

# **Politics and Sexual Politics: Women's Writing in Spain and Portugal, 1913-1933**

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## Abstract

Motivated by feminist critics of Spanish and Portuguese literature who observe a lacuna of scholarship about women writers in the early decades of the twentieth century, this thesis constitutes the first major study of four authors who will be unknown to most, all of whom participated in feminist and socio-political activism: Matilde de la Torre (1884-1946); Ángela Graupera (1890-c.1936); Maria O'Neill (1876-1932); and Emília de Sousa Costa (1877-1959). Grounding the analyses firmly within the socio-political and literary contexts in which the works were written, this study asks how these authors confront the question of women's ideological agency and political subjectivity at a time when debates surrounding women's social, legal and political rights were heightened, focusing on how fiction afforded these authors a means of reorientating and (re-)imagining women's relationship with the male-dominated political domain.

Each of the chapters centres exclusively on one author, selecting texts for close reading that encapsulate the writer's political aims and literary strategies. Chapter One focuses on De la Torre's critique of women's (in)visibility in socialist activism and rhetoric in her novel *El banquete de Saturno* (1931). Chapter Two's analysis of Graupera's *Los rebeldes* (1933) examines how women's influential yet overlooked role in social revolution is explored in a novella that manifests the political conversion it seeks to promote. Chapter Three's examination of O'Neill's work focuses on three of her novels, *Drama de ciúme* (1913), *Ilusão desfeita* (1915) and *A víbora* (1930), arguing that the author perverts the romance plot as a means of paralleling social and literary patriarchal convention. In the final chapter, the analysis centres on Sousa Costa's short story 'Quem tiver filhas no mundo' (1933), arguing that the work, published the same year the Estado Novo was officially inaugurated, can be read as a directive to the women's movement at a pivotal moment in its history.

The analyses illustrate how the selected writers capitalise on the medium of fiction to engage with public discourses, subverting and refracting generic convention and blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction in such a way as to self-consciously underline their political agency and the socio-political significance of their literature. Making an important contribution to feminist criticisms and the burgeoning field of Iberian Studies, this research exemplifies how research into non-canonical female authors augments our understanding of feminist thought and reveals tropes in female-authored fiction that trace

female – and feminist – literary traditions and patterns in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal.

## Abbreviations

### Primary texts by authors

The full title of works is provided at first reference within each chapter. Thereafter, a short form is used as indicated below as necessary for texts that are frequently referenced in the analyses. Page numbers for quotations from the works are preceded by the initial letters of the titles, as shown in brackets:

Matilde de la Torre:	<i>El banquete de Saturno</i> = <i>El banquete</i> (BS) <i>Jardín de damas curiosas</i> = <i>Jardín</i> (JDC)
Ángela Graupera:	<i>Los rebeldes</i> (LR)
Maria O'Neill:	<i>Drama de ciúme</i> = <i>Drama</i> (DC) <i>Ilusão desfeita</i> = <i>Ilusão</i> (ID) <i>A víbora</i> = <i>Víbora</i> (V)
Emília de Sousa Costa:	'Quem tiver filhas no mundo' = 'Quem tiver' (QT)

### Note to Reader

Primary sources that are cited in the analyses are listed in the Bibliography. Additional works by the authors that have been consulted are listed in appendices, as are references to the writers in contemporary press publications. The name of the author and articles are provided for all press sources when available and titles are copied as printed.



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It is no exaggeration to say that, without my mother, this thesis would never have come to pass. Not only did she cultivate, encourage and enable my love of literature, she also embodied and defended the feminist and socialist views which underpin my research. Reminiscing about our discussion of the 'mad woman in the attic', when, in spite of everything, her raw intellect prevailed, has carried me through the final stages of this work. Inspirational as a mother, teacher, guardian and feminist, Mum: this thesis is dedicated to you, I only wish my literary analysis was as nuanced and sophisticated as yours.





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## Introduction

# Women Writing Politics, the Politics of Women's Writing

In 1920, Carmen de Burgos (1867-1932) published *La flor en la playa*, a novella about a young working-class couple from Madrid who travel to Portugal on a romantic trip. The holiday is a trial marriage for the pair who are at a crossroads in their relationship and are debating whether to marry or separate. The novella concludes with the couple returning to Spain and deciding to end their affair, unsatisfied by the reality of married life. In the work, Burgos paints Portugal as a haven for liberal ideals where the lovers can act as man and wife without fearing reprisals from a conservative society, taking advantage of a more liberal country than their homeland of Spain. At the time of the novella's publication, Portugal was under a more progressive government than its Iberian neighbours. The First Republic in Portugal (1910-1926) had been in place for a decade, bringing with it a wave of feminist reform. Eagerly observing the progress of the women's movement in Portugal in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Burgos saw Portugal as the realisation of her feminist ideal; an aspiration which would not be fulfilled for another eleven years in Spain, with the introduction of the Second Republic (1931-1939).

