youthful appearance, the protagonist, on the other hand, appears “envejecido, octogenario, casi al borde del sepulcro” (“aged, in his eighties, on the verge of death”)<sup>70</sup> and clearly overwhelmed by the day’s festivities. When the time comes for the couple to enjoy their

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<sup>70</sup> This description is cited directly from the original script of the film written by Juan Miguel Lamet and Alfonso Paso. See “Los días de Cabirio,” dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05581 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

wedding night, Alfredo displays clear signs of physical weakness, unable to even support himself walking without Mari Carmen's assistance. Although Alfredo attempts to dismiss the severity of his condition by blaming his fatigue on the commotion of the wedding, when the couple finally settles in for the evening, presumably with the intention of consummating their marriage, the excitement ultimately proves too much to handle. As Mari Carmen undresses behind a partition, the viewer observes Alfredo as he struggles to disrobe, moaning and groaning as he yanks off his trousers to reveal a pair of long underwear. In the time that it takes the protagonist to partially undress, Mari Carmen emerges from behind the partition dressed in far more suggestive attire: she appears in full bridal lingerie. Alfredo, however, is so shocked by his new wife's appearance that he suffers an apparent heart attack, collapsing onto the bed to Mari Carmen's dismay, who attempts to resuscitate him to no avail. Although Alfredo's dream is ultimately cut short when a coworker shakes him awake, warning him that their boss has noticed that he has left his post and, thus, confirming the dominating influence of work, the protagonist's nightmare suggests that marriage and, by extension, his own sexual gratification represent a seemingly unattainable—or, at the very least, delayed—reality. The protagonist's nightmare, which culminates in a fatal heart attack that definitively delays the fulfillment of his long-awaited sexual urges, points to a genuine fear that marriage, as well as the intimate contact (i.e. sex) that said institution not only facilitates but formally sanctions, are essentially unachievable without financial and job security.

Given such anxieties, Alfredo's chance encounter with an old friend, Florencio, who stops in at the bank to exchange foreign currency, further destabilizes the assumption that professional activities, such as the protagonist's banking job in the financial sector, are a guarantee of economic stability. In effect, Florencio's surprise appearance raises the possibility of equally, if not more, lucrative sources of informal employment. In the case of *Los días de*

*Cabirio*, informal employment, including illegitimate or criminal activities, such as employment in the sex work industry, emerges as an alternative to work in the formal sector (such as Alfredo's banking job). While sex is never explicitly mentioned in Alfredo's conversation with Florencio, whose work is merely defined as "lo mismo que [hace] las mujeres, pero al revés" ("the same thing that women do but the other way around"), Florencio's description of "el oficio" ("the profession") characterizes such employment as short-term, however, with significant returns. Florencio explains that his lavish living accommodations, which he describes nonchalantly as "cochinas apariencias" ("a lousy façade"), are all thanks to the patronage of "la sueca" ("the Swedish woman"), a young woman that by all appearances is his latest client.<sup>71</sup> In fact, Florencio describes his access to such material commodities as one of the primary advantages of his work as a *palanquero*, luxuries made possible by the well-paying nature of the occupation, which he argues is more economically advantageous than Alfredo's job at the bank but also far more accessible to the average Spanish man given the current demands of the market:

FLORENCIO. Tú estás haciendo el canelo con un uniforme hasta aquí, viendo pasar las divisas por delante de tus narices. [...] Si allí liga hasta un enano...

ALFREDO. ¿Un enano? ¿Dónde?

FLORENCIO. Allí. Donde tú deberías estar. Te largas un mes—fíjate, un solo mes—y

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<sup>71</sup> Ironically, the viewer comes to find out that appearances are, in fact, deceptive when it comes to Florencio's employment situation. Del Amo summarizes the reality of Florencio's work in its most basic terms: in reality, he is not a sex worker, rather his job "se ve reducido a un papel de enfermero, de criado a una señora de edad convalesciente, que requiere cuidados y le llama cuando llega la hora de tomar la medicina" ("is reduced to the role of a nurse, serving an elderly convalescent woman that requires care and calls for him when she needs to take her medicine" (137-138). It turns out that the *sueca*, who at first glance appears to be Florencio's client, is, in fact, his coworker, with whom he attends to the needs of an ailing old woman.

vuelves forrado para lo que quieras. Y si te gusta el oficio como a mí, a Estocolmo. [...] Oye, sin ofender, si uno tiene su encanto y a ellas les gusta, pues, que paguen.

ALFREDO. ¿Pero pagan?

FLORENCIO. Hombre, claro.

ALFREDO. ¿Encima?

FLORENCIO. Encima. [...] Seguro que en el banco no te pagan ni los puntos.

ALFREDO. Sí, sí, sí. Los de mi madre.

FLORENCIO. Pues, a tu madre le pones un piso que... Bueno.

(FLORENCIO. You're the one being played for a fool with a uniform up to here, watching money pass right under your nose. [...] When over there, even a dwarf can hook up.

ALFREDO. Even a dwarf? Where?

FLORENCIO. There. Where you should be. You leave for a month—listen to this, only a month—and you come back loaded with enough money for anything you want. And if you like the profession like me, off to Stockholm. [...] Listen, no offense intended, if one has charm and the girls like it, then let them pay for it.

ALFREDO. But do they pay?

FLORENCIO. Of course, man.

ALFREDO. Upfront?

FLORENCIO. Upfront. [...] Surely the bank doesn't even pay you enough for your mortgage.

ALFREDO. Yes, yes, yes. My mother's.

FLORENCIO. Well, you can buy your mother a home that... anyway.)<sup>72</sup>

While the viewer soon discovers that Florencio's work situation is not at all what it appears to be, in effect, his presentation of the *palanquero* profession criticizes the notion that formal employment is a guarantee of adequate compensation, as well as the assumption that work in what appears to be the sex work industry necessitates a particular physical appearance. In fact, the central message of Florencio's argument is that the promised benefits of formal employment, such as pathways to improved earnings, occupational upward mobility, and, perhaps most important, the idea that one's wages will be enough to support the cost of living, are not only false but pale in comparison to the ease of entry, flexibility, and disposable income associated with informal employment as a *palanquero*. In this way, Florencio's claims essentially imply that Francoist-endorsed "honest" labor (i.e. Alfredo's bank job) is, in fact, unable to support and sustain Spanish citizens, even rendering impossible the goals of marriage and children. Florencio essentially ridicules Alfredo's current job at the bank, emphasizing the fact that the protagonist quite literally watches money pass him by, and forces the revelation that what little money Alfredo does earn goes straight to his mother's mortgage payments, rather than contributing to his own future. Consequently, the same logic that motivated Sabino and Valentín's sexy-suspense dinner theater in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, Manolo's "harem" in *Manolo la nuit*, and Juan's family-owned Germany-based souvenir shop in *Estoy hecho un chaval*, all of which sought to exploit a growing consumer demand for "Spanishness," ultimately renders Spanish

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<sup>72</sup> The general structure of Florencio and Alfredo's conversation, that is, a Spanish working man extolling the benefits of a particular career path or profession to a fellow compatriot struggling in the current labor market, is a common exchange in the comedies of the period, particularly, those in which a work-related issue represents the central conflict, as is the case in the films studied in this dissertation. Other notable examples include Angelino (José Sacristán) and Pepe (Alfredo Landa) of *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, as well as Juan (Paco Martínez Soria) and Felipe (Roberto Font) of *Estoy hecho un chaval*. In the case of *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, Angelino, having emigrated to Germany for work, claims that, with the wages he earns abroad, he could easily purchase a cow in as little as two weeks. Similarly, in *Estoy hecho un chaval*, Felipe is constantly promoting the latest products to sell door-to-door (i.e. books, toys, sweaters), which he insists will allow Juan to capitalize on the current demands of the market.

male sexuality an equally valuable commodity. As such, *palanquerismo*, ironically, represents a convenient forum through which the protagonist can achieve the financial resources necessary for marriage. What is more, Florencio's statement on the seemingly nonexistent barriers to entry into the *palanquero* profession, which allows even "un enano" to sell his charms to willing consumers both domestically and abroad, ultimately democratizes the special appeal of Spanish male sexuality. In this model, any Spanish man willing to capitalize on his own "encanto" can tap into a female consumer public eager to pay in order to enjoy such services. It is significant, then, that Florencio's description of the occupation of *palanquero* situates women at the center of such employment, identifying female sexual desire as a dominant force within the current economic model, which, in turn, serves as a potential vehicle for the Spanish working man's financial success.

Once in Sitges, however, Alfredo is held to a series of professional standards that suggest that the demands of the *palanquero* profession are, in fact, more rigorous than Florencio initially promised, mandating an ideal of Spanish male sexuality that privileges sex appeal as a good to be marketed and sold. The protagonist's initial introduction to the man who will be his employer, known only by the alias Tía (José Franco), ultimately revolves entirely around "si [Alfredo] sirve" ("whether or not Alfredo is fit for the job"). This evaluation is based, not on the protagonist's previous work experience or his interest in the job, but rather on his physical appearance. Unimpressed by Alfredo's experience as a bank teller, which Tía is quick to dismiss as "una infraestructura económica" ("an economic infrastructure"), Tía orders the protagonist to undress in front of him (in the company of his loud-mouthed parrot, Lorencito), effectively establishing the male body as the nexus of the *palanquero*'s professional activities and, by extension, his primary qualification for the occupation. While Tía neglects to comment

specifically on the particulars of Alfredo's physical appearance, the few comments that he does offer shed clarity on his expectations of the ideal *palanquero* and obligate the protagonist to uncomfortably evaluate his own competence for the job on the basis of his physical appearance and perceived sex appeal:

TÍA. Hijo, ¿cómo voy a saber si usted sirve si no se desnuda? Vamos, vamos.

LORENCITO. ¡Inmoral! ¡Más que inmoral! ¡Sucio! ¡Guarro! ¡Que es un guarro!

TÍA. Cállate, Lorencito. No seas pesado.

LORENCITO. Sí.

TÍA. Suficiente. Dése la vuelta. Mírese en el espejo. ¿Qué opina?

ALFREDO. Nada, nada, nada. ¿Qué voy a opinar? A la vista está. Bueno, perdóname.

TÍA. ¡Quieto, muchacho! Basta que sea recomendado de Florencio para que yo intente hacer algo por ti. Aunque va a ser difícil...

ALFREDO. Lo comprendo.

TÍA. En fin. Cosas peores ha habido.

ALFREDO. No, no, no, no. Si yo no hubiera venido... Es que Florencio me contó que hasta un enano.

TÍA. Claro, sí, hijo. Claro. Pero éste era un enano, "e-na-no." Y eso tiene atractivo. Pero tú, más que enano... Eres defectuoso, bajito, insuficiente, deficitario. Bueno, en fin.

(TÍA. How am I going to know if you're fit for the job if you don't undress? Come on, come on.

LORENCITO. Immoral! Nothing short of immoral! Dirty! Disgusting! He's disgusting!

TÍA. Quiet, Lorencito. Stop being such a pain.

LORENCITO. Yes.

TÍA. That's enough. Turn around. Look at yourself in the mirror. What do you think?

ALFREDO. Nothing, nothing, nothing. What else would I think? It's plain to see.

Forgive me.

TÍA. Hold on, boy! It's enough that Florencio recommended you for me to try and do something for you. Even if it's going to be difficult...

ALFREDO. I understand.

TÍA. Anyway. There have been worse.

ALFREDO. No, no, no, no. I shouldn't have come... It's just Florencio told me that even a dwarf...

TÍA. Of course, of course. But that was a dwarf, a real dwarf. And that has appeal. But you, more than a dwarf... you're defective, short, inadequate, deficient. Anyway.)

Although Tía initially neglects to comment directly on Alfredo's qualifications for the *palanquero* profession, he does force the protagonist to look at himself and evaluate his own competence by observing his body in the mirror. All the while, Lorencito's ongoing commentary decries the immorality of the situation and his interjections can be read as both a critique of the enterprise at hand, as well as an indictment of Alfredo's attempts to participate in informal employment formally condemned by the State. Significantly, Alfredo's body, though not particularly exceptional from the perspective of the viewer, is rendered void of any particular appeal (read: marketability) by Tía, who clarifies that a dwarf's ability to work as a *palanquero* is less about the democratizing nature of the profession and more of an indication of the exceptionality of his appearance. Alfredo, on the other hand, although overwhelmingly average, is characterized as deficient and, therefore, unfit for the profession in any objective sense,

effectively calling into question the notion that Spanish male sexuality is universally in demand, including the ideal of the *macho ibérico* we observed in Chapter 1.

While critics such as Cáceres García read the previous scene as confirmation of the protagonist's "falta de atractivo sexual" ("lack of sex appeal"), that is, "la nulidad de su *sex-appeal*" ("the nullity of his sex appeal") ("Masculinidad disidente" 501; emphasis in original), Alfredo's eventual success as a *palanquero*, however temporary, is ultimately the result of his ability to publicly uphold "los deberes de un *palanquero*" ("the duties of a *palanquero*") without necessarily violating Francoist norms regulating male sexuality. In this way, I locate the film's subversion of the "prototípico 'homo franquista' (machista, conservador, perfecto ejemplo de la ideología dictatorial" ("the prototypical homo-Francoist [macho, conservative, a perfect model of the dictatorship's ideology]"), to quote Cáceres García ("Masculinidad disidente" 491), not in the supposed feminization of the protagonist, as he suggests, but rather in Alfredo's negotiation of the norms regulating the practice of male sexuality, specifically, as it relates to work. In effect, the protagonist's initial professional success as a *palanquero* is the product of his deliberate subversion of *both* the expectations of his employer and the Franco regime's criminalization of sex work: in this way, Alfredo's work as a *palanquero* is as much an indictment of Tía's understanding of marketability and sex appeal as it is a response to the political morality of Francoist laws governing the legality of sex work, "medidas de corte claramente prohibicionista" ("clearly prohibitionist measures") (Guillén Lorente 535).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> One such law is the 1970 Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social (Law on Dangerous and Social Rehabilitation), which served as an expansión of the 1933 Ley de Vagos y Maleantes (Law of Vagrants and Crooks) and emphasized "la necesidad de defender a la sociedad contra determinadas conductas individuales, que sin ser, en general, estrictamente delectivas, entrañan un riesgo para la comunidad" ("the necessity of defending society against certain individual behaviors that, while in general may not be strictly criminal, entail a risk for the community") (12551). The law outlines fifteen populations that represent a threat to society and should, as a result, be rehabilitated, including "los que habitualmente ejerzan la prostitución" ("those that habitually practice prostitution") (12553).

In effect, Alfredo's ability to negotiate these competing forces is possible due to the particular demands of his client base: upper-middle class Spanish women that seek out his services in order to get back at their cheating husbands. These women, it appears, are caught in the same struggle between tradition and modernity as the protagonist as they attempt to pay back their husbands's infidelity without committing adultery themselves. The protagonist, on the other hand, is able to feign a playboy persona by catering specifically to these women, who agree to pay double without any actual exchange of sexual services. Consequently, Alfredo is able to conserve his virginity until marriage, an ideal espoused by the Franco regime and notably influenced by Catholic doctrine, while also contesting Tía's original estimation of the protagonist's unlikely ability to attract female sexual desire. In this way, although Alfredo's career success relies on tapping into the market value of Spanish male sexuality, the commodity at stake in his work as a *palanquero*, the reputation and financial gains he is able to cultivate are more directly the result of his engagement with larger societal concerns, such as the relationship between men and women, marriage, and adultery.

The film's conclusion, in which the protagonist makes a less than triumphant return to the *pueblo* after he is caught in the middle of a publicity stunt involving a member of the Onassis family, details Alfredo's attempt to definitively abandon the economic and moral dictates that have delayed his long-awaited sexual gratification. Perhaps as a means of undercutting the circumstances of his return and largely motivated by the advice of his taxi driver, who insists that "para conseguir algo de las mujeres, mano dura, ordeno y mando" ("in order to get something from women, a firm hand, command and control"), Alfredo resolves to assert his authority, whether or not his demands coincide with Mari Carmen's own desires or with state-sanctioned sexual norms. Not unlike the film's opening, the concluding scenes stage another one-on-one

encounter between Alfredo and Mari Carmen, this time, however, without her vigilant parents, who are seen leaving as the protagonist returns from Sitges. In contrast to the film's opening, in which Alfredo's attempts at seduction rely on his playful, yet aggressive, insistence, in this instance, the protagonist discards all pretenses of humor and instead meets his fiancée's indignance with unaffected firmness. When Mari Carmen confronts Alfredo about the reality of his work in Sitges, the protagonist's response is entirely dismissive. Rather than indulge his fiancée's accusations, Alfredo is uncharacteristically nonchalant and insists that his professional activities are none of her concern: "De mi porvenir me ocuparé yo. No te va a faltar de nada. Tal vez siga en el banco. Tal vez ponga un negocio" ("I'll worry about my own future. You'll have everything you need. Maybe I'll stay at the bank. Maybe I'll establish a business"). While this attitude might suggest that financial matters no longer represent a concern for the protagonist after his stint on the coast, Alfredo's steely demeanor carries over to his treatment of money, which he addresses as if it were merely a nuisance. In effect, Alfredo describes his newfound wealth, not as a luxury, but rather as an annoyance that he rejects. In a dramatic gesture, the protagonist pulls a stack of bills from his pocket and coldly throws them into the air, explaining: "Esto me pesa. Esto me estorba. Esto me reconcome" ("This burdens me. This hinders me. This irritates me").

Despite Alfredo's resolve to assert control over his fiancée, which he attempts to exploit in order to force the issue of sex, as well as his apparent nonchalance about financial matters, Mari Carmen's response, which escalates to physical violence, seemingly confirms that Spanish women are ultimately responsible for defending their own purity as their male counterparts are not to be trusted. When Alfredo's insistence comes to represent a legitimate threat of rape, a danger that becomes increasingly evident with the protagonist's promise that "algo muy gordo"

(“something major”) will happen if his fiancée fails to disrobe, Mari Carmen recurs to violence as a self-defense strategy, hitting Alfredo over the head with her shoe and knocking him to the ground. The concluding moments of the film witness a confrontation that is at once comical and disturbing: the protagonist regains his composure and tugs at the Mari Carmen’s zipper in an attempt to undress her, which she repays in kind with another blow, only for Alfredo to begin chasing her around the house. As the chase ensues, Mari Carmen shows no signs of surrender, physically fighting off the protagonist until the film credits begin to role, culminating in a freeze frame with the protagonist face down on the ground and his fiancée, poised to strike him once again with her shoe. Significantly, the soundtrack for these final moments is a voice-over recitation, by all indications performed by Alfredo Landa, of “El beso” (also known as “El beso en España” and “La española cuando besa”), a pasodoble originally featured in the 1947 musical revue *La estrella de Egipto* written by Adrián Ortega and Fernando Moraleda.<sup>74</sup> As the couple’s confrontation intensifies, the voice-over reads:

La española cuando besa  
Es que besa de verdad  
Y a ninguna le interesa besar con frivolidad  
La puedes dar un beso en la mano  
La puedes dar un beso de hermano  
Así la besarás cuando quieras

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<sup>74</sup> *La estrella de Egipto* follows movie stars Jorge Blanquete and Amara del Río as they confront professional and romantic conflicts on the set of the film *La estrella de Egipto*. When Amara leaves the set, the producers hire Estrella to replace her, who must pass for Amara. Chaos ensues, however, when Maurice and Prieto arrive on set, both claiming to be Estrella’s husband. The production originally premiered in Madrid in 1947 (Celia Gámez, Adrián Ortega, Olvido Rodríguez, Pepe Bárcenas, Fernando Noguerras, and Pepe Porres starring as the original cast), later showing in Barcelona, and returning to the capital in 1948. The production has since been adapted to television on two occasions (in 1985 and 1995).