Burgos' focus on Portugal indicates the social and political parallels in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal, while her close friendship with Ana de Castro Osório (1872-1935) personifies the commonalities of the early feminist movements at this period in Iberian history. Burgos and Castro Osório, arguably the most well-known feminists in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal respectively, embody the intersection of socio-political activity and literary production that is central to this

thesis. Both staunch republicans, feminists and accomplished authors, Burgos and Castro Osório used literature as a means of promoting their feminist views by confronting women's social and legal subordination in their narratives.<sup>1</sup> As critics have demonstrated, an examination of Burgos' and Castro Osório's fiction augments our understanding of the authors' respective views and, crucially, contemporary feminist discourse more broadly.<sup>2</sup> This thesis aims to highlight the literary and social contribution of female authors unknown to most critics, examining how the selected authors used fiction as a means of promoting their beliefs and engaging with feminist debates, much in the same way as Burgos and Castro Osório.

The analysis is the first major study of the works of Matilde de la Torre (1884-1946), Ángela Graupera (1890-c.1936), Maria O'Neill (1876-1932) and Emília de Sousa Costa (1877-1959), all writers who used literature as a platform to advocate their own socio-political views. An examination of these authors will illustrate the relationship between women's emancipation and female literary production, and provides further insight into the shared concerns of the women's movement in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal which are manifested in women's fiction. I argue that the selected authors, all socially- and politically-engaged women, used fiction as a means of reorientating women's relationship with the public/political sphere, carving a place for women in the public space at a juncture in Spanish and Portuguese history that saw the first legal victories for the feminist movement coincide with increased

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<sup>1</sup> Burgos' *El artículo 438* (1921), for instance, makes direct reference to the infamous article from the 'Código penal reformado' of 1870, while the precarious social position and legal standing of abused wives is central to *La malcasada* (1923) and *Quiero vivir mi vida* (1931). Castro Osório's novel *O Direito da Mãe: Novela* (1925) critiques marriage and divorce legislation, as well as the limited legal rights of mothers after a marriage breakdown, while *Mundo Novo* (19--) examines the social and legal constraints of marriage, draws on feminist discourse, and critiques the rights of women under the 'Código Civil Portuguez' of 1867.

<sup>2</sup> See Cordeiro (2012) for the most comprehensive critical analysis of Castro Osório's fiction and see Louis and Sharpe (2017) for a recent publication on Burgos' writings, along with Louis' seminal study of legal discourse in Burgos' narratives (2005). Concepción Núñez Rey's aptly named 'Un puente entre España y Portugal' (2014) examines the pair's personal and professional collaboration, in relation to their fiction and activism.

opportunities for women writers. By examining fiction written by four authors with different socio-political priorities and artistic approaches, I aim to illustrate that women's literary output from this period demonstrates a sustained interest in women's experience(s) in the public domain.

Before delving into the analyses which form the basis of this study, I will first outline some key terminology that is pertinent to the thesis as a whole. I then provide an overview of the women's movements in Spain and Portugal in order to situate the authors' views within a broader feminist context. A discussion of women's writing in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal will follow along with a consideration for the burgeoning field of Iberian Studies given the thesis' geographical focus. The Introduction will conclude by explaining why the selected authors were chosen and providing an outline of each of the chapters, outlining my critical approach to the texts. To aid clarity, I will explicate concepts that are central to this thesis as they arise throughout the Introduction and will then review the principal research questions before proceeding with Chapter One.

### **The *Politics* of Language: Context and Use of Key Terminology**

Given the parameters and subject matter of this study, an overview of terminology is required. All of our authors participated in 'political' activity, that is, they were active in the public sphere in order to advocate a particular ideology or element of social reform. In the chapters dedicated to Matilde de la Torre and Ángela Graupera, the ideology relates most closely to electoral politics. For the Portuguese authors selected for inclusion, Maria O'Neill and Emília de Sousa Costa, their socio-political work relates more explicitly to women's emancipation; a distinction between female writers in Spain and Portugal which is considered throughout this examination and discussed in

the Conclusion. The comprehensive interpretation of ‘political’ in this study reflects the varied and eclectic ways women sought to participate in public life and, given the historical context, it would be arbitrary to distinguish between electoral and social activism. Indeed, it is the blurring of the two which is of most interest for the analyses that follow. The manner in which women simultaneously repressed and capitalised on their biological sex in order to make their voices heard, it will be argued, bridges the gulf between the public/political domain, traditionally reserved for men, and the private/domestic sphere of women. In doing so, women were able to subvert hegemonic norms and reformulate expectations of women’s role in society, a fundamentally *political act*, by problematising and redressing the attributes and virtues typically associated with the female sex. All subsequent uses of ‘political’ or ‘politics’ encapsulate this nexus, unless otherwise stated.

All of the authors in this thesis engage with the notion of traditionally ‘feminine’ traits in their works, such as sensitivity, delicacy, domesticity and beauty. While ‘femininity’ is problematic from a feminist perspective, the term is necessary in this study in order to express the conservative portrayal of womanhood which the authors appropriate, negotiate and problematise. Understanding ‘femininity’ as a concept distinct from biological sex, the description is used in this examination to refer to the characteristics associated with the submissive, virtuous, self-sacrificing role that was imposed on women by conservative societal expectations and, as will be seen later in the analyses, would also resurface in feminist discourse in early twentieth-century Iberia. The question of what it means to be ‘feminine’ presents the thorny issue of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. All references to ‘sex’ in this study places emphasis on biological categories, usually in reference to legal standing or female-specific experiences, such as pregnancy, while ‘gender’ is used when social or cultural *expectations* are the focus of

the analysis.<sup>3</sup> Though decades of gender theorists have rendered the sex/gender binary null, most notably Judith Butler who argues that ‘sex’ is, like ‘gender’, artificially constructed (1990: 9-10), an arbitrary distinction is helpful at various points throughout this discussion to underline when the authors are distinguishing between a biological function and societal expectation. For this reason, I qualify all uses of ‘sex’ to clarify my point. As will be seen in Chapters Two and Four, the representation of motherhood is one example where the selected authors make use of a characteristic or state associated with being biologically female, pregnancy in this instance, in order to subvert gendered societal expectations.