Pero un beso de amor  
No se lo dan a cualquiera  
(The Spanish woman when she kisses  
She kisses genuinely  
And no Spanish woman is interested in kissing frivolously  
You can kiss her on the hand  
You can give her a friendly kiss  
You can kiss her that way whenever you like  
But a kiss of love  
Spanish women don't give to just anyone)

The pasodoble, which extols the virtues of the kiss in Spain, at least as it is practiced by the nation's women, describes the kiss in its ideal form as embodying “armonía, sentido y valor” (“harmony, meaning, and value”). It is women, then, the song's lyrics proclaim, that carry this ideal of romance “dentro del alma” (“within their soul”) and, as such, preserve the true and authentic value of the kiss as an expression of physical intimacy. In linking this conception of the kiss, which, by extension, stands in for other expressions of physical intimacy (namely, sex, in the case of *Los días de Cabirio*), with the events of the film's closing scene, Merino's film attempts to undo—or, at the very least, disguise—the subversiveness of its representation of *palanquerismo*, likely in order to comply with censorship regulations. In this way, *Los días de Cabirio*'s conclusion seems to suggest that Spanish women represent an important moral stronghold of traditional sexual morality directly linked to Francoist values, particularly, in the face of unrestrained male sexual desire and the invasion of foreign sexual mores.

### 1.3 *Préstame quince días*

Although *Préstame quince días* is essentially a romantic comedy, whose premise revolves around a Spanish migrant worker's elaborate scheme to convince his family and friends back in the *pueblo* of his professional and romantic success abroad by hiring a cabaret performer to pose as his wife,<sup>75</sup> the brokering of this relationship is made possible in large part through the involvement of the film's secondary male protagonist, Alfonso. Unlike Alfredo of *Los días de Cibirio*, whose participation in the sex industry requires him to market his own sexuality in order to make a living, Alfonso represents the counterimage of Alfredo's embodiment of the *chulo*: he makes a living not by selling himself but rather by profiting off of the work of his female partner and encouraging other men to do the same, a philosophy he espouses via night classes he teaches as part of an informal *escuela de chulismo*. In effect, Alfonso capitalizes on Iris's desire to marry in order to encourage not only her acceptance of Galdino's lucrative offer to pose as his wife, but also, more generally, her participation in the workforce. In this way, Alfonso's limited engagement with the world of work through his informal employment as a teacher (of sorts) is ultimately in service of avoiding the necessity to work altogether. The figure of Alfonso, then, is remarkably different from the majority of the Spanish working men considered throughout this dissertation, in large part because of his adamant rejection of the traditional male breadwinner model, as well as his marked disinterest in participating directly in the world of work. What is more, Alfonso's willingness to live off of Iris's earnings represents a

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<sup>75</sup> Interestingly enough, Alfredo Landa would play the role of a Spanish emigrant to Germany twice in the same year, the other instance being his iconic role as the eponymous protagonist of Pedro Lazaga's *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (1971). While *Préstame quince días* only superficially addresses the reality of working in Germany as a Spanish immigrant, the character of Galdino shares some similarities to his counterpart in *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, namely, in the perceived necessity of creating a narrative of success to share with those back in the *pueblo* that is not entirely true, if not completely false. In Pepe's case, this narrative is based largely around the economic fantasy of "el milagro alemán" ("the German miracle"), however, for Galdino, the fiction he attempts to uphold is far more personal and mostly for the benefit of his immediate family (i.e. having married while abroad).

tacit endorsement of women's participation in the labor market. While the film's conclusion neglects to condone such attitudes, ultimately forcing Alfonso into employment in order to comply with the legal responsibilities of marriage according to the State, his character represents a significant departure from dominant models of working masculinities in Spanish film, which privilege work in much the same terms as those specified in the 1938 "Fuero del Trabajo," that is, as a "deber impuesto al hombre por Dios, para el cumplimiento de sus fines individuales y la prosperidad y grandeza de la Patria" ("duty imposed on man by God for the fulfillment of his personal aims and for the prosperity and glory of the nation").

Although *Iris* makes several mentions of a fiancé throughout the film's opening scenes, Alfonso's first appearance on screen is not in this capacity but rather in his role as the instructor of nightly classes at what by all appearances is an informal, self-managed *escuela de chulismo*. Upon this introduction, the viewer observes that the protagonist has a small but devoted following of male pupils of varying ages, including an elderly man, all of whom obediently take notes as Alfonso—without a trace of irony—explains the fundamental tenets of living off of women. In order to be "un buen profesional" ("a good professional"), Alfonso explains:

Lo primero que no debe ignorar un buen chulo es que la mujer sin el hombre está indefensa. El hombre es el rey de la naturaleza. El hombre manda y la mujer obedece. Grábense bien estas palabras en la mente si quieren vivir de las mujeres. Hay que sentar desde el principio la autoridad. [...] Otra cosa que tampoco debemos olvidar es la monogamia. Eso es fatal. El hombre que vaya a vivir de una sola mujer, para eso se casa y asunto terminado. El hombre debe de vivir de varias mujeres. [...] El amor no existe si se quiere vivir de esto como Dios manda.

(The first thing that a good *chulo* should never disregard is that, without men, women are defenseless. Man is the king of nature. The man gives orders and the woman obeys. Remember these words if you want to live off of women. You must establish your authority from the very beginning. [...] Another thing that we shouldn't forget is monogamy. Monogamy is deadly. If a man is going to live off of one woman, he should marry. End of story. Man should live off of several women. [...] Love doesn't exist if one wants to make a living this way as God intended.)

Although Alfonso's lesson ironically extols the virtues of an enterprise largely condemned by the Francoist state, his lecture functions as a list of moral imperatives dominating not only the institution of work as it pertains to the *chulo*, but also the ideal relationship between men and women as it relates to questions of authority and economic matters. Significantly, the protagonist's lesson emphasizes man's dominion over women, arguing that although the woman in his model is the one acquiring the economic resources to support the man, it is the man who continues to exert authority over her. Principles of authority aside, it is significant that Alfonso ultimately promotes a very gendered (and undoubtedly misogynistic) notion of authority, especially as it relates to male-female relationships and love, but that such ideals are ultimately grounded in an understanding of women as potential streams of revenue for men. In effect, the protagonist's assertion that monogamy, for example, is a harmful construct appears to be less about any limitations on the Spanish man's sexuality and more about the issue of a constricting ideal for the man looking to generate as much income as possible through multiple sources. In this way, the man who decides to marry, therefore, eliminates other potential sources of revenue (when it comes to living off of women), limiting such sources to one, as the institution of

marriage effectively shuts the Spanish male off (at least in theory) from relations with any other woman.

Although Alfonso purports to be an authority on how to live off of women while also preserving a sense of masculine authority, this model proves increasingly difficult to sustain due to women's refusal to (quite literally) buy into the notion that a man's affection merits sexual and/or financial compensation. In fact, Iris's absence makes increasingly obvious Alfonso's haphazard success at implementing his own teachings outside of the bounds of his relationship. While Iris is quick to concede to Alfonso's demands so long as her fiancé reiterates his intentions to marry her (always with a vague timeline), other young women, particularly those active in Madrid's nightlife scene, are far less gullible when it comes to the protagonist's schemes. In practice, Alfonso's methods are far less successful than he professes to his pupils, despite his continuous attempts to assert his own masculinity (often making remarks such as "¡Que soy el hombre!" ["I'm the man!"]), as well as an elevated financial status (he tells the women he woos, "He nacido para rico" ["I was born to be rich"]). All confidence aside, such tactics ultimately fail to impress a pair of young women at a local nightclub, who the protagonist plies with champagne, assuming the girls will foot the bill at the end of the night. When the night comes to a close, Alfonso discovers that the women, who claimed to have gone to use the restroom, actually left the nightclub thirty minutes before, a revelation that confirms that the protagonist's plan has effectively backfired, leaving him stuck with the group's tab and lamenting his poor choice of company. It is this failure, among other similar challenges, that causes Alfonso to once again pursue the patronage of his most faithful source of financial support (Iris), going so far as to collect her from Galdino's *pueblo* so that he can once again benefit from her earnings from the cabaret, from which he has been cut off since Iris's departure from the city.

When Iris eventually decides to return to the *pueblo* in favor of pursuing a relationship with Galdino, presented as the favorable (and more moral) alternative to her former fiancé, Alfonso, ever the *pícaro*, resorts to tricking the last of his students, Don Julio, out of dating a young woman who claims to have recently inherited a great deal of money from her deceased parents. While at first, the young woman appears to be the protagonist's first successful seduction and promises a great deal of wealth should the two decide to marry, her role in the film's narrative is ultimately to put an end to Alfonso's *chulo* lifestyle, appealing to the political-moral imperatives of the Francoist state, which formally mandate man's legal responsibility to work in order to support his wife and children. In effect, Alfonso's spontaneous marriage to the young woman, likely rushed due to the couple's premarital sexual activities, is the result of the young woman's machinations in conjunction with Don Julio, who turns out to be her father. To the protagonist's confusion and subsequent despair, Alfonso's young wife admits that "entre los dos inventamos todo esto para casarte" ("between the two of us, we came up with the whole thing in order to force you to get married") and that, of the millions she promised to inherit, she does not have "ni un duro" ("not even a *duro*") to her name. In this way, the values of the nation's older generation, as well as those embodied in younger women looking to live off of men in a more traditional sense, serve to forcefully correct Alfonso's aversion to work, backed by the legal apparatus of the Franco regime. While Iris did not enjoy the legal protections of marriage while engaged to the protagonist, choosing instead to sever her relationship with Alfonso in favor of Galdino, Alfonso's new bride outlines his new responsibilities mere minutes after walking down the aisle: "Ahora tendrás que trabajar para mí y para mi papá. Y ojo con desaparecer. Ya sabes que la ley me protege. Abandono de hogar" ("Now you will have to work for me and for my father. And don't think about disappearing. You know that the law protects

me. Abandonment”). In doing so, the film links its representation of marriage, as well as its treatment of the institution of work, particularly with respect to Alfonso’s character, to the existing penal code, which did, in fact, criminalize the actions of “el que dejare de cumplir, pudiendo hacerlo, los deberes legales de asistencia inherentes a la patria potestad, la tutela o el matrimonio” (“he who fails to comply with, where able to do so, the legal obligations of assistance inherent to parental authority, guardianship or marriage”) (24279).

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

Although Francoist laws did not permit sex work nor did they condone the notion of living off of women or relegating financial responsibilities to the women of one’s household, Fernando Merino’s films *Los días de Cabirio* and *Préstame quince días* offer a sustained look at forms of employment that commodify male sexuality for the specific purpose of consumption and even entertain the possibility of a model of employment that attempts to undo work all together (i.e. Alfonso’s *escuela de chulismo*). In both cases, the film’s respective protagonists, Alfredo and Alfonso, exemplify the general understanding of the figure of the *chulo* presented by Del Amo, who understands this male archetype as any man who lives off of women. In this way, women play an integral role in the forms of employment under consideration in these films, not only as consumers and breadwinners, but also as a corrective moral framework that seeks to correct the potential dangers of such work. Consequently, Alfredo and Alfonso’s respective enterprises require them to understand and appeal to women in order to attain career and/or financial success, ideals that are largely controlled by the women in their lives.

While the first two chapters of this dissertation have considered two particular models of employment (*españolada* as employment and work as a *palanquero* or a *chulo*), both of which

understand gendered notions of “Spanishness” and Spanish male sexuality as commodities worthy of being sold and consumed within the capitalist market, Chapter 3 will analyze this phenomenon from the specific perspective of work as a site of performance, namely, the performance of male sexualities. In the following chapter, I will analyze two films that consider male homosexualities as a potential asset in the realm of employment. While in neither case are the male protagonists in question actually homosexual, their deliberate decision to take on the persona—albeit an exaggerated one based in stereotypical (and heterosexist) tropes of homosexuality—of a gay man as a key part of their work suggests the possibility of homosexuality as a selectively sanctioned (or selectively tolerated) resource in the world of work, particularly, in professions related to the fashion and entertainment industries.

### **Chapter 3: “Coming Out” to Enter; Performative (Homo)sexualities for Career Success**

On July 17, 1954, the existing “Ley de Vagos y Maleantes,” originally approved in 1933 in order to discourage “[l]a producción de hechos que ofenden la sana moral de nuestro país” (“the occurrence of events that offend the moral fortitude of our country”) (4862), was modified to explicitly include homosexuals among the ranks of the vagrants, sex workers, beggars, drunks, drug users, and criminals that the Francoist state considered to be “de estado peligroso” (“in dangerous condition”) (874), that is, predisposed to criminal activity. Furthermore, in popular culture, especially cinema, even the mere representation of homosexuality or homosexual desire was strictly taboo, thoroughly complicating the dissemination of queer stories. Although the 1963 “Normas de censura cinematográfica” did not explicitly name homosexuality as a prohibited subject, they did, however, repeatedly emphasize that the representation of “relaciones sexuales ilícitas” (“illicit sexual relations”) (3929) would be not be tolerated, nor would “la presentación de las perversiones sexuales como eje de la trama y aun con carácter secundario” (“the presentation of sexual perversions as an essential aspect of the plot or even as a secondary element”) (3930), unless such representations were characterized by “una clara y predominante consecuencia moral” (“a clear and prevailing moral consequence”) (3930), meaning an explicit condemnation of such persons and behaviors.

If such criteria were not enough to discourage the representation of homosexuality in cinema, censorship norms further safeguarded against the possibility of the portrayal of alternative sexualities by also prohibiting films in which “la acumulación de escenas o planos que en sí mismos no tengan gravedad, cre[a], por la reiteración un clima lascivo, brutal, grosero o morboso” (“the accumulation of scenes or shots that in and of themselves are not of concern

create, through their repetition, a lewd, brutal, vulgar, or unwholesome climate”) (3930).

Consequently, a film’s production and/or subsequent distribution could effectively be halted if censors came to the conclusion that its overall effect was ultimately too suggestive or morally ambiguous, even if individual scenes themselves were not explicitly controversial.

Nevertheless, some filmmakers associated with the genre of popular comedy, most notably, Ramón (Tito) Fernández, managed to portray homosexual characters in their films—or at least, male characters that present themselves to others as homosexual,<sup>76</sup> as is the case in *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970) and *Los novios de mi mujer* (1972). In these films, the act of self-presenting as homosexual is belied by the reality that the male characters in question, despite being coded as homosexual, are, in reality, heterosexual married men with children. It is precisely this narrative loophole—the eventual revelation that the male characters in question are merely *performing* homosexuality—, as well as the implied threat of punishment included in the films’s respective conclusions, that allow Fernández to not only circumvent the censorship apparatus, but also to enjoy commercial success despite such restrictions. In fact, *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, in which the male protagonist deliberately presents himself to his community as homosexual in order to further his own career and professional ambitions, represents one of the most widely viewed films in Spanish history, with a total of 4,371,624 viewers since its release on October 24, 1970, according to the 2017 *Boletín Informativo* generated by the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte de España.<sup>77</sup>

In both *No desearás al vecino del quinto* and *Los novios de mi mujer*, a central element of the narrative is the male protagonist’s self-presentation as homosexual, specifically, in the realm

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<sup>76</sup> For a study of the representation of homosexuality and homosexual desire in the popular melodramas of the 1960s, see Melero 2017.

<sup>77</sup> The 2017 *Boletín Informativo* also indicates that the film has generated 1,067,037.02 euros since its release.

of work, which leads him to be understood by the community in which he is active as homosexual despite his hidden heterosexuality and marital status. In the case of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, Alfredo Landa, in one of his most iconic roles, plays Antón Gutierrez, the owner of a fashion house “especializada en pret-a-porter” (“specializing in ready-to-wear”), and described in the first version of the film’s script as “un hombre de unos 35 años, con unos pelos rubios muy largos [...] y es de lo más snob” (“a man around thirty-five years old with long blonde hair [...] and extremely snobbish”).<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Pepín de Triana, a secondary character in Fernández’s later film *Los novios de mi mujer*, played by Andrés Pajares, is a singer and performer, characterized in his outward appearance as having “cierta afectación” (“a certain affectation”), his most notable characteristics being the way in which he speaks—“con una extraña mezcla de acento andaluz convencional y argentino” (“with a strange mix of a typical Andalusian accent and an Argentine accent”)—and his “aire levemente equívoco” (“a slightly ambiguous demeanor”) (92; emphasis in original).<sup>79</sup> In both cases, the male protagonist’s supposed homosexuality is never uttered explicitly but rather is assumed by others due to the character’s strategic self-presentation, namely, his appearance, mannerisms, public lifestyle, and, significantly, his chosen profession. What is more, this presumed homosexuality not only destigmatizes the male protagonist’s intimate involvement with women—both married and unmarried—in situations that would otherwise be socially impermissible, but also, in the case of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, facilitates the protagonist’s adoption of a double life, which, in turn, permits his marital infidelity.

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<sup>78</sup> These descriptions are cited directly from the original script of the film written by Juan José Alonso Millán and Italian screenwriter Sandro Continenza, originally submitted under the title *Yo engaño sin daño*. See “No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto,” dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>79</sup> These descriptions are cited directly from the original script of the film written by Rafael J. Salvia and Juan José Alson Millán, originally submitted under the title *Ojo por ojo*. See “Los Novios de Mi Mujer,” dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05589 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

Keeping in mind that sexuality, much like gender, is performed and embodied, and is also dependent in many ways on the interpretation of given behaviors, mannerisms, and physical characteristics as indicative of one's sexuality, in this chapter, I consider the performance of homosexuality/ies in *No desearás al vecino del quinto* and *Los novios de mi mujer*, focusing concretely on the ways in which the *appearance* of homosexuality is represented not only as an asset in the world of work that can ultimately be marketed and sold to consumers in order to prop up one's expertise or talent in a given industry, but also as a socially-sanctioned means of interacting with women, both married and unmarried, in contexts that otherwise would be socially impermissible, if not expressly forbidden. In doing so, I argue that the representation of homosexuality/ies in these films is tolerated by censors because of the narratives's reinforcement of heterosexist perspectives on homosexuality, as well as the prevalence of homophobic discourses that underly the performances of homosexuality that play out on screen.

### **1.1 A Performative View of Gender and Sexuality**

With the publication of her influential text *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler proposes an understanding of gender as an identity tenuously constituted through “a *stylized repetition of acts*” (92; emphasis in original). As such, the constitution of gender occurs largely through “the stylization of the body, and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (“Performative Acts” 519). Consequently, the performance of gender as a constructed identity relies not only on the “performative accomplishment” of the actor, but also “the *appearance of substance*,” that is, the constitution of a compelling identity that represents “an object of *belief*” (“Performative Acts” 520; emphasis in original). In this way, the success of

the constructed gender identity in question is constituted in large part by its believability, implicating the participation of an outside audience that interprets and accepts the appearance of another's gender as convincing and true.

While Butler does not address the question of sexuality specifically in *Gender Trouble*, scholars such as Miriam Meyerhoff argue that Butler's discussion of the link between the performative quality of everyday gender identities and drag queens's performances of routines that challenge gender norms, for example, suggest that the social categories of gender and sexuality are, in fact, intertwining aspects of the same performance (2). Other scholars, such as Tim Edwards in "Beyond Sex and Gender: Masculinity, Homosexuality and Social Theory," take this suggestion a step further by asserting that "gender and sexuality as practices, discourses and indeed constructions are intricately linked, and it is often far more accurate to talk in terms of gendered sexualities and sexualized genders than of gender and sexuality as if they were two distinct categories" (qtd. in "Queering the Pitch" 54). Edwards, engaged in an ongoing dialogue with poststructural and postmodern theory, namely, the works of Butler and Eve K. Sedgwick in relation to gender and sexuality,<sup>80</sup> emphasizes a conception of masculinity fundamentally tied to Sedgwick's notion of "homosociality," that is, the idea that masculinity is dependent on both the permanent presence and, indeed, the absence of homosexuality ("Queering the Pitch" 63). In effect, Edwards explains, a man's embodiment and experience of masculinity is dictated in large part by his relationships with other men:

To put it more simply, relations between men, both past and present, are characterized by the constant possibility of, and quite simultaneously the equally continuous prohibition

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<sup>80</sup> Specifically, Edwards engages with Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), and "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification" (1995), as well as Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire* (1985), *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), and "Gosh, Boy George, you must be awfully secure in your masculinity!" (1995).

of, homosexuality. Thus homosexuality per se works as a primarily invisible mechanism in the maintenance of masculinity. [...] Thus [the works of scholars such as sociologist Henning Bech]<sup>81</sup> [...] demonstrate the crucial extent to which homosexual identity depends even more fundamentally on masculinity than heterosexuality. (“Queering the Pitch” 63)

In this sense, Edwards’s work points to the inextricable relationship between desire and identification. Although dominant theoretical understandings of the relationship between homosexuality and masculinity are often underpinned by the idea that “successful” embodiments of heterosexuality and masculinity depend on “the repudiation of *both* femininity and homosexuality” (Edwards, “Queering the Pitch” 64; emphasis in original), in practice, the relationship between sexuality and gender is rife with contradictions as non-heterosexual men are neither more nor less “masculine” than their heterosexual counterparts, nor are they necessarily less prone to misogyny and/or cissexism<sup>82</sup> than straight men.