The problematic, unstable divide on which any division between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ rests illustrates the difficulties faced by studies, such as this thesis, that attempt to negotiate between a feminist critical reading and a consideration for the socio-political and historical context in which the works were written, a tension which is exemplified by disparate reactions that are evoked by the term ‘feminism’. In *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History*, Karen Offen explains that the English word ‘feminism’ came into usage from the 1870s, deriving from the French ‘féminisme’, and was ‘commonly used as a synonym for women’s emancipation’ (2000: 19). In Portugal, João Esteves attributes the first usage of ‘feminismo’ to Oliveira Martins who employed the term in two press publications from July 1888 (2018: 107), while, according to Offen, ‘feminismo’ and ‘feminista’ were employed in the Spanish press at some point before the turn of the century (2000: 19). Though the word was being used from the end of the nineteenth century, ‘feminismo’ remained a polemical and polysemantic word in

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<sup>3</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender* includes a glossary which defines ‘[s]ex differences’ as ‘typical differences between females and males which are most likely due to biological differences’ (2003: xxx), and ‘[g]ender’ as ‘[t]wo or more classes of persons who are believed to be different from each other; society has different roles and expectations for different genders’ (2003: xxvi). ‘Gender differences’ are described as ‘[d]ifferences between females and males that reflect cultural expectations and experiences’ (2003: xxvi).

early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal. Traditionalists argued that feminism would lead to moral decay, as women would abandon their traditional roles of wives and mothers and begin to exhibit male vices such as cruelty, brutality and aggression. Extreme examples of this anti-feminist discourse suggested that women would become physically masculine as a result of feminism, and caricatures of robust women with facial hair circulated.

Not unexpectedly, leading figures who supported women's emancipation at this time sought to counter this hysteria by detailing their own interpretation of feminism. Carmen de Burgos and Ana de Castro Osório are prime examples. In Burgos' *La mujer moderna y sus derechos* from 1927, for instance, she defines feminism as the 'vindicación de los derechos de la mujer' (2007: 70), while Castro Osório clarifies her stance in *Às mulheres portuguesas*, the first feminist manifesto in Portugal. In the piece, Castro Osório explains that feminism was a means of achieving gender equality, rather than an inverse form of patriarchy, or misandry: '*ser feminista não é querer as mulheres umas insexuais, umas masculinas de caricatura, como alguns cuidam*' (1905: 24; original emphasis).<sup>4</sup> Though Burgos and Castro Osório, two of the most influential feminists from this period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, publically aligned their views on women's emancipation with 'feminism', an aversion to the label 'feminist' was not uncommon amongst female figures who fought for women's emancipation in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal. Two of the leading women at the forefront for women's rights in Spain and Portugal are such examples: Federica

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<sup>4</sup> Other examples of Portuguese women who insist 'feminismo' is not equivalent to misandry include Virgínia de Castro e Almeida (1874-1945), a translator and children's author, and Sarah Beirão (1880-1974), a writer, journalist and women's activist. Castro e Almeida outlines her stance in *A mulher: história da mulher, a mulher moderna – educação* (1913: 19-21), while Beirão insists that the shared objective of the feminist movements, which she explicitly describes in the plural, is for the benefit of the family: 'Todos os movimentos feministas, que muitos olham de mau grado, e consideram de rebelião contra antigos usos e costumes, não têm fundamentalmente outro fim que a paz da família' (1934: 3). Adelaide Cabete also considers the polemics of the word in the well-titled 'O horror á palavra "Feminismo"' (1928).



Montseny (1905-1994) and Maria Lamas (1893-1983).<sup>5</sup> Montseny, who is the most well-known Spanish female anarchist from this period, associated feminism with bourgeois women (Montseny, 1923: 3-5) and advocated social progress for both women and men, which she summarised in her (in)famous declaration: ‘¿Feminismo? ¡Jamás! ¡Humanismo siempre!’ (Montseny, 1924: 13).<sup>6</sup> Lamas, an activist, journalist and editor who fiercely opposed the patriarchal Estado Novo, also favoured a humanist approach, as she clarifies in a press article published in 1935: ‘[E]stou fora do problema do feminismo [...] [S]ó a «política humana» merece a minha atenção de mulher’ (cited in Rebelo, 2008: 51).