With these theoretical precepts in mind, my analysis of both *¡No desearás al vecino del quinto!* and *Los novios de mi mujer*, focuses on how Ramón (Tito) Fernández dialogues with dominant heterosexist discourses of homosexuality in order to tentatively challenge the assumption that sexualities not consistent with state-sanctioned heterosexuality are inherently prone to criminality and unproductiveness. Although the heterosexual men who perform homosexuality in these films do so with an adherence to heterocentric stereotypes of male homosexualities emphasizing flamboyance and effeminacy, these films not only acknowledge the performative character of both gender and sexuality, but also seem to suggest that in certain

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<sup>81</sup> Here Edwards references Bech’s 1997 monograph *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*.

<sup>82</sup> Trans-bi activist and scholar Julia Serano defines cissexism as “the belief or assumption that cis[gender] people’s gender identities, expressions, and embodiments are more natural and legitimate than those of trans people.”

work environments, namely, in fashion and the performance arts, expressions of non-normative masculinities are, in fact, an asset for working men.

## **1.2 *¡No desearás al vecino del quinto!***

Of the films studied throughout this dissertation, *¡No desearás al vecino del quinto!* has generated by far the most critical attention, in particular, in the context of wider discussions of the *comedia sexy* as a filmic genre, as well as in recent considerations of representations of gender and sexuality in popular film throughout the latter decades of the Franco regime and into the transition to democracy.<sup>83</sup> Often regarded as “la quintaesencia del género” (“the quintessence of the genre”) (Alonso Barahona 71), if not “el representante de la comedia sexy en su totalidad” (“representative of the *comedia sexy* as a whole”) (Cáceres García, *El destape del macho ibérico* 12), critics such as Luis Pérez Bastías and Fernando Alonso Barahona have gone so far as to position the film as the very initiator of a generic tradition of comedy based in “bodrios entre el pseudo-erotismo, la sátira y el vodevil” (“a confusing mash-up of pseudo-eroticism, satire and vaudeville”) (238-39), while still others, namely, Barry Jordan, have utilized Fernández’s work in order to promote the reconsideration of the Spanish popular comedy as a worthy object of study in academic circles. In his article “Revisiting the ‘comedia sexy ibérica’: *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Ramón Fernández, 1971)”, Jordan offers up *¡No desearás al vecino del quinto!* as a case study in his larger defense of commercial Spanish cinema as worthy of “serious and systematic investigation” (168), emphasizing the film’s comic interplay between gay and straight identities, in addition to its overall depiction of a host of relatively daring elements, including representations of homosexuality and Spanish men indulging in the playboy lifestyle, which are,

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<sup>83</sup> See, for example, Epps 2016, Gubern 1981, Hartson 2008, Jordan 2002, Jordan 2004, Martínez Expósito 2004, Melero 2013.

in fact, key elements of the film's plot. Despite the film's conservative ending, which serves to reassert traditional male heterosexuality, the lingering visibility of homosexuality—regardless of whether or not said homosexuality is a sham performance—ultimately represents an important foil to the representation of more traditional values:

*No desearás...* manages to combine aspects of tradition and modernity and representations of dominant heterosexual and 'other' sexual identities which at the same time satisfied Spanish audience tastes for new sexual freedoms but within a reassuring structure of traditional values. The titillation (and insecurity) arising from Antón's camp antics and the tease over gay seduction are more than counterbalanced by the security and certainty of knowing he was straight after all. [...] What is intriguing [however] is that by denying homosexuality in the private family sphere while exploiting it as a public mask, however camp, the film perhaps unwittingly retains gayness as a visible identity and as a possible future alternative for social behavior. (Jordan, "Revisiting the 'comedia sexy'" 185-186)

In this way, Fernández's film walks a thin line between allowing "camp gay identity" (to borrow Jordan's term) the space to exist, particularly as an asset in the realm of work, and incorporating narrative elements that serve to reimpose and reassert heterosexual masculinity. The clearest example of such "corrective" tendencies is, of course, the film's conclusion, which sees the reappearance of Antón's wife, as well as his five children, who chase after him cruelly chanting "marica" ("homo").<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Although one of the accepted meanings of "marica" is "magpie," it is predominantly used as a pejorative term for a homosexual man (akin to homophobic epithets such as "homo," "queer," or "fag" in English). Significantly, the *Diccionario de la lengua española* lists "afeminado" ("effeminate") and "apocado, falta de coraje, pusilánime o medroso" ("timid, lacking in bravery, faint-hearted or fearful") as primary definitions, in dialogue (perhaps, unsurprisingly) with dominant stereotypes associated with homosexual men.

According to Mary T. Hartson, who considers another performance of feigned homosexuality in Manuel Ozores's 1981 film *¡Qué gozada de divorcio!*, in which Andrés Pajares also poses as a gay fashion designer, another strategy utilized to counteract "any 'taint' of homosexuality" is to allow the male protagonist the indulgence of consumption, specifically the consumption of female bodies, which Hartson ultimately understands as "a totally heterosexual activity" (152). In the case of *¡No desearás al vecino del quinto!*, the film's protagonist, Antón, resorts to a similar strategy, enthusiastically adopting a playboy persona during his time away from the *pueblo* in Madrid, where he spends his nights partying and seducing female tourists. It is significant, however, that this seducer persona is in many ways just another guise, in this case, a guise based on the performance of exaggerated heterosexuality. Consequently, Antón's masculine self is ultimately fragmented into three disparate identities, divided largely along personal and professional, as well as public and private, lines, each serving to either uphold or directly contradict the image of masculinity embodied in his other performative identities. While the protagonist's Lothario tendencies during his residencies in Madrid function as an attempt to offset his sustained performance as a gay man for work in the *pueblo*, both of these identities are, in effect, threatened—and, by the film's conclusion, ultimately punished—by the revelation of another of Antón's private lives: the reality of his identity as a husband and father.

Although the narrative conceit of homosexuality, even if said homosexuality is ultimately a farce, represents, at the very least, the possibility of alternative expressions of masculinity and male sexuality, critics such as Román Gubern have argued that the interventions of the censorship apparatus effectively reduce non-normative masculinities to merely a tool to attract audiences and, in turn, teach them a lesson:

La película atrajo masivamente al público con la atrevida promesa de una historia homosexual. Aparentemente era así y el público se divertía con el afeminamiento caricaturesco de Alfredo Landa; pero como la censura velaba por la moral pública española, al final de la película se revelaba que todo era pura simulación y que en realidad Landa era un ardiente heterosexual. Es decir, se llegaba a un pacto hipócrita entre la escabrosidad como atractivo comercial y su represión moral. (267)

(The film attracted the public on a massive scale with the daring promise of a homosexual story. Seemingly that was what it was and audiences were entertained by Alfredo Landa's exaggerated effeminacy; however, because the censorship apparatus safeguarded the morality of the Spanish public, the film's ending revealed that everything was purely a simulation and that in reality Landa was a flaming heterosexual. That is to say, a hypocritical pact was reached between salaciousness as commercially attractive and its very repression.)

While Gubern is correct in his understanding of the censors's general apprehensions regarding the representation of homosexuality, an attitude clearly evidenced by the comments and suggestions provided throughout the evaluation process,<sup>85</sup> the film's apparent condemnation of homosexuality as a legitimate sexuality and/or lifestyle does little to dismantle the narrative's portrait of homosexuality as a potential asset in the workplace. In fact, I would argue that the film is far more concerned with "correcting" the male protagonist's transgressive adultery than it is with putting an end to Antón's gay masquerade, which continues to represent a viable source

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<sup>85</sup> The censors's recommendation to the film's producers was a strict reminder to "cuidar rigurosamente los excesos de exhibicionismo y de intimidad erótica, así como la presentación del supuesto homosexual" ("take great care over excesses of exhibitionism and eroticism, as well as the presentation of supposed homosexuality"). See "No Desearas al Vecino del Quinto," dated October 23, 1970, held in AGA,36,04428 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

of income, especially in the context of the protagonist's small town, which, despite its traditional conservatism, appears to have selectively accepted aspects of the nation's nascent capitalism.

In much the same way that homosexuality as a salacious premise may have enticed the participation of Spanish filmgoers, the same observation holds true in the film's small town, where Antón appears to be the resident gay man, as well as the *pueblo's* leading fashion designer. The film's opening, which introduces Antón's eventual partner-in-crime, Pedro (Jean Sorel), as he is rushed to the hospital by ambulance, with his fiancée, Jacinta (Ira von Fürstenberg), in close pursuit, imposes the film's setting, a small unidentified town a mere train ride away from Madrid, as an important backdrop for the narrative action.<sup>86</sup> When asked by a doctor to explain how Pedro landed himself in the hospital with such severe injuries, Jacinta's long-winded response emphasizes the *pueblo's* ambivalent response to the encroaching influence of modernity, as well as Antón's unique role in this ongoing negotiation:

De todo lo sucedido tiene la culpa la ciudad donde Pedro y yo hemos nacido y en la que hemos pasado toda nuestra vida. Porque hoy en día vivir en una capital de provincia es difícil, ¿sabe? Todo se complica. Se vive pendiente de los demás. Hay una confusión tremenda de ideas, de gustos, de opiniones. El aire moderno contrasta con los viejos prejuicios. Las antiguas tradiciones se entremezclan con tendencias revolucionarias. En fin, somos demasiado provincianos para ser modernos y demasiado modernos para ser

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<sup>86</sup> Although the film's script is intentionally vague when establishing the narrative's setting, merely specifying that the town is "situada en el centro de la Península Ibérica [...] a unos cien kilómetros de Madrid" ("situated in the center of the Iberian Peninsula [...] about a hundred kilometers from Madrid"), the opening scenes clearly situate the narrative action in Toledo by including clear shots of landmarks such as the Plaza de Zocodover, the Alcázar of Toledo, and the Tagus River. See "No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto," dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

provincianos. Estamos acomplexados, ¿comprende? [...] Sólo en un ambiente como el de esta provincia puede producirse el éxito de un tipo como Antón.<sup>87</sup>

(Everything that has happened is the fault of the city where Pedro and I were born and have spent all of our lives. These days living in a provincial capital is difficult, you know? Everything is complicated. Everyone lives dependent on one another. There is an enormous confusion of ideas, tastes, and opinions. Modern appeal contrasts with old prejudices. Old-fashioned traditions mix together with revolutionary tendencies. In short, we are too provincial to be modern and too modern to be provincial. We have a complex, you see. [...] Only an environment like that of our province can generate success for someone like Antón.)

While this version of Jacinta's address ultimately did not make it into the final version of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, her monologue serves as a prologue of sorts to the film, establishing Antón as an exemplary figure within the town before his character even makes an appearance on screen. By referring to Antón not simply by his name, but rather in more categorical terms as "someone like Antón," Jacinta's description immediately sets his character apart as an exceptional subject who has been able to generate success in a remarkably peculiar environment. Although Jacinta blames her hometown for the apparent disarray surrounding Pedro's injuries (which at this point of the film are still unclear), describing the town primarily in terms of tension and contradiction, Antón is somehow able to cultivate success, seemingly because of the coexistence of modern and old-fashioned forces, that is, the coexistence of European (i.e. foreign) modernity and conservative ultra-Spanish tradition. What is more,

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<sup>87</sup> This version of Jacinta's monologue is cited directly from the original script of the film written by Juan José Alonso Millán and Italian screenwriter Sandro Continenza, originally submitted under the title *Yo engaño sin daño*. See "No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto," dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

although these lines were ultimately cut from the final version of the film, it is also significant that Jacinta's prologue in the film's script characterizes Antón as an important tastemaker, specifically for women, in the greater context of the town's attempts to "ponerse de acuerdo con el ritmo de la vida moderna" ("adjust to the rhythm of modern life"). In effect, Antón's contribution to the *pueblo*'s tentative transformation into a modern town is largely related to questions to aesthetics: "Antón implantaba las modas, [...] mandaba con su gusto, en lo que se iba a llevar, en el maquillaje, etc." ("Antón introduced trends, [...] commanding with his tastes what would be worn, makeup, etc.").<sup>88</sup> While the implication of Antón's supposed homosexuality has not at this point of the film been explicitly introduced, this initial characterization positions the protagonist as an important aesthetic and cultural influence in the *pueblo*, specifically, as a man exerting influence over women's fashion. In this way, from the start of the film, it is readily apparent that Antón's particular brand of masculinity is likely not the kind that the viewer is necessarily expecting or even used to seeing on screen.

When, shortly after, Antón makes his first appearance on screen, he stands in stark contrast to the other male characters presented in the film's opening scenes, namely, Pedro. While Pedro is described as "guapo, joven, fuerte" ("handsome, young, strong"), in turn, representing a sort of masculine ideal (significantly, from Jacinta's perspective), Antón's introduction positions his character as Pedro's polar opposite. Emerging from the background of the frame, Antón is seen entering what appears to be a retail establishment, equipped with a large mirror and populated by an array of young—and noticeably well-dressed—women, idly flipping through fashion magazines. To the women's delight, the male protagonist sashays into the foreground, with a small, white poodle in tow, blowing kisses and greeting his "preciosidades"

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<sup>88</sup> See "No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto," dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

(“beauties”), notably, in a high-pitched voice. Dressed in an elaborate brocade blouse and flared pants, complemented by neatly coiffed blonde hair, Antón passes through the shop floor, politely dismissing customers complaining about the wait and making a bee line for the dressing rooms, where he observes two half-dressed women in the midst of a fitting. Any shock triggered by the women’s appearance is further compounded by Antón’s behavior, who immediately launches into a critique of the women’s physical appearance, commenting on one woman’s “rollitos” (“little stomach rolls”) and touching the other woman’s chest and torso as he evaluates the fit of her garment. Interestingly, the question of the permissibility of such intimate interactions between the male protagonist and the women visiting his shop is explicitly breached throughout the course of the trio’s small talk:

ANTÓN. Bueno, es mejor que me vaya porque tendréis que desvestiros.

MUJER 2. Por nosotras, puedes quedarte. No importa.

ANTÓN. ¡Uy! ¡Desvergonzadillas! ¿Delante de un hombre?

MUJER 1. ¿Quién? ¿Tú?

ANTÓN. ¡Uy! No va a ser el caniche, vamos.

(ANTÓN. Well, I better go since you two have to get undressed.

WOMAN 2. We don’t mind if you stay. It doesn’t matter.

ANTÓN. Oh! How shameless! In front of a man?

WOMAN 1. Who? You?

ANTÓN. Oh, come on! I don’t mean the poodle.)

Although the brief interaction between Antón and the two female clients appears to be harmless, it quickly becomes clear that the typical restrictions governing male-female relations, particularly in a small-town province such as the setting of the film, are not in play within the space of

Antón's fashion house (or, at the very least, do not impose the same level of influence). The explanation for this lapse, as the trio's conversation reveals, is Antón's unassuming masculinity, which the women undergoing fittings do not seem to regard as a threat, nor do they display even the remotest sense of discomfort regarding the male protagonist's presence while they are in the process of undressing. In fact, although the two female clients find themselves in a vulnerable position as they are in various stages of undress and subject to the close proximity of the seamstresses altering their clothing, the scene lacks any openly suggestive or lascivious undertone, even with Antón's unabashed touching. The women's playful comments and general amusement at Antón's suggestion that he should leave in order to grant them a measure of privacy as they undress serve to clarify the cause of their comfort: they do not see Antón as a man. While this understanding of Antón's masculinity is expressed as a joke, which the male protagonist also attempts to brush off by clarifying that he was, of course, not referring to the poodle in his arms, it clarifies a significant motivator for his career success: the town's inhabitants do not regard Antón as a man and, as such, feel comfortable allowing their wives, girlfriends, and daughters to patronize his services.<sup>89</sup>

Ultimately, Antón's effeminacy, solidified by his overall appearance and general demeanor, is meant to serve as a visual indication of his homosexuality and, by extension, his harmlessness to women. In this way, Fernández's film relies on what Alejandro Melero identifies as one of the most pervasive stereotypes surrounding gay men in the Spanish comedies of the

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<sup>89</sup> While Antón's presumed homosexuality renders him harmless to the *pueblo's* women, as Alejandro Melero rightly observes, the same logic does not transfer to his interactions with men. On the contrary, from Pedro's mother and girlfriend's perspective, Antón represents a significant threat to Pedro due to their implicit fear of his "ability to convert people and spread [his] contagious sexual orientation" (Melero, "Gay Men" 1467). When Antón calls Pedro's apartment to see if he might be able to treat his toothache, Pedro's mother, Doña Socorro, goes out of her way to avoid passing the phone call off to her son and prays for her son's protection in his absence. When Pedro returns, Doña Socorro even goes so far as to ask her son, "No te habrá hecho nada, ¿verdad?" ("He didn't do anything to you, right?").

1970s, namely, the image of gay men as effeminate, especially in relation to physical features and manners. Although Melero's study focuses primarily on the filmic production of Mariano Ozores, another notable director of the period, it also isolates a specific subgenre of Spanish comedy—the *comedia de mariquitas* (“gay comedy”)—which could easily encompass *No desearás al vecino del quinto*. In such films, Melero describes, the farce of a straight man pretending to be gay is ultimately interpreted, in the context of comedy, as joke, which gives way to a series of recurring gags:

A number of standard situations became typical gags in many of these comedies and were easily recognizable by the average spectator. Some of the most typical situations were sequences of straight men pretending to be gay in order to have easy access to women or to hide an infidelity, cross-dressing scenes in which straight men had to pass for transvestites and suffer the social consequences of that, and gay men insistently flirting with the male heterosexual protagonist, who very soon gets angry. (Melero, “Gay Men” 1451)

Within this framework, Melero emphasizes a tendency in such comedies to use gay characters with comic intentions, often in the form of formulaic jokes that relied heavily on the recognizability of telltale indicators of homosexuality, significantly, indicators informed by heterosexist notions of male homosexuality. This use of stereotypical references comes to stand in for the average audience as “signs of gayness,” that is, “a repertoire of gestures, expressions, stances, clothing, and even environments that bespeak gayness” (Melero, “Gay Men” 1464). In the case of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, the use of such signs is a key aspect of Alfredo Landa's performance, whose overall appearance fits neatly within the stereotypical image of the gay man, thus rendering his character easily recognizable as a gay man as soon as he appears on

screen. The most noticeable aspects of Antón’s initial appearance—his effeminate voice, his clothing, his particular manner of interacting with his female clients—become a convenient shorthand for what is unspeakable (i.e. his supposed homosexuality), as well as a key element of his working identity as a *modista* (“clothing designer”).

While Pedro struggles to consolidate a client base at his gynecology practice due to a general distrust of his intentions towards women (predominantly, from the men of the town), Antón, on the other hand, is able to freely interact with women and, thus, generate a consistent stream of female customers, who not only trust his services but are also seemingly “safe” in his company, according to the men in their lives. This general sense of trust, which, again, is derived largely from the protagonist’s assumed homosexuality, in turn, represents for Antón a form of cachet, which he argues can be used not only to his own benefit but also to Pedro’s in the form of referrals. When Pedro admits that his business is facing challenges, Antón shares his own career success, as well as his confidence in his own influence over the *pueblo*’s women, specifically, over their decisions as consumers:

ANTÓN. ¿Sabe usted [por qué no me puedo quejar]? Tienen confianza en mí.

PEDRO. Justamente lo contrario que en mi caso.

ANTÓN. Qué contraste, ¿verdad? Los dos vivimos de las mujeres. Ya sé cómo le voy a pagar, doctor.

PEDRO. No se moleste. Ya le he dicho.

ANTÓN. Le voy a recomendar clientes. Usted tiene talento y yo me voy a encargar de que en su consulta haya cola.

PEDRO. Lo veo muy difícil.

ANTÓN. ¡Uy! Usted no me conoce a mí. A las gentes de aquí me las conozco de sobra.

(ANTÓN. Do you know why I can't complain? They trust me.

PEDRO. Exactly the opposite of my situation.

ANTÓN. What a contrast, right? We both make a living off of women. I know how I'm going to pay you back, doctor.

PEDRO. Don't trouble yourself. I already told you not to worry.

ANTÓN. I'm going to refer my customers to you. You have a talent and I'm going to make sure that your practice has a line.

PEDRO. I think that will be very difficult.

ANTÓN. Oh! You don't know me. I know the people here perfectly well.)

While Pedro laments that for his business “todo son dificultades” (“it has been nothing but problems”), Antón openly regards his own success as a testament of the townspeople's trust in him, which Pedro lacks entirely. Despite the stark contrast between the rate of success of Antón and Pedro's respective business ventures, their shared interest in women as customers effectively links their careers as appealing to a shared consumer public. It quickly becomes clear, however, that while Pedro is largely ignorant of the concerns and desires of the town's female consumers, as well as his own potential (sexual) appeal to a female clientele outside of offering strictly professional services, Antón, on the other hand, is acutely aware of the idiosyncrasies of his customer base, as well as their particular restrictions and limitations as female consumers.

In effect, the revelation that Antón's performance of homosexuality, again, constituted largely through distinguishable signs meant to identify him to others as a gay man, is, in fact, all for the benefit of his business points to an ironic reality: although under Franco's dictatorship, homosexuality was not a state-sanctioned expression of male sexuality, within the realm of work, at least the way Fernández's film presents it, the performance of homosexuality—albeit an

effeminate and comic brand of homosexuality, easily distinguishable and understood as non-threatening by others—represents a convenient means by which to profit off of women with minimal competition, particularly in a small, conservative town. Significantly, Pedro discovers the reality of Antón’s strategic performance of homosexuality not in the *pueblo* but in Madrid, where the two happen to run into each other while Pedro is in town for a medical conference. The men’s encounter is at first clouded by Pedro’s initial confusion regarding Antón’s appearance, who appears, not as the well-dressed and manicured *modista* of the *pueblo*, but rather, as the film’s script specifies, “en todos sus ademanes [...] todo un hombre” (“but in all of his gestures and signs<sup>90</sup> [...] a total man”).<sup>91</sup> While back in their hometown, Pedro is able to easily interpret Antón’s appearance as an indication of his sexual inclinations, the stark contrast of Antón’s “manly” appearance in Madrid, made all the more confusing by Antón’s company, a duo of attractive, young women, unsettles both Pedro’s and the viewer’s understanding of the male protagonist’s identity. This confusion is ultimately resolved through Antón’s own intervention, who, after confirming that no one else from the *pueblo* has accompanied Pedro to Madrid, explains that “el pelo rubio y el perro” (“the blonde hair and the poodle”), signs meant to denote his supposed homosexuality, are entirely superficial and all for the sake of his career. This performance, it turns out, has been deliberately crafted in response to the town’s moral and social values, which, Antón seems to argue, selectively tolerate apparent expressions of homosexuality, particularly, when it comes to the acquisition of certain services. In fact, in the

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<sup>90</sup> I choose to translate “ademanes” deliberately in this case as “gestures and signs,” in dialogue with theorist Richard Dyer’s work on the construction of characters, specifically sexual minorities, through the use of stereotypical references. For more on the narrative value of the stereotype and its importance in the construction of characters and plots, see Dyer 1993.

<sup>91</sup> See “No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto,” dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

original version of the film's script, Antón goes so far as to suggest that Pedro try his hand at the same performance:

ANTÓN. Ése es mi truco... ¿No lo entiendes?... Haciéndome pasar por lo que no soy... mi negocio "Chez Antón" va divinamente. Yo sé de memoria lo que es un negocio como ése y en una provincia, si no te haces pasar... Por eso, no va ni una mujer a dejar que la pruebas y no por ellas, sino por su marido, su novio, su familia...

PEDRO. Claro. Me parece que entiendo.

ANTÓN. A tu negocio le pasa igual. Yo lo he oído comentar en mi casa. Tú gustas a las mujeres. Por lo tanto, serías el último médico que irían a ver.

PEDRO. ¿No pretenderás que yo haga lo que tú...?

ANTÓN. No, ya no se lo creería nadie... ¡O quizás! ¿Quieres que lo intentemos?

(ANTÓN. That's my trick... Don't you understand?... Passing myself off as something I'm not... My business "Chez Antón" is going brilliantly. I know a business like that by heart and in a provincial town, if you don't pass... That's why no woman is going to let you examine her and not by choice but because of her husband, her boyfriend, her family...

PEDRO. Of course. I think I understand.

ANTÓN. The same thing affects your business. I've heard my clients talk about it.

Women like you. So you would be the last doctor they would go to see.

PEDRO. You're not suggesting that I do what you...?

ANTÓN. No, no one would believe you... Or maybe they would! Do you want to give it

a try?)<sup>92</sup>

While the film's final cut suppresses much of Antón's claim that, in a provincial town, men in industries such as his own and Pedro's have no choice but to feign homosexuality in order to maintain a successful business,<sup>93</sup> it bears noting that the conversation detailed in the original version of the film's script explicitly characterizes Antón's performance of homosexuality in the realm of work as a deliberate act of passing, specifically, passing as a sexual orientation different from his own. Although the brand of passing related to sexuality that Antón advocates for is entirely decontextualized from its typical manifestations, namely, passing as heterosexual as a form of self-preservation or self-protection in response to "the dominant social order [that] often implores gay people to stay in the closet" (Sanchez and Schlossberg 6), it remains a clear example of passing with the intended result of securing specific privileges, including an increase in social acceptance.

Significantly, in this case, the privileges Antón seeks to secure through his passing as a gay man are primarily economic (though not without the added bonus of convenient access to women's bodies): by posing as a gay man, Antón is able to secure a female clientele that Pedro as a heterosexual man has been denied due to his perceived threat (read: sexual appeal) to the *pueblo's* women. In Antón's estimation, the only way to bypass the town's provincial values is, ironically, to intentionally subvert them. In effect, the male protagonist's career success, evidenced by the busy shop floor presented in the film's opening scenes, serves to confirm that while homosexuality may not have been officially permitted under Francoism, it seemingly

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<sup>92</sup> See "No Desearas Al Vecino del Quinto," dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05562 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>93</sup> Instead, the dialogue that makes its way into the final version of the film sees Antón suggest that the perceived necessity of performing homosexuality in order to work in a fashion house is, in fact, an inconvenience, which he blames on "la sociedad en que vivimos" ("the society we live in"), with no further explanation.

represents a less significant threat to the preservation of traditional values, namely, the systematic regulation of female sexuality, than heterosexuality, which, if left unregulated (which would be the case if the townswomen were allowed to visit Pedro's gynecology practice, for example), poses a significant threat to Spanish society.

Arguably, it is for this reason that the film's conclusion, although it details Jacinta and Antón's wife's discoveries of their partner's respective infidelities, does not dismantle the male protagonist's business model. In fact, the primary moral indiscretion corrected in the film's resolution is that of adultery, which is effectively squashed through the incorporation of Antón's wife, Matilde (Annabella Incontrera), into the general framework of his fashion business as a jack-of-all-trades.<sup>94</sup> In the film's closing scenes, Jacinta, in her function as the film's de facto narrator, explains that Antón's wife "como no se fiaba nada de su marido, se instaló en la casa de modas como secretaria, jefe de relaciones públicas, presentadora de modelos" ("since she did not trust her husband at all, settled into the fashion house as a secretary, head of public relations, model presenter"). In effect, the viewer witnesses Antón in his typical provincial ensemble, newly disguised in his blonde wig and extravagant garments, however, noticeably uncomfortable due to his wife's sudden presence in his work environment and uncharacteristically awkward in his banter with his female customers. For example, when he attempts to sell a customer on a garment by insisting "¿Cómo no te va a ir?" ("How could it not suit you?"), an assertion he makes while affectionately stroking his female client's arm, Antón's wife dramatically coughs and glares at her husband, who proceeds to leap away from the female client. In this way, the film's restoration of order is achieved, not through the definitive prohibition of performative homosexuality, but rather through the diligent policing of a previously unrestrained

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<sup>94</sup> For his part, Pedro receives a similar punishment: not only does Jacinta begin working as a receptionist at his medical practice, the couple also gets married.

heterosexuality by a female moral authority. Consequently, Antón's performance of homosexuality is allowed to continue, however, with unprecedented oversight, serving as a reminder of the enduring influence of traditional values in the town, however, not with the punishment that we might expect.

### 1.3 *Los novios de mi mujer*

In many ways, Fernández's later film *Los novios de mi mujer* directly reflects the "loose ends" (to borrow Barry Jordan's term) left unresolved in *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, a film that, despite its socially conservative ending, gives way to acts of transgression that "produce an excess which cannot be contained" (Jordan, "Revisiting the 'comedia sexy'" 182) in large part due to the film's representation of male sexuality. In fact, although *Los novios de mi mujer* had previously been granted a filming permit in 1971, as well as a rating of "únicamente para mayores de 18 años, sin adaptaciones" ("for adults over the age of 18 only, without adaptations")<sup>95</sup>—significantly, under the original title *Ojo por ojo*—, in mid-1972, Fernández's work represented the first case of a film being denied economic protections due to the Junta de Censura de Película's application of the newly-passed second article of the "Orden de 12 de marzo de 1971 sobre protección de la cinematografía nacional," which disqualified any films that "vayan en detrimento de los valores culturales y sociales que el Estado está interesado en proteger" ("might harm the cultural and social values that the State seeks to protect") (6593). Censors ultimately justified their decision by condemning the film for having "un desarrollo argumental de ínfima calidad, sin otra ambición que la que posee un producto estrictamente comercial, pero sin preocupaciones artísticas, culturales o morales que la hagan digna de estima"

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<sup>95</sup> See "Los Novios de Mi Mujer," dated May 2, 1972, held in AGA,36,04224 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

(“a plot of low quality, without any other ambition than that of a strictly commercial product, and devoid of any artistic, cultural or moral concerns that would make it worthy of esteem”), evidencing a general distaste for films perceived to have prioritized commercial interests over the values and interests of the State.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, while the promise of homosexuality for commercial gain, as opposed to an attempt to legitimate homosexuality as a sexuality, may have allowed *No desearás al vecino del quinto* to survive the censors’s wrath, the film’s overwhelming success at the box office, which was the highest grossing film between 1971-1975 (Palacio and Vernon 478), was likely in part to blame for the bureaucratic hurdles later faced by *Los novios de mi mujer*.

While the Comisión en Pleno de la Junta de Ordenación y Apreciación de Películas would later reevaluate the film in late-1972, in large part due to Fernández’s insistence on the ambiguity of the law that disqualified the film from economic protections, the censors’s apprehensions about the film’s “reiterados ataques a la institución matrimonial” (“repeated attacks on the institution of marriage”),<sup>97</sup> as well as its treatment of the relationship between the protagonist, Emilio (Alfredo Landa), and his eventual accomplice, Pepín de Triana (Andrés Pajares), illuminate lingering concerns about the representation of sexuality in popular culture, specifically, within the realm of cinema, even in the late stages of Francoism. Ultimately, underlying the censors’s general recommendation to avoid “los excesos de exhibicionismo, erotismo, situaciones y diálogos” (“excesses in exhibitionism, eroticism, situations or dialogue”) was a specific warning to the film’s producers against explicitly emphasizing the presumed

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<sup>96</sup> See “Los Novios de Mi Mujer,” dated May 6, 1972, held in AGA,36,04224 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>97</sup> See “Los Novios de Mi Mujer,” dated May 3, 1972, held in AGA,36,04224 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

homosexuality of Pepín de Triana, who the censors cautioned should not appear “en modo alguno como invertido” (“in any way to be homosexual”).<sup>98</sup> In this way, censors appeared eager to correct their uncharacteristically sympathetic treatment of the scandalous issue of homosexuality in the case of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, demonstrating far less tolerance towards the portrayal of the same topic in Fernández’s later film. In contrast to Fernández’s earlier film, which does not completely negate the potential value of posing as a gay man for the benefit of one’s career, *Los novios de mi mujer* represents the performance of homosexuality as unreliably lucrative and continually emphasizes what Melero identifies as the assumed “predatory intentions” of gay men, which positions homosexual men as “gays plotting how to get their victims, or [...] trying to victimize the straight hero” (“Gay Men” 1467).

In *Los novios de mi mujer*, Andrés Pajares, who would go on to reprise his performance as a straight man pretending to be gay in later films such as *¡Qué gozada de divorcio!* (Mariano Ozores, 1981) and *El currante* (Mariano Ozores, 1983), makes a living as a singer and performer under the stage name Pepín de Triana. While Pepín’s stage persona is characterized by obvious references to the Spanish pasodoble and flamenco, not unlike like the male protagonists of Chapter 1 who capitalize on stereotypical tropes of Spanish masculinity in order to profit from an increasing demand for such performances from European consumers, Pepín’s performances generate far less success (though he claims to have performed to the delight of Latin American audiences). In fact, when Pepín arranges to perform at a local venue in Madrid, El Royale, which he promises will represent a triumphant “vuelta a la patria” (“return to the motherland”) after extensive touring in Latin America, the show, at least in his estimation, turns out to be “una completa ruina” (“a complete disaster”). Despite the fact that Pepín’s performance is a dazzling

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<sup>98</sup> See “Los Novios de Mi Mujer,” dated December 13, 1971, held in AGA,36,04224 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

rendition of “Yo maté a Magdalena” (“I killed Magdalena”), an unapologetically misogynistic song about wife killing, complete with a pink cropped jacket, covered in sequins, the protagonist storms off-stage to meet his secret family—his wife, María, (Joselé Román) and son, Manolo (Alfonso Velasco)—to whom he complains, “Aquí [en España] sólo interesan las cosas americanas o los estancieros con acento regional” (“Here [in Spain] people are only interested in Latin American things and ranchers with regional accents”). Much to Pepín’s frustration, his attempts to market Spanish popular culture to a domestic audience, even with the intended appeal of a flamboyant stage persona, characterized by theatrical, highly gestural body language, does not garner the level of success he would have hoped, calling into question the enduring mass appeal of both Spanish exoticism and performative homosexuality beyond a trendy gimmick.

With the long-term value of such entities in doubt, much of the narrative tension sustained throughout the first half of the film emerges out of a consideration of the permissibility of homosexuality outside of the explicitly framework of employment. Such tension is predicated in large part on the sustained assumption of Pepín de Triana’s homosexuality, as well as his own fears as a closeted straight man regarding the potential of Emilio’s own homosexuality. Emilio, on the other hand, convinced of Pepín’s homosexuality and determined to settle the score with his wife, who intends to repay his recent infidelity with a marital indiscretion of her own, sees Pepín’s homosexuality as a useful service that he can essentially “hire out” in order to trick his wife, Charo (Esperanza Roy). In effect, Emilio’s plan is to convince his wife to pursue Pepín, assuming that Pepín’s perceived homosexuality will effectively prevent the couple from successfully carrying out the affair, while still allowing Charo the opportunity to pretend that she has gotten even with her cheating husband. Up until this plan becomes clear, however, Pepín is

gravely suspicious of Emilio's intentions, especially after finding himself the recipient of personalized gifts, and enlists his wife and son, who are also wary of Emilio, to spy on their encounters, warning them to call the police if Emilio tries anything unsavory. When Emilio finally reveals the nature of his proposition, however, clarifying that he is married and offering to gift Pepín a car in exchange for his participation in the plot against his wife, the protagonist comes to understand Emilio's petition as a strange but alluring offer. With the threat of Emilio's possible homosexuality removed, Pepín shares his relief that Emilio is straight and, perhaps ironically, given Emilio's ignorance that Pepín himself is also secretly straight, argues that his acting talents make him more than fit for the job:

PEPÍN. Entonces, ¿tú eres normal?

EMILIO. Hombre, pues, claro...

PEPÍN. Lo que tú quieres es darle una lección a tu costilla.

EMILIO. Eso es. Una lección. ¿No te parece bien?

PEPÍN. Muy bien.

EMILIO. Tienes que aprender bien el papel porque no puedes fallar.

PEPÍN. Descuida. Yo soy un histrión.

(PEPÍN. So you're straight?)

EMILIO. Of course...

PEPÍN. What you want is teach your better half a lesson.

EMILIO. That's it. A lesson. What do you think?

PEPÍN. Very good.

EMILIO. You have to learn the role well because you can't fail.

PEPÍN. Don't worry. I'm an actor.)

While there is humor to be derived from Pepín's enthusiastic display of relief that his assumed admirer is, in fact, straight, the comedy of the scene is largely the result of the viewer's knowledge that Pepín is not the kind of man Emilio seems to think he is based on his signs and gestures, such as his physical appearance, mannerisms, and chosen profession. Ironically, Emilio's response to his newfound accomplice's agreement to go through with the plan is to emphasize the importance of Pepín learning the role well, which in this case, is the role of a heterosexual man. Unbeknownst to Emilio, Pepín's requested embodiment of heterosexuality does not require him to pretend that he is something he is not (as in the case of his performed homosexuality), but instead necessitates his "taking off" of the deliberately constructed homosexual identity meant to add an additional allure to his career. As a result, Pepín's confident promise that his profession as a performer, namely, as an actor and singer, will allow him to perform the requested role well, is thoroughly amusing to the viewer, who, fully aware of Pepín's closeted heterosexuality, is conscious of the fact that Pepín's promise of delivering a success performance of heterosexuality necessitates just the opposite: Pepín's refusal to perform. In agreeing to do so, Pepín's individual performance of male sexuality is no longer an exercise carried out solely in service of his own career in the performing arts, but rather, in the case of Emilio's unconventional favor, a coveted skill solicited by another man for his own benefit (i.e. to teach his wife a lesson).

The dissolution of any confusion on the part of Pepín and Emilio regarding their respective interest in one another does not, however, nullify the fear of Emilio's potential homosexuality, which is rendered an object of suspicion, not due to his outward appearance and mannerisms (as in the case of Pepín), but rather by the misinterpretation of otherwise harmless actions, particularly, by other men in Emilio's life. Without proper context, Emilio's erratic

behavior and mysterious interactions with Pepín throughout the film, especially while on the job at the car dealership where he works, are potentially misinterpreted as expressions of sexual interest in other men. Consequently, Emilio's coworker, Luis (Luis Dávila), unaware of the underlying conflict between Emilio and his estranged wife, which the couple has kept a secret from those in their inner circle, and disturbed by Emilio's recent change in demeanor, understands the protagonist's behavior as indicative of latent homosexuality. Ultimately, Luis's initial response is to involve Emilio's wife, which he does in an attempt to not only raise her concern, but also to facilitate the protagonist's rehabilitation:

A lo mejor todavía estamos a tiempo de ayudarle. [...] Emilio está muy raro. Algo le ocurre. Desde que volvisteis de la nieve, ha cambiado. [...] Contigo no es el mismo. Me refiero—y perdona—a vosotros, bueno, tú ya me entiendes. [...] Tiene retratos de hombres en el despacho y se pasa el día tirándoles flechas al corazón y cuando les acierta, se ríe mucho. Además, me regaña continuamente porque me gustan las mujeres. Dice que eso es una guarrería.

(We might still have time to help him. [...] Emilio is very strange lately. Something is going on with him. Ever since you two came back from visiting the snow, he's changed. With you he's not the same. I'm referring to—and I'm sorry to say it—to the two of you, well, you understand. [...] He has portraits of men in his office and spends the whole day throwing darts at their hearts and when he hits the target, he laughs a lot. Also, he constantly scolds me for liking women. He says it's dirty.)