From a contemporary perspective, the views of Montseny and Lamas may seem perplexing given that their understanding of humanism correlates with feminism; equal rights for women and men. It is also noteworthy for this study that some women writers continue to reject the label ‘feminist’ in Spain (Bergmann, 2007: 2; Davies, 1994: 5-7; Ferrán and Glenn, 2002: xvii; Glenn and Mc Nerney, 2008: 7-8) and Portugal (Correia, 1996: 51; Owen, 2000: 17), despite writing works which invite a feminist critical reading. As the above illustrates, any resistance to the label ‘feminist’ underscores the importance of interpretation and context. As Carol Maier argues in relation to Spain, “‘feminism’ and ‘feminist’ as words [...] may be less international than some critics and translators acknowledge [...] Rather than a dictionary equivalent, the translation of

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<sup>5</sup> Details of Montseny’s activism are discussed in Chapter Two. Lamas is best known for her opposition to the Estado Novo, and she was imprisoned twice for public protests against the government. She travelled Portugal to examine the effects of the regime on the lives of women and published two books, *Mulheres do meu país* (1948) and *A mulher no mundo* (1952).

<sup>6</sup> Montseny explicated her stance as follows: ‘Nosotros jamás hemos sido feministas, porque consideramos que la mujer debe tener los mismos derechos que el hombre y que, como el hombre, posee las mismas parecidas cualidades y los mismos semejantes defectos’ (cited in Alcalde, 1983: 29). For a thorough discussion of Montseny’s views on feminism, see Cruz-Cámara, 2015: 13-37.

[the terminology] often requires an explanation or parallel term' (1994: 189).<sup>7</sup> For this reason, my study aims to establish how the authors define or understand feminism, outlining how it related to their other ideological views (such as socialism) and the views of their contemporaries. As this objective implies, the early feminist movement in Spain and Portugal cannot be categorised as one homogenous ideology, but rather a mutable, heterogeneous, polyphonous grouping of ideas that can only be understood by exploring the creative and political output of the women who advocated them.

### **Delay, Difference and Domesticity: First-Wave Feminism in Iberia**

The personal and professional collaboration of Burgos and Castro Osório exemplifies how the countries' geographical proximity, comparable legal structures and staunchly Catholic societies fostered common aims, communication and debate between early feminists in Spain and Portugal. Summarising this context is crucial for this study as it illustrates how first-wave feminism<sup>8</sup> in Spain and Portugal gained pace in the early decades of the twentieth century, with feminist thought evolving in response to rapidly changing socio-political contexts; a continuous re-evaluation that, I argue, is textually inscribed in female-authored fiction. The discussion first outlines important points of comparison, specifically the oppressive influence of the Catholic Church and a common focus on education and marriage reform, before considering the feminist reforms enacted by the Republican governments, which leads onto a detailed discussion of

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<sup>7</sup> The polemic which surrounded the word is observed in 1935 by María Teresa León (1903-1988), the writer and communist. Following the progress made by first-wave feminists in Spain, discussed in detail later in this Introduction, León remarks, '[n]o se habla más de feminismo porque se practica ya, y cuando algo se practica, se olvida la palabra, se ignora el término [...] la mujer en España, es feminista sin saberlo, sin pensarlo, sin recordar cómo y cuándo se incorporó a él, sino con naturalidad' (cited in Marrast, 1984: 62).

<sup>8</sup> 'First-wave feminism' is understood as referring to the women's movement between the early to mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century (see LeGates, 2001: 197-202). While feminist critics have recognised the polemical quality of the 'wave' metaphor as it implies an arbitrary, inaccurate disconnectness between critical periods of feminist activism throughout history (see Molony and Nelson [2017: 1-11] for an informed discussion), the term is useful in this study as a means of indicating historical, rather than ideological, parameters.

women's suffrage on the Peninsula. The section concludes by summarising two diametrically opposed typologies of female behaviour that pervaded popular culture at this time, the 'angel of the hearth' and the 'new woman', as these constructs typify the intersection of feminist thought, socio-political discourse and cultural production that is borne out in feminist fiction in early twentieth-century Iberia.

Evidence that the early women's movements in Spain and Portugal invite comparison is found both contemporaneously and in present-day critical literature. As Silvia Bermúdez and Roberta Johnson note in the Introduction to *A New History of Iberian Feminisms*, critical accounts of feminism in the Iberian Peninsula often fail to consider 'the diverse linguistic, political, and cultural milieu in which feminist thought and activity developed' (2018: 3), overlooking how the varied, eclectic elements of feminist discourses form part of a 'complex web of feminist interactions' (2018: 7). The similarities between the women's movements in Spain and Portugal at the turn of the twentieth century would also be expressed contemporaneously by Virgínia de Castro e Almeida (1878-1945), a Portuguese writer and feminist. Writing in 1913, Castro e Almeida observes:

Nos paizes latinos o movimento feminista não tem a força nem a gravidade que acabamos de observar nos outros.

Na Hespanha e em Portugal o feminismo é apenas embryonario. Neste rápido esboço de analyse ao desenvolvimento da questão da mulher em varios paizes, nem vale a pena falar do que sobre o assumpto se passa na peninsula.

Ainda ha bem pouco a triste iniciativa de um numero elevadissimo de senhoras hespanholas manifestando-se contra a lei que subtrahia a escola

primaria ao ensino religioso obrigatorio, nos dá a prova concludente do abraço d'aquelle paiz no sentido da libertação da mulher. O catholicismo, sob a sua forma mais nociva, – o jesuitismo, – domina poderosamente o sexo feminino.