Although Charo greets Luis's concern with a great deal of amusement, assuming that Emilio's recent change in demeanor is, in fact, the result of her promise to sleep with one of his friends as repayment for doing so with one of her friends from childhood, Luis's continued preoccupation

with the possibility of Emilio's homosexuality leads him to become increasingly involved in Emilio's private life. As a consequence, unlike in the case of *No desearás al vecino*, where the protagonist's wife is a dominant force in correcting perceived moral transgressions, in *Los novios de mi mujer*, it is the film's male characters that serve to police each other, interpreting each other's gestures and signs according to whether or not they appear to suggest homosexual inclinations. While Emilio, upon interpreting Pepín's gestures and signs as indicative of his sexual orientation, is entirely amicable towards the performer (perhaps because he stands to gain something from Pepín's performance of homosexuality), Luis, on the other hand, serves as a firm reminder of the necessity for men to comply with heterosexuality under Francoism, actively interrogating what he understands as deviant behavior on Emilio's part and encouraging his friend to abandon unsavory influences—in this case, gay men (or men understood to be gay).

The clearest example of this tendency occurs as the result of Pepín and Emilio's joint arrest after a police raid on a seedy bar, which the film's script describes as “[q]uizá la peor sala de fiestas de Madrid” (“perhaps the worst bar in Madrid”).<sup>99</sup> After being forced to spend the night in jail, which the duo does with great excitement, Luis comes to Emilio's rescue, however, not without expressing a judgmental attitude about not only his friend's run-in with the law, but also what he regards as a questionable choice in company. When Emilio tries to explain away the evening by suggesting that the arrest was merely a misunderstanding, Luis sidesteps his friend's explanation in favor of questioning Emilio's recent choice of male company:

LUIS. Perdóname, Emilio—y no es que me meta en tu vida—pero, ¿tú crees que haces bien con esa clase de amistades?

EMILIO. ¿Y qué tiene de malo? Pepín es un gran artista, un hombre con una gran

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<sup>99</sup> See “Los Novios de Mi Mujer,” dated 1970, held in AGA,36,05589 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

sensibilidad. Y que a mí...

LUIS. Está bien, está bien. Ya eres mayorcito pero creo que deberías recapacitar. Si

Charo se enterase de esto, tendría un disgusto.

EMILIO. Pero si tú no se lo dices, no tiene por qué enterarse nunca.

LUIS. Hazme caso y cambia de vida, Emilio. Esto que haces no es normal.

EMILIO. Bueno, bueno. Yo cambiaré de vida pero de esto a Charo, ni una palabra, eh. Ni una palabra.

(LUIS. Forgive me, Emilio—it's not that I'm involving myself in your life—but do you think you're doing the right thing with friends like that?)

EMILIO. And what's so bad about him? Pepín is a great artist, a man with a great deal of sensitivity. And in my opinion...

LUIS. Fine, fine. You're an adult but I think you should rethink things. If Charo were to find out about this, she would be upset.

EMILIO. But if you don't tell her, she has no reason to ever be upset.

LUIS. Listen to me and turn your life around, Emilio. What you're doing isn't normal.

EMILIO. Fine, fine. I'll change my lifestyle but not a word to Charo, eh. Not a word.)

Much like Pedro's mother's fear in *No desearás al vecino del quinto* of the effeminate gay man as a corrupting influence on straight men, potentially in the form of conversion, Luis's comments confirm a general mistrust of gay men, to whom he gestures vaguely in isolating categorical terms as "esa clase de amistades." What is more, Luis's emphatic suggestion that Emilio must right the course of his life or risk upsetting Charo is motivated by the belief that Emilio's recent behavior is not normal, a moral evaluation echoing ultraconservative discourses of homosexuality characterizing gay men as morally, intellectually, and even sexually inferior to

their heterosexual counterparts. In short, Luis's intervention, entirely lacking in subtlety, serves to shut down the possibility that homosexuality, including the mere suggestion of homosexual tendencies, could represent a masculine asset.

In a comic twist, not unlike that of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, Charo's skillful manipulation of Emilio's seduction plot confirms the malleability of appearances, namely, those thought to be indicative of gender identity and sexuality. The film's final moments ultimately throw the question of the permissibility of homosexuality completely out the window in order to focus on a different kind of "coming out" moment, specifically, Emilio's discovery of Pepín's closeted heterosexuality, which in its revelation constitutes a legitimate threat to the protagonist's marriage. Significantly, this "coming out" is largely the consequence of Charo's own performance of female sexuality, teasing her supposed transformation into an adulteress by calling into question Emilio's relief that he has arrived just in time to prevent any indiscretions. Pepín's "coming out" is further confirmed by his wife and son's admission of their true relationship to him, which seemingly serves to confirm Emilio's fears: "Luego, todo es un truco. Resulta que Pepín es normal" ("So that means it's all a trick. It turns out that Pepín is straight"). Emilio's shock and confusion is met with a disinterested explanation from Pepín's wife, María, who confirms that her husband's performance of homosexuality was, in fact, a gimmick in an attempt to gain notoriety as a performer: "Estos artistas de la canción cómica necesitan lograr que el público se meta con ellos y él lo consigue así" ("These comic song artists need to make the audience engage with them and this is the way he does it"). In effect, María's confirmation that Pepín's supposed homosexuality is actually just "un truco para trabajar" ("a trick in order to work"), that is, a performance meant to ascribe additional cachet to his working reputation, at

once confirming the effectiveness of the protagonist's enterprise and underscoring a complete and total ambiguity inherent to the embodiment of one's sexual identity.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Emilio's sudden discovery of the unreliability of signs and gestures as indicative of one's identity, especially as it pertains to gender and sexuality, does very little to actually destabilize the interpretive habits that resulted in his long-held assumption of Pepín's homosexuality. Despite the unchanged rigidity of such practices, the film's concluding images, which see Emilio chase Pepín out from the backstage area of the venue where he is performing so as to give him a beating, surpass a general critique of performative homosexuality as deserving of punishment by suggesting, instead, that a man pretending to be anything other than who he is is in and of itself a condemnable offense.

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

While homosexuality as an identity was not permitted under Francoism, gay characters, specifically, gay men, were often including as protagonists or in secondary roles in the comedies of the popular directors of the 1970s, particularly, in the works of filmmakers like Ramón (Tito) Fernández. It is interesting to note that, although gay characters or situations involving gay paraphernalia were not entirely absent from the landscape of Spanish cinema before the 1970s, the period saw a relatively steady inclusion of gay characters (or heterosexual characters pretending to be homosexual), especially in film and comedy, likely due to what Alejandro Melero understands as a general lack of any "serious analysis of homosexuality" ("Gay Men" 1451), which was not permissible under Francoism. Despite the fact that filmic representations of homosexuality largely utilized gay characters as a convenient vehicle for comedy, it is significant that films such as *No desearás al vecino del quinto* and *Los novios de mi mujer*

present the possibility of performative homosexuality as a key aspect of some Spanish men's working experience. Although the payout guaranteed by such performances of sexuality is unreliable at best, I would argue that the mere suggestion of homosexuality as a potential career asset is a subversive conceit for censors to have allowed filmmakers within the greater landscape of Franco-era film.

While in both films, the threat of punishment for inauthentic or feigned performances of masculinity and male sexuality remains consistent, in each case, the performance of homosexuality within the realm of work also has potential to grant men access to financially advantageous opportunities, including the potential of lucrative employment in traditionally feminine industries (i.e. fashion in the case of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*'s Antón), as well as a more socially permissible means of attracting and including female consumers. As such, though homosexuality as an aspect of the Spanish working man's identity does not entirely escape becoming the butt of the joke in the popular cinema of the 1970s, especially when embodied by the stereotypical effeminate and comic gay man, the fact that the performance of homosexuality does not automatically exclude the Spanish working man from participating actively and enthusiastically in the labor market represents a tentative step towards the construction of a new sexual discourse for gay men.

In contrast to the first three chapters of this dissertation, which have offered relatively successful narratives of employment—albeit not without their respective challenges—, in the last chapter of this dissertation I will consider the issue of underemployment. While many of the films included in this study focus on the representation of employment in specific industries, such as tourism and sex work, as well as the performance of given Spanish masculine identities as a key aspect of one's work, a recurring issue in much of the popular cinema of the 1970s is

that of job insecurity. As such, job insecurity often manifests in these films as a cycle of unemployment and *pluriempleo* (“multi-employment”), in which the Spanish working man struggles to secure permanent employment. In this context, I will analyze how leisure time comes to represent a significant concern for the Spanish working man. On the one hand, leisure time represents a point of anxiety for the Spanish working man, as opposed to a source of comfort, given that an excess of leisure time seemingly confirms his idleness. In this scheme, such unproductivity ultimately produces damaging consequences for the Spanish working man, whose sense of self-worth under Spain’s burgeoning capitalist framework is largely determined by his productivity within the realm of work. Conversely, for the overworked and underemployed Spanish working man, leisure comes to represent an elusive ideal that effectively represents the antithesis of the modern capitalist economy, representing a form of escape from overwork, consumerism, and the demands of married life. Consequently, for the Spanish working man, leisure continually represents a significant counterpoint to work, especially given the increasingly dominant economic and cultural values produced by the growing influence of capitalist ideals.

#### Chapter 4: Overworked and Underemployed; *Pluriempleo* and the Anxiety of Leisure

In the previous chapter, I considered the representation of performative (homo)sexualities in Ramón (Tito) Fernández's *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970) and *Los novios de mi mujer* (1972), specifically, the significance of the male protagonists's deliberate self-presentation as homosexual in order to further their own career and professional ambitions. In both films, the male protagonist's supposed homosexuality is never declared explicitly, rather, other characters assume the protagonist's sexuality given the presence of "signs of gayness," which are meant to communicate what cannot be expressly spoken. While both *No desearás al vecino del quinto* and *Los novios de mi mujer* subvert the censorship apparatus by reinforcing heterosexist perspectives on homosexuality, as well as including conservative conclusions that serve to "punish"—or, at the very least, monitor—the male protagonists in light of their performance of homosexuality, these films also seem to suggest that homosexuality as an assumed identity is not necessarily a detriment to success in the world of work. In fact, homosexuality as it is performed by Antón and Pepín in *No desearás al vecino del quinto* and *Los novios de mi mujer*, respectively, serves as a strategy to attract and maintain a consistent client base and/or audience and effectively facilitates contact with women that would otherwise be impermissible.

In Chapter 2, I analyzed the figure of the *chulo* in Fernando Merino's *Préstame quince días* (1971), in which Alfonso's defense of *chulismo* as a lifestyle positions women as a potential source of financial support for men disillusioned with the world of work and eager to more frequently indulge in leisure time. In fact, the idealized notion of leisure extolled by Alfonso in *Préstame quince días* represents a recurring theme in the comedies of the period, particularly, in those films in which the male protagonist is either unemployed or *pluriempleado*, that is,

significantly underemployed and working multiple jobs in order to make a living (or some semblance of a living).<sup>100</sup> In this context, this chapter is particularly concerned with the Spanish popular comedy of the period's representation of men who, due to unemployment or insufficient employment, resort to working multiple jobs, often in various industries, in order to make a living. These male protagonists are typically motivated by economic factors and/or goals that are seemingly impossible to achieve without a measure of financial stability, such as purchasing or renting a home, getting married, buying luxury commodities, and paying off debt. Furthermore, these men, despite, or perhaps because of, working multiple jobs, are unable to attain the stability necessary in order to achieve their personal and/or professional goals, ultimately contributing to a sense of stagnation and a lack of personal fulfillment.

In the face of such challenges, contrasting perspectives of leisure time tend to reflect one of two equally daunting attitudes: whereas an excess of leisure time represents an indication of one's inability to participate fully and actively in the labor market, a perceived lack of leisure time positions leisure as an evasive luxury, unattainable given the extent and duration of the male protagonist's work-related activities, as is the case in films such as Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* (1974) and Pedro Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* (1972), which I analyzed in Chapter 1 as an example of the increasing commodification of an exaggerated image of "Spanishness." In this chapter, I revisit Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* in order to examine the male protagonist's employment activity outside of the short-lived tourism enterprise he undertakes alongside his business partner, Valentín. In effect, this venture is for Sabino an

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<sup>100</sup> For the International Labour Organization, whereas persons in unemployment are defined as "all those of working age who were not in employment, carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity," persons in underemployment engage in varying levels of employment activity. Generally speaking, underemployed individuals express a desire to work additional hours, accumulate working time in all jobs that is less than full-time, and are often available to work additional hours given an opportunity for more work (International Labour Organization).

isolated attempt to remedy his severe underemployment. Overwhelmed by his current situation, the viewer witnesses Sabino simultaneously carry out freelance accounting work (in line with his former occupation as an accountant), door-to-door sales, dog walking services, paid church choir performances, knitting, and even modeling for a local art class in order to combat his accumulated debt. As a consequence of such a workload, the protagonist comes to resent staples of capitalist culture, such as luxury commodities, in favor of an idealization of rural life (exemplified in the portrait of Sabino's late father) and outdoor recreation, namely, fishing (an activity that Sabino frequently practiced before meeting his wife, Elisa). In this way, leisure is defined in direct opposition to the modern capitalist economy, representing a form of escape from overwork, consumerism, and the demands of married life.

Similarly, Saturnino of *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, also played by Alfredo Landa, is—in Álvaro del Amo's terms—"algo así como «el chapuzas» del pueblo" ("something like the town's jack-of-all-trades") (105). While the film's plot focuses primarily on Saturnino's journey to Madrid on assignment from the mayor to acquire a bull for the town's upcoming festivities, in this way engaging with the dominant trope of *el cateto (or paleto) de pueblo* ("country bumpkin") in the big city,<sup>101</sup> while in his hometown of Lerma, the protagonist's daily activities are largely determined by the wants and needs of the town's citizens, who depend on the protagonist for a myriad of tasks. As such, Saturnino's occupational duties include everything from fixing the town square's streetlamps and serving as the resident handyman to castrating the

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101 In dialogue with María García de León, Nathan Richardson understands this trope as representative of a particular series of formulaic comedies, *películas de paleto* ("paleto films"), that is, "comedies of explicit city/country encounter" (73). Richardson understands such films as a playful reflection of the hundreds and thousands of rural villagers that relocated to Spanish cities throughout the 1960s and 1970s. According to Richardson, the popularity of such films rested on their "gratuitous comedic broadsides of the cosmopolitan culture that confronted the unsophisticated rural immigrant (or *paleto*) and on the ultimate triumph of the films' country-bumpkin protagonists over the bewildering urban culture" (61). Examples of such films include *El turismo es un gran invento* (Pedro Lazaga, 1968), *De picos pardos a la ciudad* (Ignacio F. Iquino, 1969), and *El abuelo tiene un plan* (Pedro Lazaga, 1973).

town's farm animals and giving German classes (presumably, in response to the contemporary trend of emigration for work). Consequently, Saturnino is consistently exhausted, much to his wife's chagrin, who interprets his lack of interest in sex, not as a sign of work-related fatigue, but rather confirmation either of his infidelity or homosexuality, which she is determined to remedy.

While in other comedies of the period, such as *París bien vale una moza* (Pedro Lazaga, 1972), excessive leisure time is decried as the root of all moral indiscretions, or even an indication of a male worker's uselessness, as is the case in Lazaga's later film, *Estoy hecho un chaval* (1977), both *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* understand and effectively idealize leisure time as the antithesis of work. In this way, non-work time comes to represent an opportunity for the male protagonist to not only distance himself from the demands of work, but also those of consumer capitalism, which effectively complicate—if not render completely impossible—his ability to carry out both necessary functions, such as sleep, as well as chosen recreational activities, such as outdoor activities and even sex.

### **1.1 Cinematic Conventions: The Spanish Working Man, *Pluriempleo*, and Marital Instability**

While previous chapters have considered in varying degrees of detail the Spanish popular comedy's engagement with generic conventions and recurring tropes—namely, the recurrence of farcical situations and storylines, various configurations (and reconfigurations) of the so-called *macho ibérico*, and frequent references to the contemporary extra-filmic reality (i.e. capitalist development, immigration, tourism)—it is important to concretely define the figure of the underemployed (and, significantly, overworked) Spanish working man as a key fixture of the

popular comedy of the 1970s. Álvaro del Amo, in particular, although he does not carry out his study of the Spanish popular comedy of the 1970s through the lens of gender, organizes his analysis of such films according to a thoroughly gendered framework, separating the genre's dominant archetypes according to male and female archetypes. In doing so, the author outlines three main types of Spanish male protagonists: *el hombre casado* (“the married man”), *el hombre que acabará casándose* (“the man who will end up getting married”), and *el chulo* (“the pimp”).<sup>102</sup>

Although the nomenclature of these three types defines the Spanish male protagonist primarily in terms of his marital status and, to an extent, his sexuality and/or sexual activity, Del Amo's elaboration of the overarching characteristics of these tropes of Spanish masculinity especially emphasizes the male protagonist's relationship to work. While Del Amo's analysis ultimately fails to go beyond an itemized (albeit thorough) categorization of the main types of Spanish male protagonists, it does, however, elucidate a series of qualities often associated with the male protagonists of the Spanish popular comedy of the period, which, in turn, point to a recurring set of specifically work-related concerns. *El hombre casado*, for example, is overwhelmingly defined in terms of his professional work, as well as his responsibility to provide for his dependents (i.e. his wife and, if he has them, children): “Sobre él recae la responsabilidad de «sacar adelante» a su familia, lo que consigue desempeñando una profesión de categoría o, en otros casos, dedicado a trabajos peculiares, o agobiado por situaciones de pluriempleo, que afectan más, por lo general, al hombre que acabará casándose” (“The responsibility of ‘supporting’ the family falls upon him, which he is able to achieve through a high-status profession or, in other cases, by dedicating himself to odd jobs, or overwhelmed by a

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<sup>102</sup> Although I have translated *chulo* as “pimp,” it is important to recall Del Amo's specific—and more general—understanding of the figure of the *chulo* as “el hombre «que vive de las mujeres»” (136).

situation of having more than one job, which generally more often affects the man who will end up getting married”) (103).

The unmarried man, on the other hand, is, perhaps mistakenly, characterized almost exclusively according to what Del Amo identifies as a principal interest in recreation (i.e. staying up all night and pursuing women). It is significant, however, that the unmarried man is often restricted by a sense of financial instability and/or job insecurity, which often serve to prevent him from full-time employment, moving out of his parents’s home, and/or getting married, either for an extended period of time or indefinitely (as was the case, for example, in *Los días de Cabirio*, the subject of Chapter 3). As such, the unmarried male protagonist (and often even the married male protagonist) finds himself firmly situated in the lower-middle or middle class due to his employment situation, which Del Amo appropriately describes as “modesto, mal pagado” (“modest, poorly compensated”) (114).

Although Del Amo’s categorization identifies the situation of having more than one job as a plight relatively unique to the unmarried male protagonist—citing films such as *París bien vale una moza*, *Jenaro, el de los 14* (Mariano Ozores, 1974), and *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1971) as examples of this phenomenon, *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* feature married working men who for various reasons are forced to resort to *pluriempleo* in order to support themselves and their spouses.<sup>103</sup> While the two films differ largely in terms of the protagonist’s personal and professional backgrounds, as well as the

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<sup>103</sup> Significantly, the male protagonists of *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, Sabino and Saturnino, respectively, do not have children. This is the case across the films studied in this dissertation, with the exception of Antón of *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, the sole male protagonist to have children (a fact that is hidden throughout much of the film). *Manolo la nuit* technically represents another exception, although the protagonist’s wife is not revealed to be pregnant until the conclusion of the film. In general, however, these films do not acknowledge the absence of children, though perhaps the issue of a lack of sex, as is the case in *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, for example, serves as a possible explanation.

motivations for their respective employment situation, both Sabino and Saturnino find themselves subject to working multiple jobs, often contradictory or widely varying occupations, as opposed to full-time employment. Whereas Sabino's employment dilemma is brought on in large part by his and his wife's enthusiastic embrace of consumer culture, which lands the protagonist in a great deal of debt, in Saturnino's case, perhaps because of the film's predominantly rural setting, the reality of working multiple jobs throughout the day appears to be more or less the standard for the protagonist, either out of necessity or out of convenience.<sup>104</sup> Regardless of these differences, however, both Sabino and Saturnino, due to their respective situations of *pluriempleo*, confront marital instability, particularly, as it relates to the question of intimacy, as well as a deficit of leisure time, not only complicating the fulfillment of basic needs, such as sleep, but also contributing to a sense of "angustia vital" ("existential anguish")—in Sabino's words. In this way, these films point to a notion of work as an increasingly important component of the protagonists's sense of self, as well as their personal wellbeing, both of which are negatively impacted, along with their respective interpersonal relationships, by an inability to effectively balance work and leisure.