Emquanto essa força não fôr vencida, a mulher, escrava do padre, será um elemento de atrazo e de desmoralisação. (1913: 204, 206)

Her criticism that the Catholic Church impeded feminism in Spain and Portugal and, as a consequence, the movement was underdeveloped and inherently weak when compared with other countries is in consonance with more recent critical analyses. João Esteves, for instance, notes how first-wave feminism in Portugal 'avoided excessively advanced ideas and never managed to reach a significant number of women' (2018: 110), while Monserrat Roig posits that, in Spain, '[e]l feminismo llegó tarde y mal' (1981: 13).<sup>9</sup> As Geraldine Scanlon observes when considering 'los posibles motivos del retraso del movimiento feminista en España', the impact of religion was as pertinent as socio-economic factors: 'Por lo general, los países en los que floreció el feminismo eran protestantes y estaban industrializados (Inglaterra, Alemania, Estados Unidos)' (1986: 5). The oppressive influence of the Church was such that Catherine Davies deems it the 'greatest obstacle to women's emancipation in Spain' (1998: 7), echoing Castro e Almeida's powerful words: 'O catholicismo, sob a sua forma mais nociva, – o jesuitismo, – domina poderosamente o sexo feminino' (1913: 204, 206).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> While Roig's critical assessment risks minimising or disregarding the efforts, aims and achievements of Spain's early feminists, it does, nevertheless, reflect scholarship on feminism in Spain as there is broad agreement that the Spanish movement was inherently weak and achieved little (see, for example, Bieder, 2018: 158; Franco Rubio, 1982; García Méndez, 1979; Koonz, 1998; Roig, 1981; Scanlon, 1986), and critics tend to ascribe a conservative image to Spanish feminism (see, for example, Enders, 1999: 389; Labanyi, 2002: 76; Johnson, 2003: 26).

<sup>10</sup> I have outlined the conflict between the feminist movement and the Church in early twentieth-century Portugal in my contribution to *A New History of Iberian Feminisms* (Madden, 2018a: 199-201).

In addition to the oppressive, insidious spectre of the Church, the development of first-wave feminism in Spain and Portugal was also impeded by common legal, cultural and practical concerns. The nineteenth-century Civil and Penal Codes made women socially and legally subordinate to their fathers and husbands,<sup>11</sup> which provoked great backlash from early feminists. Extreme illiteracy rates amongst women slowed the development and spread of feminist thought in both countries as debate was mostly limited to the pages of female-authored and -directed press.<sup>12</sup> As the German-born Portuguese literary critic Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos would remark in an article she published in the (male-directed) periodical *O Primeiro de Janeiro* in 1902, the main impetus for the feminist movement in *fin-de-siècle* Spain and Portugal was education: ‘[A] questão feminista, na península hispânica, é atualmente uma simples questão de instrução’ (2002: 26). Accordingly, the pioneers of the women’s movement in both countries would focus their efforts on improving women’s educational opportunities. In Portugal, this included leading figures such as Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho (1847-1921), a writer, journalist and poet who would become the first woman accepted to the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, and Guiomar Torreção (1844-1898), who founded the woman’s magazine *Almanque das Senhoras* and would direct the publication for almost thirty years. The Spanish feminist Concepción Arenal (1820-1893), (in)famous

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<sup>11</sup> Under the Spanish ‘Código civil’ of 1889 (Art. 57-61) and the ‘Código civil português’ of 1867 (Art. 1185), single women were under the tutelage of their fathers until they married and married women were legally obliged to obey their husbands. Women also received harsher penalties for adultery than men under the Spanish ‘Código penal reformado’ of 1870 (Art. 438), the focus of Burgos’ literary critique mentioned earlier, and the ‘Código penal português’ of 1886 (Art. 372).

<sup>12</sup> Key publications in Portugal include *A Voz Feminina* launched in 1868, which Cláudia Pazos Alonso notes was celebrated ‘for the novelty of its outspoken positions, with particular regard to the education and emancipation of women’ (Pazos Alonso, 2017: 62), and *Eva*, a women’s magazine that commemorated women’s liberation in Portugal and abroad. Examples include a front-page dedication to female lawyers (30 May 1925: 1) and a review and celebration of the Instituto Feminino de Educação e Trabalho (12 July 1930: 1), as well as articles on ‘Feminismo no Século XX’ (8 June 1929: 8, 18), ‘A Mulher Moderna’ (Castro, 5 December 1931: 1), together with pieces which track the progress of women’s emancipation in other countries, such as Sweden (Castelo Branco, 2 March 1935: 1). For a comprehensive overview of the feminist press in Portugal, see Leal, 1992. Christine Arkinstall observes how a feminist press began to emerge in Spain in the mid-nineteenth century, citing two Madrid-based weeklies, *Ellas* and *La Mujer*, both founded in 1851, as two influential publications (2018: 114-6).

for her ironic commentary on hegemonic gender norms in *La mujer del porvenir* (1884),<sup>13</sup> would focus explicitly on women's education *La mujer en la educación* (1892), while Emília Pardo Bazán (1851-1921) condemns Spain's educational systems for keeping women 'en perpetua infancia' in 'La mujer española' (1976[1890]).