## **1.2 *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!***

While in Chapter 1 I analyzed *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* with an attention to the influence of consumer capitalism and Spain's booming tourism industry on the protagonist's involvement in a business venture marketing exoticized images of Spanish masculinity to female tourists, this chapter considers the overall transformation of Sabino's employment situation,

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<sup>104</sup> Saturnino's socioeconomic standing, however, is somewhat ambiguous. In addition to his wife, Elvira, it appears that the protagonist also supports his mother-in-law, who lives with the couple. The family does, however, also have hired help that by all appearances does the housework (rather than Saturnino's wife or mother-in-law).

which sees him transition from a stable job in the accounting sector to a situation of *pluriempleo*. Significantly, this transformation is presented as the result of two equally catastrophic influences: on the one hand, the pressure of Sabino's wife, Elisa, and his mother-in-law, Doña Ramona, who encourage Sabino to invest (quite literally) in consumer culture, and, on the other, the looming authority of technology in the workplace, which represents a potential threat to the protagonist's job security in the professional services sector. Whereas Elisa and Doña Ramona are enticed by the appeal of commodities such as home appliances and luxury apartments, consumer capitalism's influence over the domestic sphere, Sabino's personal and professional wellbeing is equally threatened by "la maravilla electrónica" ("the electronic marvel") that is the innovative American accounting computer that represents the protagonist's newest coworker.<sup>105</sup> This situation gives rise to the protagonist's idealization of leisure, particularly, outdoor recreational activities, such as fishing, carried out in the company of other men, as entirely oppositional to work. Similarly, the pastoral space of the *pueblo*, specifically, Sabino's home community of La Mancha, comes to represent a sense of nostalgia for a time before what Valentín dubs "la sociedad del consumo" ("consumerist society"), a past most concretely embodied in the portrait of Sabino's deceased father that hangs in the family's home and speaks (often in proverbs) throughout the film. As a consequence, work in the film, especially Sabino's gradual descent into *pluriempleo* as a means of sustaining his family's consumption of consumer goods, is "la maldición bíblica" ("Biblical punishment") that complicates the protagonist's aspirations of idyllic leisure. In this way, Sabino's conflict reflects the Franco regime's complex and often contradictory relationship with capitalism, which owed much of Spain's economic miracle and

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<sup>105</sup> The ominous threat of the accounting computer as a sign of the increasing influence of technology in the workplace is also an important plot device in *Estoy hecho un chaval* (Pedro Lazaga, 1977). While the film approaches the issue with an attention to ageism in the workplace, as is the case in *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, automated technologies are presented as a significant threat to the job security of the Spanish working man.

modernization to liberal economic policy reforms and foreign aid, while also decrying the “material” values encouraged by capitalist culture.

The film’s opening scenes establish a concrete divide between an Edenic past—the protagonist’s former life as a single man, in which he was able to indulge in recreational activities with other men—and a post-Fall present, in which Sabino wrestles with the sinful influences of “la serpiente” (“the serpent”) (Doña Ramona), “la manzana” (“the apple”) (the blender that initiates the growing list of commodities requested by Elisa and her mother throughout the film), and “la hija de Satanás” (“the daughter of Satan”) (the American accounting computer that suddenly becomes a staple at Sabino’s workplace). In effect, the narrator’s introduction presents the film’s narrative in an explicitly Biblical framework, one that contextualizes Sabino’s personal struggles with the increasingly dominant influence of consumer capitalism within the greater Fall narrative. In doing so, the protagonist’s story, not only positions women as the source of sin and, by extension, the instigator of man’s necessity to work, much like the Genesis creation narrative,<sup>106</sup> but also blames imported technological innovations for the workforce displacement affecting the Spanish working man. Beginning with a close-up of Albrecht Dürer’s 1507 painting *Adam and Eve*,<sup>107</sup> which depicts the Biblical couple in a scene together, surrounded by several animals, the narrator explains that the pair has just learned “dos cosas tremendas” (“two tremendous things”): “que en cueros ya no podrán ir a

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<sup>106</sup> In fact, God’s address to Adam in the aftermath of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil explicitly characterizes Adam’s punishment as the result of following Eve: “To the man he said: Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat from it, / Cursed is the ground because of you! / In toil you shall eat its yield / all the days of your life. / Thorns and thistles it shall bear for you, / and you shall eat the grass of the field. / By the sweat of your brow / you shall eat bread, / Until you return to the ground, / from which you were taken; / For you are dust, / and to dust you shall return” (*New American Bible*, Gen. 3.17-19).

<sup>107</sup> The painting has been held at the Museo del Prado in Madrid since 1827.

ninguna parte decente y que la píldora es un pecado gordísimo porque los hijos tienen que nacer sin trampas y además con dolor” (“they will not be able to go to any decent place naked and that the pill is a huge sin because children must be born without tricks and with pain”). The narrator goes on to clarify that, as a result of their sin, Adam and Eve “qued[aron] para siempre a las puertas del Paraíso” (“remained forever at the gates of Paradise”), where Sabino also finds himself, however, not at the gates of Paradise, but rather, stationed as the doorman of a nightclub ironically named *Paraíso Discoteca* (“Club Paradise”). With this link established between the figure of Adam and the film’s protagonist, the narrator explains that Sabino’s present employment situation stands in stark contrast to a past moment in which he was happy:

Antes de llegar a esto, era un hombre feliz. Trabajaba en *Le Papillon*, una compañía francesa de seguros. Era soltero. No porque no le gustaran las señoras... que sí que le gustaban y mucho. Pero sólo para un ratito. Ganaba lo suficiente para pagar la pensión, ahorrar un poco y salir los domingos a la sierra. Pero a la sierra-sierra. No como esos que dicen que van a la sierra y donde van es a Doctor Fleming a ver a Mariloli. Él iba a la sierra porque lo que más le excitaba en este mundo era la pesca. Le había contagiado ese vicio su amigo Porriño, que desde hacía veinte años soñaba con pescar la “salvelinus fontinalis,” que es cómo llaman los expertos a la trucha de fontana. Pero Porriño propone y...<sup>108</sup>

(Before this point, he was a happy man. He worked at *Le Papillon*, a French insurance company. He was single. Not because he didn’t like women... he liked them a lot. But

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<sup>108</sup> This line is a play on the popular saying “El hombre propone y Dios dispone” (“Man proposes, but God disposes”), which has its origin in the Bible, specifically, Proverbs 19:21: “Muchos pensamientos hay en el corazón del hombre; / Mas el consejo de Jehová permanecerá” (“Many are the plans of the human heart, / but it is the decision of the Lord that endures”) (*La Reina-Valera*, Prov. 19.21). The saying lends itself to providentialist interpretations, suggesting that while man can make plans, it is ultimately God who determines how a given situation will unfold.

only for a little while. He earned enough to pay for his lodging, save a little, and go to the mountains on Sundays. But to the mountains. Not like those other men who say they're going to the mountains and actually go to visit Doctor Fleming to see Mariloli. He visited the mountains because what excited him most in this world was fishing. His friend, Porriño, got him into that vice, who for the past twenty years had dreamed of catching the "Salvelinus fontinalis," what experts call the brook trout. But Porriño plans and...)

The narrator's introduction of the protagonist, which is accompanied by a series of flashbacks to a presumably younger Sabino, shown working a desk job, as well as in the company of his friend, Porriño (Manuel Summers), creates a clear division between the protagonist's life as a single professional and his later identity as a multi-employed married man. As a single professional, the protagonist finds himself in a comfortable financial situation, characterized neither by significant lack nor excess, rather his salary allows him to afford a place to live, to save money, and, perhaps most importantly, to enjoy recreational activities on the weekends. Furthermore, Sabino's life as a single man, it appears, is characterized by an identifiable demarcation between time spent working and non-work (leisure) time, that is, "time over which [he] exercises choice, undertakes activities in a free voluntary way" (Herbert 241). Ultimately, this exercise of free voluntary choice leads Sabino to spend his Sundays fishing for trout with his friend and coworker, Porriño. The pair's time spent fishing in the mountains is, in effect, not only the antithesis of work, but also a means for Sabino and Porriño to (re)construct and negotiate their masculinity in a non-work context. Through the act of fishing, the male protagonists engage in a challenging recreational activity, characterized in large part by an inherent goal of controlling and dominating nature (i.e. Porriño's dream of catching the "Salvelinus fontinalis"). What is more, the fishing experience also represents what Marti Kheel

describes as “a momentary reversion to an earlier period of time before humans became removed from the natural world” (89), that is, a symbolic return to an idealized rustic, rural existence, in which man finds himself free from modern influences. Under Francoism, such modern influences, which, according to Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, encouraged increasingly politicized labor relations, cultural massification, greater public awareness of how democratic societies functioned, and the decline of traditional religious values, were considered detrimental to traditional Francoist attitudes and ultimately conflicted with the dictatorship’s “capacity to guarantee social order and general political control” (Riquer i Permanyer 268). Unlike “those other men,” who chase romance and/or sexual activity as a form of leisure, Sabino chooses what is presented as a far less morally compromising activity, one that allows him to not only build homosocial bonds with other men, but also to connect with a natural environment far removed from the urban center of Madrid, as well as the larger constraints and obligations of the world of work.

In line with the Genesis creation narrative established in the film’s opening scenes, it is a woman—in this case, Sabino’s future wife, Elisa—that interrupts and effectively alters the protagonist’s lifestyle, which has, up until this point, allowed him to cultivate an effective separation between work and leisure. In this way, the film’s female characters (with the notable exception of Valentín, who also influences Sabino’s financial and work-related decisions and is presented as a foil of sorts to the protagonist, as discussed in Chapter 1) come to represent active instigators of consumerism.<sup>109</sup> The narrator’s introduction of Sabino, which emphasizes the

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<sup>109</sup> In the case of films such as *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1971), female characters will go so far as to encourage their male partners to emigrate to Germany in order to pursue the financial resources necessary to bankroll the material commodities they desire. For example, Angelino (José Sacristán), shares the vast majority of his earnings with his hometown sweetheart, who seems unbothered by his absence and eventually goes on to elope with “un viajante de peines” (“a traveling comb salesman”), fleeing with Angelino’s savings.

significance of his weekly fishing trips, effectively positions Elisa as the force and temptress directly responsible for distancing the protagonist from his idyllic weekend outings. To the protagonist's surprise (as well as Porriño's, whose name is cleverly inserted in the aphorism "El hombre propone y Dios dispone" ["Man proposes, but God disposes"]), he does not catch the long-sought-after brook trout, but instead somehow hooks and reels in Elisa's bikini top. This comical mix-up serves to set in motion Sabino's march towards marriage and, by extension, his subordination to his new wife and mother-in-law's demand for luxury commodities. The ensuing montage details a progressive change in the protagonist's primary leisure activities: instead of spending non-work time in nature with Porriño, Sabino's time outside of work is spent visiting Elisa at her workplace (a boutique), going to the movies, dancing, and going out to the nightclubs. In effect, the protagonist's developing relationship with Elisa takes him further and further away from the natural environment where he had previously thrived, rendering him increasingly susceptible to "el ambiente social" ("the social environment"). As such, it becomes increasingly clear that the urban social environment, far removed from the mountain fishing space, is regulated by an entirely different set of values, specifically, those of a burgeoning consumer culture, such as conspicuous consumption, which encourage the display of wealth through the consumption of goods. In addition to such motivations, which promote the purchase of "artifacts of consumption" (Trigg 101), Sabino finds himself increasingly swayed by the demands of his wife and mother-in-law, who justify their consumer behavior by emphasizing the utility of luxury household commodities, which they argue will contribute to a more efficient homelife. As a consequence, the protagonist comes to accept the ideals of his female family members, largely influenced by the practical advantages of luxury commodities, as well as the short-term advantages of cashing out on a severance package offered by his employer.

The eventual necessity of Sabino's multi-employment as a means of offsetting the catastrophic financial impact of his engagement in conspicuous consumption not only points to the unsustainability of consumerist culture, but also suggests a series of negative consequences for male breadwinners seeking to live up to such ideals. One such consequence is the protagonist's forced reintroduction into the labor market, which requires Sabino to prove his marketability in what is presented as a varied yet highly specialized job market. Significantly, it is Doña Ramona, Sabino's mother-in-law, who serves as the principal advisor in his job search. Despite this intervention, Doña Ramona emphasizes that as "el hombre de la casa" ("the man of the house") it is ultimately Sabino "el que tiene que coger el timón con mano firme y segura" ("who has to take charge with a firm and sure hand"). Doing so, however, necessitates that the protagonist pursue any form of employment that he is technically eligible for, regardless of the duration or whether or not he possesses the necessary qualifications for such work. For example, at his mother-in-law's behest, the protagonist considers a classified ad that requires a command of English, despite the fact that he does not speak the language:

DOÑA RAMONA. Persona educada. Trato amable. Con conocimientos de inglés.

SABINO. Pero yo no sé inglés.

DOÑA RAMONA. Aquí dice "conocimientos." ¿Tú no sabes decir "okay"?

¿"Goodbye"? ¿"Stop"? A lo mejor no pide más. Media hora de trabajo por la mañana. Media por la noche. Y 2.000 pesetas al mes.

SABINO. ¿Y qué hay que hacer?

DOÑA RAMONA. Pasear.

(DOÑA RAMONA. Educated. Friendly. Knowledge of English.

SABINO. But I don't know how to speak English.

DOÑA RAMONA. Here it says “knowledge.” You don’t know how to say “okay”?

“Goodbye”? “Stop”? Maybe it won’t require any more than that. Half an hour in the morning. Half an hour at night. And 2,000 *pesetas* a month.

SABINO. And what do you have to do?

DOÑA RAMONA. Walk.)

The job, which turns out to be a dog walking gig for a local English-speaking ambassador, ushers in a series of odd jobs (with the exception of an hourly accounting job) that place the protagonist in the contradictory position of being a simultaneously under- and overqualified worker. In the case of the dog walking job, for example, while Sabino’s accounting skills are woefully underused, he struggles to maintain control of the dogs he walks given that his mastery of English dog commands is limited to “Come on” and “Quick.” As such, the professional skills the protagonist does have do little, if anything, to support his participation in non-professional work. What is more, such varied and multiple sources of employment render Sabino increasingly vulnerable in a way that his previous occupation did not, subjecting him to tasks that often compromise his sense of competence or put him in embarrassing positions. Whereas the protagonist’s former accounting position presented larger structural challenges, such as a bureaucratic leadership structure and technological advancements in the workplace, the protagonist’s various sources of employment as a multi-employed worker not only require that he stretch himself thin, often running (quite literally) from job to job, but also force an uncomfortable evaluation of Sabino’s masculinity, particularly, as it relates to the male body and (hetero)sexuality.

The protagonist’s work as a door-to-door salesman, for example, which encourages him to enter the homes of potential customers and demonstrate the supposed efficacy of an “aparato

ultramoderno para adelgazar” (“an ultra-modern weight loss system”), converts Sabino into an unwilling object of homosexual desire. During one particular home visit, the protagonist entertains a potential male customer by performing a workout in the client’s living room, using the ab wheel he has been instructed to sell. The male customer, however, embodies implicit undertones of homosexuality—or at the very least, homosexual desire—in his appearance and in his response to Sabino’s athletic performance. Dressed in a velvet robe and colorful scarf, the male customer, an older gentleman, paces in circles around the protagonist as he exercises, smoking with a cigarette holder, an accessory predominantly associated with women’s fashion.<sup>110</sup> The camera’s sudden focus on Sabino’s backside as he rolls backwards and forwards, signaling a change in perspective to that of the male customer, effectively confirms the client’s non-platonic interests. When the male customer insists that Sabino continue his demonstration, the protagonist, realizing his client’s intentions, panics and runs out of the home. In this way, Sabino’s initiative to take any work that might serve to help offset his debt, regardless of his qualifications and the specific nature of the job, forces an uncomfortable consideration of the question of dignity as it relates to work. What is ultimately at stake as a result of the protagonist’s new working conditions, then, is whether or not the circumstances of his situation of *pluriempleo* are conducive to the idea of dignity, which Andrew Sayer defines in the following terms:

To be dignified or have dignity is first to be in control of oneself, competently and appropriately exercising one’s powers. Most obviously, then, dignity is about self-command and autonomy. As with so many other matters relating to moral sentiments,

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<sup>110</sup> In fact, the primary use for a cigarette holder was to keep falling ash off of a woman’s clothing, since women did not wear smoking jackets.

dignity is partly consciously, partly unconsciously, signaled through the body—in our bearing, in how we hold ourselves. (qtd. in Hodgkiss)

In this regard, the protagonist's multi-employment, as it is presented in the film, appears to be largely antithetical to any concrete sense of self-command and autonomy (to borrow Sayer's phrasing). In Sabino's case, this lack of self-command is ultimately evident in both his professional and personal life: not only does the protagonist seemingly exercise little control over the nature and obligations of his respective occupations, going from job to job with no obvious sense of meaning or job satisfaction, but he is also ill-prepared to exercise control over the women in his life, which the film misogynistically blames for the influx of consumerist influences that have contributed to his current dilemma, as well as the extensive time constraints of his work schedule, which have effectively compromised any possibility of leisure time.

Sabino's chance encounter with his former coworker, Porriño, serves to not only illustrate the artificiality of the protagonist's outward persona of upward economic mobility, but also confirms the negative effects of his multi-employment. While Porriño interprets what he has heard about the protagonist's new living arrangements and scenes such as Sabino carrying out his dog walking job as signs of the protagonist's personal and financial wellbeing, the viewer, however, is able to read between the lines of Sabino's responses, which betray a melancholy nostalgia for the pair's Sunday fishing trips. Initially distracted by a fish tank in a shop window, an explicit reminder of fishing in the mountains, as well as a symbol of a lack of freedom, given that the fish is not only encaged in a tank, but also rendered further inaccessible by the glass of the storefront, overworked Sabino is uncharacteristically animated as he and Porriño reminisce about their weekly fraternal outings:

PORRIÑO. ¡Gurupe!

SABINO. ¡Hombre! ¡Porriño! ¿Qué tal?

PORRIÑO. Ya sé cómo te van las cosas. Te vi el otro día con los perros. Te habrán costado una fortuna.

SABINO. Bueno, no creas...

PORRIÑO. Conmigo no tienes que disimular. ¡Que no voy a pedirte nada! Ya me han dicho que tienes un piso de miedo. Todo electrificado. ¡No va más!

SABINO. Sí... Eso sí...

PORRIÑO. Oye, me alegro que hayas triunfado. Lo único que lo siento es por los domingos. Me has hecho polvo.

SABINO. Sí. Oye, ¿con quién vas a pescar ahora?

PORRIÑO. Con Galíndez, el de accidentes. Pero es un cenizo ese tío. No te lo creerás pero todos los domingos me acuerdo de ti. Porque pescar no pescábamos pero reírnos, ¿eh? Todo lo que queríamos y más. Oye, ¿te acuerdas de aquel día que fuimos con las suecas, que yo me fui a meterle mano a la gordita aquella? ¿Qué decía? Una cosa muy rara. No me acuerdo.

SABINO. ¡Sí! “¡Verboten! ¡Verboten!”<sup>111</sup> Y yo tirando de ti. ¡Y nos caímos al agua los tres! Lo pasábamos bien entonces...