Marriage reform was another fundamental shared objective of the women's movement in both countries, and Burgos and Castro Osório would both author feminist commentaries on the topic. Burgos' *El divorcio en España* from 1904 advocated legislative reform in Spain, arguing that public perception backed changes to the law according to the results of a survey she conducted in the press, while Castro Osório would publish *A mulher no casamento e no divórcio* (1911). Castro Osório's work, which I draw on in Chapter Three, celebrates the recent legislation and provides a detailed commentary on the law. Not only do these works illustrate how Burgos and Castro Osório shared similar politics and strategies for achieving their aims, but these manifestos also demonstrate how feminist reform in both countries followed a similar pattern; a link personified by the professional and personal collaboration of Burgos and Castro Osório. The objectives of many women's organisations, which would prove crucial in affording women an empowered public role in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal, reflect the emphasis on education and marriage reform as a transnational, collective feminist initiative. Organisations with more moderate aims such as the Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portuguesas (CNMP)<sup>14</sup> and Asociación Nacional de

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<sup>13</sup> In an almost tongue-in-cheek reflection on gendered expectations, Arenal observes the inconsistencies and hypocrisies that arise as typically 'feminine' traits such as sensitivity, kindness and nurturing, would make women good priests, lawyers and doctors.

<sup>14</sup> Founded in 1914 by Cabete, the CNMP was a branch of the International Council of Women that launched its own feminist magazine, *Alma Feminina* (see Cova, 2010; 2014). According to Darlene Sadlier, this group was 'the most important and longest sustained organization in the history of Portuguese feminism' (1989: 118).

Mujeres Españolas (ANME),<sup>15</sup> for instance, centred their initiatives changes to marriage and education, while more radical and progressive groups, such as the Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas (Liga Republicana)<sup>16</sup> and the Cruzada de Mujeres Españolas<sup>17</sup> would also back the same aims. The emphasis on education and marriage reform is fundamental to the present study. Not only would educational reform mean fiction was more accessible to a wide female readership, but attempts to displace the social and legal foundations of marriage confronted women's relationships with men and the public domain. As will be seen in the analyses that follow, all four writers engage with the intersection of sexual and state politics, an overlap that would become particularly pertinent under two Republican governments: the First Republic in Portugal (1910-1926) and the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939).

The notion that republican governments tend to be felicitous to the social, political and sexual liberation of women is encapsulated by the personification of the Republic as a patriotic, empowered, typically bare-breasted woman. Accordingly, the establishment of two secular, Republican governments would expedite feminist progress on the Peninsula. Reform would reach Portugal first, and the new administration introduces a range of pro-woman reforms that were celebrated by feminists.<sup>18</sup> The new government fostered a climate that Maria João Mogarro and Vera Dias class as 'campo fértil' for women's emancipation (Mogarro and Dias, 2008: 2). A liberal divorce law was introduced just one month after the Republic was established, as

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<sup>15</sup> The ANME is considered to be the first women's organisation in Spain. Formed in 1918, the group was a relatively moderate association that was dedicated to improving educational and professional opportunities for women and reforming the polemical 1889 Civil Code.

<sup>16</sup> As the name suggests, the Liga Republicana was a republican feminist organisation. It was founded in 1909 by Castro Osório and Adelaide Cabete (1867-1935), a teacher and later doctor who was part of the group that famously hoisted a republican flag to celebrate the founding of the First Republic (Samara, 2007: 105).

<sup>17</sup> A progressive organisation established by Burgos in 1921, the Cruzada de Mujeres Españolas, centred its efforts on legalising divorce and promoted women's suffrage.

<sup>18</sup> For a fascinating resource on the history of the feminist movement in twentieth-century Portugal, see Elina Guimarães' *Portuguese Women Past and Present* (1987) which provides an eye-witness account of the developments throughout the century as observed by Guimarães who lived from 1904 until 1991.

touched on above, which permitted no-fault divorce by mutual consent (Art. 3) and treated women and men as equally responsible in cases of adultery (Arts. 4.1, 4.2) and abandonment (Art. 4.5), and the 1911 Constitution stipulated equal legal rights for both sexes (Art. 3.2).<sup>19</sup> The Republican Party was committed to improving women's literacy rates (Marques Alves, 2012: 66; Tavares da Silva, 1983: 875), and the 1911 Constitution introduced compulsory, state-funded primary education for girls and boys (Art. 3.11; also see Evaristo, [n.d.]: 348; Esteves, 1998: 333; Silva, 2011: 175). The Second Republic in Spain was as equally favourable to women's rights, an establishment described by Roberta Johnson as a 'dream' for the feminist movement (2002: 42). The 1931 Constitution legalised divorce and afforded married women equal rights to their husbands (Art. 43), protected the rights of female workers (Art. 40), particularly mothers (Art. 46) and, crucially, outlined voting equality for both sexes (Arts. 9, 36, 52, 68) and legislated women's right to hold political office (Art. 53).

Suffrage deserves special mention here for two reasons: it encapsulates the symbiotic relationship between socio-political changes in Spain and Portugal; and it illustrates the paradoxes pertaining to women's ideological agency and ability to participate in public debate in early twentieth-century Iberia that is central to this study.<sup>20</sup> In Spain, the first elections in which women were eligible to run for office were held in 1931 and the first *diputadas* in Spanish political history were elected: the communist Clara Campoamor (1888-1972), and Victoria Kent (1898-1987) and Margarita Nelken (1894-1968), both socialists. Although female suffrage was technically granted by the 1931 Constitution, women would not vote until 1933 when additional legislation was passed in the Cortes. There was, therefore, a period when

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<sup>19</sup> Details of the law are found in Castro Osório's *A mulher no casamento e no divórcio* (1911), mentioned above.

<sup>20</sup> Fátima Mariano's recent PhD thesis, 'Às urnas: a reivindicação do voto feminino na península ibérica (1821-1934)', examines the parallels between the suffrage movements in Spain and Portugal against the backdrop of first-wave feminism (2018a).



Spanish women could stand for election but not vote; a paradox that is borne out in the work examined in Chapter One. Women's relationship with formal politics was even more complex in Portugal. The First Republic voted against women's suffrage in 1911<sup>21</sup> but, taking the phrasing of the law in its most literal sense, one valiant woman, Carolina Beatriz Ângelo (1878-1911), registered to vote on the basis that she was literate, the legal head of her family as a widow and mother, and was over the age of twenty-one (Mariano, 2011: 159, 270; Sadlier, 1989: 117). Although her initial attempts to register were rejected, Ângelo won her right to vote through a legal appeal, becoming the first Portuguese woman and the first woman in the history of Southern Europe, to vote in an election. In response, the Republic changed the wording of the legislation to specify that only literate *male* heads of household were eligible to vote, in changes passed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1913 (Rebelo, 2008: 47).

The evident tension between feminist progress and otherwise progressive governments that this suggests is exacerbated when we consider that female suffrage would not be granted in Portugal until 1931, in changes passed by the ultra-conservative military regime that followed the 1926 *coup d'état*. As Darlene Sadlier points out, the decree was passed in the same year that suffrage was (technically) legislated by the 1931 Constitution in Spain (1989: 120-1). Taking its lead from the example set by the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera in Spain (1923-1930),<sup>22</sup> the regime in Portugal granted women the vote on the assumption that women would align themselves with conservatism given their dependence on their fathers, husbands and the Church. In Spain, women over the age of twenty-three were able to vote in local elections as of

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<sup>21</sup> The most convincing reason for the refusal of the Portuguese First Republic to allow women the vote is that the Republican government feared the influence the Catholic Church had on women and were concerned it would implore them to vote for conservative parties (Esteves, 1998: 74; Gallagher, 1983: 23; Robinson, 1979: 36; Sadlier, 1989: 119).

<sup>22</sup> Primo de Rivera resigned in January 1930 and was replaced by Dámaso Berenguer who presided over the dictatorship until the establishment of the Second Republic in April 1931.

1924, with thirteen women appointed to the Spanish National Assembly in 1926, while three women would be elected to the National Assembly in Portugal in 1934, all joining the União Nacional (UN), the only political party legally permitted under the regime. The expressly anti-feminist nature of the reforms in Portugal is evidenced in an article published in *O Século* in 1934, as António Oliveira Salazar (then leader of the Estado Novo) would clarify that the introduction of female deputies did not mean that ‘ter-se o Estado ou elas próprias convertido, agora, ao feminismo’ (cited in Reynolds de Sousa, 2013: 40). As Salazar’s reflection illustrates, therefore, female suffrage and feminism did not always align and, at least in Portugal, were often in direct conflict, a concept that is explored further in Chapter Four. Although this period saw seismic changes to the social and legal standing of women, women’s ideological agency and ability to reason and think critically was still hotly debated. A sense of disharmony between feminist objectives and women’s relationship with the ‘formal’ political space<sup>23</sup> is tangible in all of the analyses that follow, evidencing how the mutable, ambiguous quality of women’s ideological agency is borne out in female-authored fiction.

As the foregoing suggests, first-wave feminism in Spain and Portugal is often characterised by its focus on social, rather than political, parity for women. While educational reform was an objective shared by revolutionary and conservative feminists alike, suffrage was undoubtedly the most contentious issue. The lack of any clear consensus on women’s voting rights is illustrated by Burgos’ own views. While she would argue in *La mujer en España*, published in 1906, that ‘ahora darle el derecho de voto es poner un arma peligrosa en manos de un niño’ (1906: 46) as, like many feminists, she believed women were not sufficiently educated to vote, Burgos would

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<sup>23</sup> Drawing on Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff, I refer to governmental or state structures and debates as the ‘formal’ political sphere, using inverted commas as an acknowledgement of the problematic nature of drawing arbitrary distinctions between what does and does not constitute ‘politics’ (1999: 10).

become a staunch advocate of women's suffrage in the later years of her career. In 1921, the year that also saw the publication of Margarita Nelken's *La condición social de la mujer en España* (1975), Burgos would present a signed manifesto to the Cortes, demanding the vote for women (Bieder, 2018: 178; Guallart, 2011: 139; Nash, 2004: 243).

The shift in Burgos' position charts how feminist thought would evolve in the early decades of the century and, crucially, alludes to the tensions between two conceptions of feminism: difference (or relational) and equality (or individual) feminisms. As Karen Offen explains, while difference feminism typically focuses on 'women's rights *as women* (defined principally by their childbearing and/or nurturing capacities) in relation to men' (2000: 22), equality feminism 'emphasizes more abstract concepts of individual human rights and celebrates the quest for personal independence (or autonomy) in all aspects of life, while downplaying, deprecating, or dismissing as insignificant all socially defined roles and minimizing discussion of sex-linked qualities or contributions, including childbearing' (2000: 22). Rather than framing the two as distinct, independent phenomena, Joyce Tolliver rightly notes that difference and equality feminisms should be considered in relation to 'a continuum rather than a dichotomy' (2011: 251), a point that is illustrated by Burgos' rationale for women's right to vote, which she outlines in *La mujer moderna en sus derechos*: 'Las mujeres que interesan por cuestiones de moralidad, de higiene, de educación y pacifismo, saben bien que necesitan reclamar el sufragio, no por vano orgullo, sino para tener medios de trabajar en mejorar el porvenir' (1927: 264-5). My approach to literary analysis in this study – reading the works principally as manifestations of socio-political debate – complements the need for a more nuanced understanding of the pluralism of feminist thought within this geographical and temporal focus as contextualising our

interpretation of feminism is, as Gisela Bock and Susan James have convincingly argued, a productive means of ‘reaching beyond the dichotomy equality/difference’ (1992: 3).