PORRIÑO. Oye, ¿por qué no vamos el domingo otra vez?

SABINO. No, el domingo no puedo.

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111 While Porriño describes the foreign women as Swedes, the word “*verboden*” comes not from Swedish, but rather, from German. The word is used to describe things that are forbidden according to a law or a highly regarded authority. This conflation of Germanic peoples with those from Nordic countries confirms the symbolic force of the Swedish female tourist during the 1960s and 1970s in Spain. Elena Lindholm Narváez explains: “Even though many tourists during this period were Swedish, they were by far outnumbered by other northern European and North American tourists who were just as likely to be blond and fashionably dressed in mini-skirts and bikinis.” Lindholm Narváez emphasizes the symbolic value of the bikini-clad Swedish woman in Spain as a symbol of openness towards the outside world, as well as modernity and social progress.

PORRIÑO. ¿Que tienes un compromiso gordo?

SABINO. Sí. Y no lo puedo arreglar...

(PORRIÑO. Gurupe!

SABINO. Porriño! How's it going?

PORRIÑO. I already know how things are going for you. I saw you the other day with the dogs. They must have cost you a fortune.

SABINO. Well, not really...

PORRIÑO. You don't have to pretend with me. I'm not going to ask you for anything!

They already told me that you have a stunning apartment. All electric. The works!

SABINO. Yes... that's right...

PORRIÑO. Hey, I'm glad to hear you've made it. The only thing I'm sorry about is

Sundays. You've left me a wreck.

SABINO. Who are you going to fish with now?

PORRIÑO. With Galíndez, the one from accidents. But that guy is a wet blanket. You

wouldn't believe it but every Sunday I think of you. Because we didn't fish very

well but we laughed, huh? All we could ever want and more. Hey, do you

remember that day when we went with the Swedish women and I made a pass at

one of them? What did they say? Something really strange. I don't remember.

SABINO. Yes! "*Verboten! Verboten!*" And I pulled you back. And the three of us fell

into the water! We had fun back then...

PORRIÑO. Hey, why don't we go fishing on Sunday again?

SABINO. No, I can't on Sunday.

PORRIÑO. What? You have another important commitment?

SABINO. Yes. And I can't manage to get it straightened out...)

Sabino and Porriño's exchange, in which the two men reminisce about the recreational activities they enjoyed together as single men,<sup>112</sup> including their fond memories of flirting with (presumably uninterested) female tourists, represents the direct antithesis of Sabino's current circumstances. In contrast to Porriño, who selectively interprets what he has seen and heard of Sabino, as well as the protagonist's vague replies, as the confirmation of his achievement of success, for the viewer, the double meaning of Sabino's statements, particularly, his assertion that he has "un compromiso gordo" that he has been unable to resolve, confirms that his employment situation has become more than just a commitment, rather, it has come to represent a significant personal dilemma. The confirmation that Sabino has been effectively replaced as Porriño's fishing companion, as well as his own inability to successfully balance the responsibilities inherent to eliminating his debt with satisfying and fulfilling leisure experiences, suggest an inherent incompatibility between excessive work and leisure time.

What is more, Sabino and Porriño's conversation ultimately triggers the protagonist's explicit declaration of his own exhaustion and unhappiness, which he links to both his work and his wife and mother-in-law's investment in material commodities: "¡Estoy harto de comodidades! Yo quiero mis siete horas de trabajo, mi partida de dominó y marcharme a pescar los domingos" ("I'm tired of commodities! I want my seven-hour workday, my game of dominoes, and to be able go fishing on Sundays"). The protagonist's statement problematizes any understanding of the accumulation of goods as a vehicle for greater happiness and fulfillment, pointing instead to the familiar recreational comforts of fishing and dominoes. It is

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<sup>112</sup> Although the film clarifies early on a formal distinction between Sabino's recreational activities as a single man and those he carries out while courting and after marrying Elisa, the viewer knows very little about Porriño in terms of his personal and/or romantic life. Given that Porriño continues to go fishing on the weekends, in the company of another male coworker, it can be assumed that, unlike Sabino, Porriño is unmarried.

significant, however, that the protagonist's desire to participate in leisure activities does not demand the absence of work, rather, Sabino's outburst includes a plea for a return to the stability and structure of the traditional workday. In this sense, the protagonist proposes the necessity of a more balanced work-leisure relationship, rather than any formal dismantling of work as a practical necessity for men.

Ultimately, Sabino's resolve to temporarily abandon the urban center in favor of returning to the natural environment of the mountains serves a form of recourse against the emasculating aspects of his multi-employment and homelife. The protagonist's decision to deliberately abandon the demands of his work and home and instead join Porriño in the act of fishing represents an intent to base the masculine self not in overwork nor in the greater demands of consumerism but rather in a recreational activity that represents "a pursuit of control, deference, and autonomy" (Adkins 12). Fishing with Porriño, then, represents a symbolic return to the protagonist's life as a single man, allowing Sabino to distance himself from "la angustia vital" ("existential anguish") associated with consumerism, consumption, and overwork, forces he attributes directly to "las letras, las compras a plazos, el movimiento continuo y [la] madre [de Elisa]" ("installment contracts, installment purchases, continuous movement, and Elisa's mother"). Despite his escapist motivations, Sabino is able to recuperate a semblance of control over his employment situation and financial status not through his own means but rather through Elisa's promised renunciation of modern domestic amenities, as well as her commitment to a simpler lifestyle that not only alleviates the protagonist's financial burdens, but also (re)establishes the traditional gender roles of the domestic space. While Elisa's offer seemingly suggests her deference to Sabino's authority over the couple's finances, her very act of participation in the negotiation over what is to be done with the couple's commodities confirms

her influence over Sabino's personal and economic wellbeing, as well as the balance he seeks to maintain between work and leisure. Despite the protagonist's insistence that since living alone he is, in fact, much happier, Elisa appeals to a gendered fantasy of the home in order to draw Sabino away from the masculine social world of fishing and back into the urban domestic space:

SABINO. Fíjate. Desde que vivo solo, soy feliz. Hasta he engordado dos kilos.

ELISA. Pero yo te quiero.

SABINO. Sí. Me quieres asesinar.

PORRIÑO. (Aparte) Naturalmente, imbécil.

ELISA. Por favor, Sabino. Yo haré lo que tú mandes pero vuelve.

SABINO. ¿Lo que yo mande?

ELISA. No habrá más letras. Te lo juro. Devolveremos todo.

SABINO. ¿Hasta la máquina de tricotar?

ELISA. Ya está devuelta.

PORRIÑO. (Aparte). Qué calzonazos.

ELISA. Créeme, Sabino. Sí haré todo lo que tú digas.

SABINO. ¿No empezaremos como la otra vez?

ELISA. No, morronguín. Si no quieres lavadora, devolveremos la lavadora. Y la batidora.

Yo misma te lavaré las camisas cómo decía tu padre: con jabón Lagarto<sup>113</sup> y azulete.

(SABINO. Look, since living alone, I'm happy. I even gained two kilos.

ELISA. But I love you.

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<sup>113</sup> Lagarto, a Spanish brand of cleaning products, became extremely popular within Spain throughout the twentieth century and gained notable commercial success in the 1920s. The brand's industrial and commercial success even drew the attention of Alfonso, Prince of Asturias, who, along with his brother, Jaime de Borbón y Battenberg, visited Lagarto's factory in San Sebastián in 1924 ("Las grandes industrias nacionales").

SABINO. Yes. You love to kill me.

PORRIÑO. (Aside) Of course, idiot.

ELISA. Please, Sabino. I'll do whatever you ask but come back.

SABINO. Whatever I ask?

ELISA. There won't be any more installment contracts. I promise you. We'll return everything.

SABINO. Even the knitting machine?

ELISA. It's been returned.

PORRIÑO. (Aside). What a wuss.

ELISA. Trust me, Sabino. I'll do whatever you say.

SABINO. We won't start up again like last time?

ELISA. No, kitten. If you don't want a washing machine, we'll return the washing machine. And the blender. I myself will wash your shirts like your father always said: with Lagarto soap and washing blue.)

In effect, Elisa's use of the commodities the couple has accumulated as a bargaining tool of sorts to facilitate Sabino's return confirms the influence of such items over the protagonist's lifestyle, including his employment situation. The suggestion that the disappearance of these commodities will, in turn, invalidate the installment contracts that have for the duration of the film eluded Sabino's control also implies the possibility of an end to the protagonist's existential anguish. What is more, Elisa's appeal to a time before the couple's financial instability—as well as her insistence that the situation will never happen again—echoes the Edenic fantasy established in the film's introduction, in which the protagonist was able to afford housing, save money, and, of course, fish on Sundays. It is significant, however, that Elisa slightly modifies this ideal by

promising to uphold an image of femininity she has up to this point in the film not embodied: that of the woman actively involved in the performance of household chores. In this way, Elisa's expressed intentions to embody a traditional femininity that will see her (re)investment in labor-intensive chores, such as washing the laundry by hand, represents a symbolic return to an era before modern appliances, in which women, significantly, were afforded less free time for their own chosen activities. In addition to the implication of a return to traditional gender roles, upon which the "anti-modern, anti-rationalist official culture" of the Franco regime was firmly based (Graham and Labanyi 17), Elisa's vow to return the couple's washing machine in favor of handwashing the laundry represents an apparent renunciation of modern domestic machinery. Furthermore, the reference to Sabino's late father, whose appearance throughout the film is confined to the portrait in his image displayed in the family's living room (a framed sepia-toned photograph that speaks in proverbs that only the protagonist and the viewer can hear), seemingly validates traditional values that throughout the film are frequently dismissed as "antigüito" ("old-fashioned") and "folklore manchego" ("Manchegan folklore"). In doing so, the couple's reconciliation is effectively predicated upon Elisa's abandonment of material commodities, as well as her investment in a far more traditional role in the home, under the pretense that such changes will effectively alleviate Sabino's overburdened work life.

Despite this agreement, the film's conclusion emphasizes the persistence of consumerism as a dominant cultural influence and implies that even the idealized image of rural tradition can be mobilized as an instrument of capitalism. In fact, the ambiguity of the film's concluding scenes serves to suggest that the moralizing dichotomy of tradition versus modernity is perhaps a reduction of the dominant forces at work in the Spanish economy, labor market, and in the country at large. Much of the skepticism voiced by Porriño in the wisecracks he mutters during

Sabino and Elisa's reconciliation is echoed by the portrait of Sabino's late father, who presides over the film's ending. While the image of Elisa, shown handwashing clothing near a river, "vestida a la usanza típica asturiana" ("dressed according to traditional Asturian custom"),<sup>114</sup> seemingly confirms her transformation into a pre-industrial housewife, the viewer suddenly discovers that she is in fact playing a part in a commercial, also starring Sabino, for the Lavadora Numancia,<sup>115</sup> a washing machine that promises to put an end to its customers's problems ("se acabarán los problemas para siempre"). Ironically, the commercial capitalizes on the nostalgic imagery of the countryside not to extol the values of the past but rather to suggest that the observation of tradition does not, in fact, necessitate a drastic return to the past. In his capacity as the washing machine's spokesman, Sabino states: "No hace falta llevar las cosas hasta ese extremo" ("We need not take things that far"). Although such a slogan indicates the possibility of a compromise between past and contemporary mores, Sabino and Elisa seem to compromise very little in their performative embodiment of tradition, which earns the couple a free washing machine. While Sabino seems to have found a way to successfully "game the system" by participating in the world of advertising without the necessity of buying, Doña Ramona and Elisa's insistence that the family's new washing machine needs a high voltage transformer makes apparent the artificiality of the protagonist's resolve to abstain indefinitely from consumption. Ultimately, the film's concluding moments, in which the portrait of Sabino's late father provides an eerily ominous warning, seem to suggest that while women might appear to be

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<sup>114</sup> This description comes directly from the original script co-written by Vicente Escrivá and Vicente Coello. See "No Firmes las Letras Cielo," dated January 1972, held in AGA,36,05592 at the Archivo General de la Administración.

<sup>115</sup> With the mention of the washing machine's brand name, the appeal to Asturian tradition is paired with an allusion to Numantia, founded on the site of earlier settlements by Iberians and the eventual center of Celtiberian resistance to Rome. Only after an eight-month siege, which saw Numantia reduced by hunger, the town's destruction ended all serious resistance to Rome in Celtiberia.

the primary inciters of consumption under capitalism, working men like Sabino are equally at fault for letting themselves be bled dry: “¡Otra vez, Sabino! Que mujer que pide y cesto sin culo, dejan al hombre en el hueso puro. ¡Ojo, desgraciado! Que te veo conmigo en la pared” (“Again, Sabino! Women who ask for too much will leave their husbands broke. Watch out, dummy! I see you ending up with me on the wall”). The film’s concluding premonition effectively rewrites Sabino as a protagonist who in reality has a great deal of control over his own circumstances, as opposed to solely a victim of greater economic influences and the requests of his wife and mother-in-law.

While *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* is in large part an extended consideration of the impact of the burgeoning influence of consumer capitalism in Spain during the twentieth century, it is also a reflection on the surprisingly contemporary concern of how best to balance work and leisure as a working man, while simultaneously negotiating the demands of one’s employment, finances, material desires, and personal relationships, among other responsibilities. The film establishes masculine recreational activities, such as fishing in the company of other men, as a necessary form of escapism for working men looking to exercise a sense of control over their circumstances, as well as a formative tool in the fashioning of a masculine self. Such activities and leisure, more generally, ultimately serve as an important foil to work, especially for the *pluriempleado* Spanish working man. Without some semblance of work-leisure balance, as well as a selective investment in the act of consumption, the working man, who, in effect, is also a consumer and participant in the capitalist economy, finds himself increasingly subject to external influences that, in turn, compromise his personal, professional, and financial wellbeing.

### ***1.3 Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar***

In contrast to *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, which takes place in the urban city and follows Sabino as he is forced to take on multiple jobs in order to pay off a series of installment contracts and, therefore, sustain the appearance of wealth he has cultivated, the opening scenes of Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* make abundantly clear that the viewer is far from Spain's metropolitan capital. In fact, the film's opening scenes suggest that the very nature of work in the *pueblo* complicates the possibility of any concrete divide between work and leisure. Unlike Sabino, the protagonist of *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, Saturnino (Alfredo Landa), is presented as employed in more than one occupation from the very beginning of the film, framing his situation of *pluriempleo* as a long-term condition rather than one of strictly economic necessity. By all appearances, Saturnino is responsible for nearly every odd job imaginable in his hometown of Lerma, working as a handyman of sorts for the local townspeople. In fact, the film's introduction, which begins with a wide-angle landscape shot of the *pueblo*, functions as an itemized list of job responsibilities, following the protagonist as he moves from job to job throughout the workday, hurried along by the townspeople's recurring cries of "¡Saturnino!". In the first two minutes of the film alone, the protagonist paints city walls, fixes a door, repairs a tractor, installs new shingles on a neighbor's roof, and replaces the plaza's streetlamps, in addition to entertaining a myriad of additional requests from other townspeople, who directly address the camera as they clamor for Saturnino's attention and assistance. Bouncing from job to job with hyperbolic humor, it quickly becomes apparent that the protagonist's employment situation renders him vulnerable to an avalanche of labor-intensive tasks with seemingly no time to recover in between projects. As a consequence, leisure, specifically, rest that allows the protagonist to cease work in order to relax, refresh, and recover strength, is noticeably absent from Saturnino's life.

While the domestic space typically serves as an important site of leisure, especially for men who—unlike women—are often able to experience the domestic space of the home as clearly delineated from the sphere of work and work-related responsibilities, in the case of *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, Saturnino’s home environment presents another source of pressure in the form of the protagonist’s wife, Elvira (Esperanza Roy), who, in spite of Saturnino’s utter exhaustion, insists that he fulfill his “deber de marido” (“husband’s duty”). While sex is often thought of as a form of casual leisure, that is, any “immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy” (Stebbins 305), in the film, Saturnino’s duties as a husband come to represent a sexual responsibility that serves as an additional burden and, in effect, another form of labor that the protagonist is unable to carry out due to sheer fatigue. In contrast to the highly (hetero)sexed *macho ibérico* chiefly concerned with self-gratification, characteristic of several of the films studied in this dissertation,<sup>116</sup> such as *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Ramón [Tito] Fernández, 1970) and *Manolo la nuit* (Mariano Ozores, 1973), Saturnino’s work overtakes all of his other priorities to the extent that any activities, chores, or obligations outside of necessary functions, such as sleep, are understood as essentially the equivalent of work, rather than as a form of leisure.

While the narrative action of the film takes place outside of the urban center of Madrid, Saturnino’s home life is not entirely unlike Sabino’s as he too is forced to entertain the wants and needs of his wife, Elvira, and mother-in-law (Mari Carmen Prendes). The key difference, however, is that Saturnino is emphatic from the beginning of the film about the family’s existing financial commitments, as well as the fact that he is overextended as it is when it comes to work.

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<sup>116</sup> John Hopewell describes the *macho ibérico* succinctly but appropriately: “The Iberian male is horny” (81).

Whereas Elvira's mother insists that Saturnino owes it to his wife to provide her with the material commodities that she asks for, the protagonist argues that he cannot work more than he is already working:

MADRE DE ELVIRA. Mi hija es un ser humano y como todo ser humano, tiene derecho a un utilitario. ¿O no?

SATURNINO. Sí, claro, pero es que no somos ricos.

MADRE DE ELVIRA. Hay que trabajar, Saturnino. Hay que trabajar más.

SATURNINO. ¿Más? ¡Si no paro! Apenas tengo tiempo para comer y dormir. La última vez que dormí ocho horas seguidas fue la noche de boda. ¡Yo no le digo más!  
¿Eh?

PAULITA. Es la sociedad de consumo, señorito. El confort es un artículo de primera necesidad.

(ELVIRA'S MOTHER. My daughter is a human being and like every other human being, she has the right to a car. Am I wrong?

SATURNINO. Yes, of course, but we're not rich.

ELVIRA'S MOTHER. You have to work, Saturnino. You have to work more.

SATURNINO. More? But I never stop! I barely have time to eat and sleep. The last time I slept eight consecutive hours was my wedding night. I'll say nothing more about it!

PAULITA. It's consumer society, sir. Comfort is an essential commodity.)

While in the case of *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!*, Doña Ramona seemingly demands commodities merely for the sake of having them, Saturnino's mother-in-law in *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* appeals to traditional gender ideologies mandating the necessity for the man to

provide for his wife and family, an ideal effectively institutionalized by Francoist laws. Although the family appears to have some semblance of financial security, if not wealth, due to the fact that they have a live-in maid, Paulita (Gracita Morales), the protagonist insists that the family is not rich and that working more as a means of boosting the family's economic status is not an option given his current employment situation. In this way, the film's early scenes serve to solidify the reality that Saturnino's exhaustion is legitimately the result of his multi-employment in multiple sectors of the local economy and that this dynamic has been consistent since his marriage to Elvira. Elvira, however, is not directly blamed for the protagonist's *pluriempleo*, rather, Paulita's seemingly facetious comments about consumer society essentially characterize comfort and, by extension, leisure, explicitly as a commodity, albeit a necessary one.

Aside from a general sense of exhaustion, the protagonist's problem of overwork creates a number of issues in the realm of sex and romance, not only rendering Saturnino physically unable to participate in sexual activity due to fatigue, but also hindering his understanding and interpretation of any sexual advances he receives from women, including (but not limited to) those of his wife. Consequently, the protagonist misinterprets—or completely misses—any indications of romantic interest from women, even those that are explicitly sexual in nature. For example, when Encarna (Eva León), a local married woman, drops by the protagonist's store in the early morning hours under the pretense of having Saturnino repair her malfunctioning electric blanket, the protagonist pays no mind to her nightgown nor to her invitation to “test out” the blanket. On the contrary, Saturnino snuggles up under the blanket with Encarna out of a sincere interest in learning how the appliance works (astounded by how comfortable the blanket is, Saturnino wonders aloud, “¿Cómo no la habrá comprado mi mujer?” [“How has my wife not bought one?”]) and as a convenient means of getting some extra rest. Only when the encounter

encroaches into questionable territory (i.e. Saturnino using Encarna's breast as a pillow) is the interaction abruptly interrupted with Encarna eventually storming out of the store to return home.

While Saturnino's tiredness contributes to a series of uncomfortable encounters with local townswomen, the effects of his multi-employment are most visible in his marriage, particularly, the couple's sexual relationship. In effect, Elvira interprets Saturnino's apparent indifference towards sex, not as a sign of exhaustion, but rather as a personal insult indicative of his disinterest and potential infidelity. The couple's recurring disagreements about the issue of sex indicate a shared understanding of the activity as a duty ("deber"), however, whereas Elvira appeals Saturnino's "deber de marido" as a means of indicating a sense of entitlement to her husband's affection, for Saturnino, this "deber" merely represents an additional chore to add to his never-ending list of obligations, as opposed to a form of leisure activity. Consequently, despite her husband's pleas, Elvira understands Saturnino's stubborn refusal to comply with what she perceives to be his duty to her as a husband as a mark of his own selfishness:

SATURNINO. Por favor, Elvira. Estoy que me parto.

ELVIRA. La niña, tu mujer... Está esperando en la camita.

SATURNINO. Sí. Ya sé, ya sé. Pero es que tengo que levantarme a las seis y media y son más de las dos.

ELVIRA. ¿Y el vínculo? Somos marido y mujer.

SATURNINO. Por favor, Elvira. Esta noche, no, eh.

ELVIRA. ¡Pero es que llevamos así más de tres meses! Y aún soy una mujer joven, enamorada de su marido.

SATURNINO. ¡Pero no comprendes! Estoy durmiendo unas cuatro horas al día.

ELVIRA. ¡Eres un egoísta! Esas cosas se piensan antes de casarse. Tú tienes un deber y

me tratas como un mueble. No piensas más que en dormir.

(SATURNINO. Please, Elvira. I'm exhausted.

ELVIRA. Your girl, your wife... She's here waiting in bed for you.

SATURNINO. Yes. I know, I know. It's just that I have to wake up at 6:30AM and it's  
already after 2AM.

ELVIRA. What about our bond? We're husband and wife.

SATURNINO. Please, Elvira. Not tonight.

ELVIRA. But it's been more than three months! I'm still a young woman in love with her  
husband.

SATURNINO. You don't understand! I'm sleeping four hours a day.

ELVIRA. You're selfish! One should think about such things before getting married. You  
have a duty and you treat me like a piece of furniture. You don't think about  
anything else but sleep.)

The couple's dispute about the issue of sex not only clarifies their difference in opinion as far as the question of marital responsibility, but also makes evident a fundamental misunderstanding regarding the motives for Saturnino's exhaustion. While the viewer, who has followed the protagonist through his workday, is a direct witness to Saturnino's overburdened work schedule, a discussion of the issue of work is completely absent from the couple's quarrel, leaving space for Elvira to interpret Saturnino's behavior exclusively within the context of their marriage and, consequently, as an act of selfishness. Although Saturnino's employment situation determines much of how he spends his waking life, he does not explain his exhaustion as a symptom of his multi-employment, rather the protagonist cites his lack of sleep as a problem in and of itself. In this way, it appears that the main issue at stake for Saturnino with regards to his employment is

less the nature of his work, which requires him to be a jack-of-all-trades for the town's citizens, but rather the practical consequences of such work, which cause him to consistently complain about the amount of work he is performing and how tired he is as a result.

If such disagreements were not enough, Saturnino's brief trip to Madrid on assignment from town leadership, who have instructed the protagonist to acquire a bull for the *pueblo's* upcoming celebrations, merely widens the divide between what the protagonist understands as an earnest opportunity to recuperate and rest and what Elvira (as well as many of the other townsmen) see as a convenient chance for Saturnino to hook up with other women. Madrid, in effect, comes to represent (for every character other than the protagonist, it seems) the ideal space "para hacer lo que quieras" ("to do whatever you like"), a phrase repeated among the townsmen with implicit sexual connotations. Despite the convenient accessibility of beauty queens in town for a pageant, including a representative of the Basque Country named Rita (Mary Francis) who the protagonist eventually befriends, the protagonist's total and complete disinterest in even the remote possibility of infidelity (which by all appearances is condoned, if not expected, by the townsmen who have sent Saturnino on the errand) only further confirms the effects of Saturnino's work, which has effectively squashed his libido. In this way, the protagonist's apparent indifference towards sex, even when the opportunity arises to engage in what appears to be socially condoned extra-marital sex, at once indicates a sense of moral fortitude seemingly absent in Saturnino's peers, as well as a prioritization of intentionally restorative activities, such as sleep, as opposed to other (more hedonistic) forms of recreation. The protagonist's employment situation, which has effectively overtaken Saturnino's life, has essentially left him with a diminished capacity to appreciate leisure. Whereas Sabino of *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* laments the loss of his Sundays spent fishing, Saturnino represents the

extreme of what happens when the work-leisure relationship is improperly balanced: the protagonist has, in effect, found himself past the point of idealizing recreational non-work activities, instead his exhaustion has led him to the prioritization of only necessary functions during non-work hours.

Upon the protagonist's return to Lerma, Saturnino's response to Rita's offer to serve as her manager as she embarks on a new career in Hollywood confirms the protagonist's benchmark for success, which ultimately stands in stark contrast to notions of career success that privilege the upward progression of one's career. In contrast to Rita, whose resolve to relocate to the United States in order to pursue a career in the American entertainment industry confirms her progressive ascension from local Basque beauty queen to blooming Hollywood starlet, having since claimed the title of Miss Universe, Saturnino's decision to reject the opportunity to pursue a new and potentially lucrative career outside of Lerma effectively calls into question the narrative of a small-town person "upgrading" to the big city. In this way, the film's concluding scenes steer away from a sense of personal satisfaction predicated upon upward mobility. In contrast, the protagonist's determination to stay in the *pueblo* is largely motivated by his commitment to his wife, as well as his contentment—despite his exhaustion—with the work he has in Lerma:

SATURNINO. Lo siento, Rita. No hay nada que hacer.

RITA. La debes querer mucho, ¿no?

SATURNINO. Es mi mujer. Y como no tengo otra...

RITA. Claro. Yo, en cambio, para esto no sirvo. Yo voy más lejos.

SATURNINO. ¡A Hollywood! Nada menos.

RITA. Me hacías falta tú. Un amigo.

SATURNINO. Yo no tengo aspiraciones. He nacido para trabajar, para llevar una existencia oscura aquí en este pueblo.

RITA. Claro. Te comprendo muy bien.

(SATURNINO. I'm sorry, Rita. There's nothing I can do.

RITA. You must love her a lot, huh?

SATURNINO. She's my wife. And since I don't have another one...

RITA. Of course. I, on the other hand, don't belong here. I'm going further.

SATURNINO. Nothing short of Hollywood!

RITA. You're what I needed. A friend.

SATURNINO. I don't have aspirations. I was born to work, to live an obscure existence here in this town.

RITA. Of course. I completely understand.)

Saturnino's conversation with Rita, which sees two small-town people share conflicting perspectives on the issue of moving out (and up) from the *pueblo*, clarifies the protagonist's shifting sense of priorities. Whereas Rita's remarks betray an aspirationist interest in not only leaving her small town but also leaving the country in pursuit of a career in the entertainment industry, the protagonist's declaration of his own lack of aspirations suggests a contentment with small-town living and, significantly, with work, as opposed to any interest in upward mobility. Interestingly, both characters's decision-making is motivated by a sense of belonging, however, with vastly different understandings of their place within their small-town local economy. While Rita's interest in "going further" is likely a reactionary response to her conservative upbringing, characterized in large part by her brothers's control and vigilance, who go so far as to follow her to Madrid in order to physically stop her from participating in the beauty pageant, Saturnino's

attraction to the idea of obscurity, on the other hand, implies his own idealization of an extreme normalcy, that is, an inconspicuous existence far from public notice or important activities. In this way, the protagonist's confirmation of work as a key aspect of his self-concept ("I was born to work"), as well as his explanation that his rejection of Rita's job offer is largely out of consideration for his wife and marriage, indicate a consciousness of conflicting priorities. As such, Saturnino's decision to reject a new career opportunity in the film's concluding scenes, regardless of its potential to change—and possibly even improve—the nature of his employment situation, implies a notion of compromise otherwise absent throughout the majority of the film. The protagonist's resolve to stay in Lerma, prioritizing his work and marriage, suggests that the ideal of "having it all," in fact necessitates loss and compromise, as well as the prioritization of specific non-negotiable limitations. In this way, although throughout the majority of the film, work and leisure, particularly, leisure in the form of sex and romance, are presented as thoroughly contradictory forces, the protagonist's choices in the film's conclusion suggest that such values are in fact largely complementary.

Despite Saturnino's firm resolve to dedicate himself wholly to his wife and various occupations in the *pueblo*, his attitudes ultimately stand in contrast to those of his fellow townspeople, whose enthusiasm for the possibility of bringing tourism and commercial interest to Lerma seem to confirm the reality that traditional small-town economic models of industry are in fact on the way out. Given Saturnino's newfound relationship to the entertainment world, as well as his unfounded relationship amongst the *pueblo*'s men as an ideal of "fuerza erótica" ("erotic force"), the town's mayor, in the company of his constituents, are confident that the protagonist can serve as an important draw for tourists looking to visit the region. While the townsmen dream about the possibility of opening up attractions such as a nightclub and a

boutique so as to rival the tourist appeal of the Costa del Sol, the protagonist's frustrated reaction shows a fundamental disinterest in serving as the vehicle for the town's economic development, confirming his own prioritization of an alternative set of responsibilities out of line with the townspeople's economic aspirations:

¡Tenéis que callaros ya! No me interesan mis relaciones públicas ni la Costa del Sol ni que pongan mi nombre a una tienda. ¡Y a la calle donde vive mi padre! Que en paz descance. Ni siquiera me interesa esa señorita [Rita] por muy Miss que sea. Yo quiero a mi mujer y voy a verla y hacer las paces. Y a trabajar menos para poder estar con ella de vez en cuando. Así que, señor Alcalde, presento la dimisión de todos mis cargos oficiales. A partir de ahora me dedicaré a las labores propias de mi sexo. ¡Que ya es bastante, digo yo!

(Shut up already! I'm not interested in my public relations nor am I interested in the Costa del Sol or in having a store named after me. And on the street where my father lived! May he rest in peace. I'm not even interested in that young lady [Rita], even if she's a beauty queen. I love my wife and I'm going to see her so that we can make peace. And I'm going to work less so that I can be with her every now and then. For that reason, Mr. Mayor, I present my resignation from all of my official duties. From now on, I will dedicate myself to the duties of my sex. Which I think is plenty!)

Whereas the townspeople's attitudes betray the increasing influence of more "modern"—and potentially lucrative—forms of leisure, especially those related to the tourism industry and the potential commodification of the town's resources and iconography, Saturnino's resolution to trade in his official duties for "the duties of [his] sex" are largely at odds with the townsmen's entrepreneurial ambitions. Significantly, the protagonist's outburst disparages the notion of self-

commodification and overwork in favor of a gendered, and seemingly more domestic, conception of duty and responsibility, in this way, representing a significant stronghold against the modernizing project of urbanization. While such remarks ultimately betray a conservative attitude towards consumerist forces such as tourism, thus, linking the protagonist's views to those of the Francoist state, the deliberateness of Saturnino's decision to treat the responsibilities of his marriage as a formal obligation, echoing Elvira's initial pleas to the protagonist's "deber de marido," reframes the prioritization of such relationships and their inherent necessities (including sex), as equally, if not more, important as work. As such, the protagonist's follow-through in the film's concluding scenes, which clearly imply the couple's enthusiastic physical reconciliation (without showing it, of course), validates the importance of non-work related leisure activities, especially those related to the moral institutions of the family and marriage, confirming the value of leisure as an essential complement to work as opposed to an escapist response to the necessity of such work.

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

The archetype of the overworked and underemployed—or perhaps, more accurately, multi-employed—Spanish working man represents a recurring image throughout many of the popular comedies of the 1970s, whether as a plot device or as a key element of the protagonist's characterization. This trope ultimately gives way to an extended consideration of the work-leisure relationship in such a way that any clear divide between work and leisure, as well as the notion of "having it all," are rendered problematic at best (if not completely impossible), whether for reasons related to the nature of the male protagonist's employment, specifically, or due to larger economic and social influences, such as consumer society and capitalism. In effect, films

such as Pedro Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* effectively problematize the assumption that work and/or steady employment is the key to personal and professional wellbeing. Instead, Lazaga and Ozores's comedies point to the potential dangers of understanding work strictly as a vehicle for economic success, outlining the negative consequences of a strictly work-driven existence. Furthermore, the conclusions of both films, which encourage the abandonment of capitalist values and overwork, serve to indulge the censors's desires for the confirmation of Francoist morals, in this case, the superiority of the Francoist authoritarian cultural project over the materialist motivations of capitalist modernization. While Lazaga's film emphasizes the insatiable nature of consumer capitalism, under which the act of consumption represents a false pursuit of happiness and the appearance of wealth, presenting recreational leisure activities, especially the masculine sport of fishing, as a form of escapism against the corrupting nature of modern economic influences, in the case of *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar*, leisure, especially as it relates to personal relationships, comes to represent an important counterbalance to the often-exhausting pressures and responsibilities of work. In doing so, these films in many ways can be understood as an exploration of the personal consequences of much of the behavior exhibited throughout the films studied in this dissertation, which for those working men pursuing self-gratification, self-commodification, and their own active integration in the burgeoning capitalist market extend beyond a purely economic set of consequences.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have analyzed the relationship between masculinities and work as it is represented in the popular comedies of the late-Francoist period, specifically, throughout the 1970s. In short, I proposed that Pedro Lazaga's films *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* (1972) and *Estoy hecho un chaval* (1977), as well as Mariano Ozores's *Manolo la nuit* (1973), utilize the *españolada*, both as a genre and, more generally, as a concept, in order to engage with the notion of Spanish exceptionalism and, by extension, the commodification and subsequent promotion of exaggerated and stereotypical images of "Spanishness" and Spanish masculinities, both of which characterized the Spanish tourism industry of the 1960s and 1970s. I then analyzed Fernando Merino's *Los días de Cabirio* (1971) and *Préstame quince días* (1971), which I demonstrated are just as concerned with the increasing protagonism of women in the Spanish economy, both as participants in the labor market and as consumers, as they are with the commodification of male sexuality. In doing so, women hold the key to the male protagonists's career and/or financial success. I also examined how Ramón (Tito) Fernández's *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (1970) and *Los novios de mi mujer* (1972) exploit heterosexist tropes of homosexuality in order to reconfigure homosexuality (or, at the very least, the appearance of homosexuality) as not only a potential asset in the world of work, but also as a socially permissible means for Spanish men to interact with married and unmarried women outside of the confines of the family and marriage. Finally, I studied how Lazaga's *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and Mariano Ozores's *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* (1974) pursue an indictment of consumer capitalism through the specific lens of leisure. Rather than prioritize moralizing perspectives of consumerism, Lazaga and Ozores's respective films consider the side effects of capitalism on a more personal level,

configuring leisure as the direct antithesis of work (as it exists under the modern capitalist economy) and a necessary form of escape from the increasingly dominant values of consumerism and consumption.

I have maintained that, in the case of the Spanish popular comedy of the 1970s, film directors and screenwriters use work as an important plot device, if not the explicit focus of the narrative, in order to unveil the contradictions of Spain's nascent capitalism. With this study, I contest the notion that the Spanish popular comedy's reputation among critics and scholars as "populist, low-brow, commercial genre cinema" (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 61) inherently disqualifies the value of such films as cultural objects worthy of serious and systematic analysis. Furthermore, comedy's interest in commercial gains is not, by necessity, an indication of unflinching Francoist values nor is it indicative of a disinterest in pressing economic, political, and social issues on the part of the director and/or filmmaker. On the contrary, Ramón (Tito) Fernández, Pedro Lazaga, Fernando Merino, and Mariano Ozores's respective films, through their deliberate engagement with the gendered issue of work as a prevailing narrative concern, point to a growing understanding of Spanish cinema by filmmakers and censors alike as an increasingly valuable consumer good, as well as a convenient vehicle for the exploration of the dominant fears, anxieties, and problems of Spanish society. In doing so, these films open up the space for depictions of work and Spanish working men that implicitly or explicitly challenge Francoist norms regarding masculinity and work.

The relevance of work as a thoroughly gendered thematic concern in Spanish popular cinema poses a series of related research opportunities. The most pressing of such opportunities involves the expansion of the analysis of the films and issues studied throughout this dissertation. Despite the range of comedies selected for this study, the principal focus of my investigation has

been the representation of Spanish working men within the domestic urban space (i.e. Madrid, the Costa del Sol, etc.) and/or in relationship to this space. Additional research is needed in order to address the disparities between representations of work (and leisure) in a strictly urban context and the nature of work in the *pueblo* and other rural settings. Furthermore, while films such as *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lazaga, 1971) have received critical attention for their portrayal of Spanish migrant workers abroad, a holistic investigation of the representation of work in the Spanish popular comedy of the 1970s would encompass filmic representations of the Spanish working man domestically *and* abroad, in both urban and rural environments.

Additionally, because my analysis of the films studied throughout this dissertation prioritizes close readings of the representation of work, as opposed to an extended study of censors's evaluations of such representations, this project could also easily evolve into a more focused analysis of the role of censorship, as well as the evolution of censorship norms in relationship to (or even in response to) Spain's greater economic transformation in the late-Francoist era. Such an investigation would require additional archival research in order to pursue a more comprehensive analysis of the censors's overall understanding of popular cinema as both a commercial and cultural product, as well as any indications of a larger economic and/or ideological project on the part of censors to regulate the film industry's portrayal of the greater issue of consumer capitalism. While archival research funded by the UCLA Center for European and Russian Studies allowed for my consultation of censorship records related to several of the films studied throughout this dissertation, as well as those related to *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, a more thorough investigation of the censorship documents housed at the Archivo General de la Administración would likely contribute to a deeper understanding of the conflicts surrounding Spain's adoption of capitalist reforms within the particular discursive space of popular cinema.

Furthermore, although I prioritize the genre of comedy throughout this dissertation as a defining staple of mainstream Spanish cinema, popular dramas such as *El vikingo* (Pedro Lazaga, 1972), starring Jose Luis López Vázquez, Conchita Velasco, Máximo Valverde, Mary Francis, and Javier Escrivá, share narrative and thematic concerns that run parallel to those of the comedies I have analyzed throughout this project. In much the same way that *¡No firmes más letras, cielo!* and *Dormir y ligar, todo es empezar* give extended consideration to the issue of the work-leisure relationship, *El vikingo* explores the consequences of prioritizing success in the workplace over a successful marriage, however, with the key narrative twist that the male protagonist's rise within his company is, in fact, the direct result of his wife's affair with his boss.<sup>117</sup> Ultimately, the increasing hostility generated by the protagonist's prioritization of his own career aspirations results in a sexless and childless relationship, as well as adultery on the part of both spouses. In this way, treating Spanish popular cinema as a whole, as opposed to as a series of subgenres, would allow for an extended, cross-genre consideration of the representation of masculinities and work across popular cinema.

Finally, another potential avenue of research related to this dissertation would be a complementary study pursuing an analysis of the relationship between femininities and work in the Spanish popular comedies of the 1970s. While I have touched on aspects of this relationship throughout my analysis of the Spanish working man, the role of women in the labor market, as well as in relationship to the influences of capitalism and consumerism, was, out of necessity, rendered secondary to a consideration of the films's male protagonists. Arguably, the films included throughout this study have just as much to say about the Spanish woman, given the

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<sup>117</sup> The film's tagline succinctly summarizes this dynamic: "Un tecnócrata que se hace a sí mismo... gracias a la ayuda de su mujer" ("A self-made technocrat... thanks to the help of his wife").

popular comedy's representation of women as increasingly active participants in the national economy as both workers and consumers.

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