The question of suffrage is particularly pertinent to this study as it encapsulates women’s unstable, ambiguous and ultimately temporary engagement with the ‘formal’ political domain; a theme that arises in all of the chapters, and exemplifies the mutable, eclectic nature of feminist thought that is identified in the analyses that follow. The interconnectedness of women’s social and political parity, which is implied by Burgos’ defence of female suffrage as a logical consequence of women’s supposed interests in morality and hygiene, suggests a displacement of the hegemonic gendered binary of female/domestic and male/political. Adelaide Cabete, who founded A Liga with Castro Osório, would frame her defence of women’s suffrage in a similar vein. In ‘A mulher na politica’, an article she published in *Almanach das Senhoras* in 1912, Cabete presents the traditionally feminine sphere of the home as a microcosm of the nation, arguing that, when considered in this light, women’s right to vote does not necessarily disrupt socially constructed roles for women and men:

Se a politica é, como se diz, a sciencia de bem governar os povos, parece que o assumpto deve interessar á mulher, como parte integrante, que é, do corpo social.

É a mulher que, de ordinario, governa a casa.

E governando-a bem, da justiça, seria que as suas aptidões e experiencia fossem aproveitadas no governo da nação, conjunto de muitas casas.

(1912: 151)

The arguments put forth by Burgos and Cabete illustrate how feminists, both unconsciously and strategically, capitalised on the intersection of the domestic space and the political domain as a means of carving a place for women in the public space at a time debates surrounding women's ideological autonomy were heightened. The manner and the means through which women could contribute to socio-political discourse, therefore, became a fundamental, shared feminist objective that surpassed state, linguistic and cultural divides.

The social paradigms of the 'angel of the hearth' and the 'new woman' are a productive means of summarising the socio-political backdrop and introducing the literary context of the present enquiry as they encapsulate the nexus of socio-political and fictional narrative that is central to this study. The 'angel of the hearth', referred to as 'ángel del hogar' in Spanish and 'anjo do lar' in Portuguese, was an ultra-conservative image of womanhood that promoted a model of female behaviour that encompassed domesticity, chastity, patience and subservience, and was popularised through literature, periodicals and (socio-)political discourse (see, for example, Aldaraca, 1991; Fuentes Peris, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2003: 30-6; Nash, 1999; Scott, 2007; Urruela, 2005). Women's rightful place, in accordance with this belief, was in the private sphere of the home, and any attempt to contest, reconsider or disrupt traditional gender norms was considered not only harmful to society, but wholly unnatural. The extent to which the 'angel of the hearth' was instrumental in shaping societal expectation and justifying women's legal inferiority is best illustrated by the fact that it would be strategically appropriated by the Salazar and Franco dictatorships to advocate conservative gender roles when women would, once more, be segregated to the domestic domain. The 'new woman', known as 'la mujer nueva' in Spanish and 'mulher nova' in Portuguese, represented the antithesis of the 'angel'; an independent,

intelligent and professionally successful woman who would enjoy the same rights and freedoms as men (Jago, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 2003: 36-46; Nash, 1999: 32; Osório de Castro, 2004).

While the ‘angel’ embodies the social subordination and legal slavery imposed on women by hegemonic gender norms, the ‘new woman’ represented the increased opportunities and rights for which many first-wave feminists fought. As Lynn C. Purkey notes, specifically in relation to Spain, the contrast between these constructs of womanhood ‘was indicative of the change from the nineteenth-century woman who is defined by her relationships within the family to a modern twentieth-century woman engaged in a quest for identity’ (2013: 110). Although Purkey describes the contrast of the two as a ‘dichotomy’ (2013: 110), the summary above of the socio-political context(s) would suggest that drawing such arbitrary, rigid categorisations is equivocal, deceptive and unproductive. While the turn of the century offers a convenient way of charting a shift in public perception, which is not wholly inaccurate, the tension(s) between feminism and women’s suffrage and the overlap of equality and difference feminisms in early twentieth-century Iberia implies the need for a more illustrative media of engaging with the mutable conception of female agency. Female-authored fiction, arguably, would prove an effective media, as the immanently elastic, interpretative quality of fiction – specifically its ability to encapsulate nuances and paradoxes – affords women an alternative public forum through which they can assert their ideological agency.

### **The Politics of Women’s Writing in Early Twentieth-Century Spain and Portugal**

Against a backdrop of women’s emancipation, political reform and increased literacy rates in Spain and Portugal, the scene was set for a boom in female-authored fiction.

Catherine Davies deems the 1920s and 1930s in particular ‘fertile ground’ for Spanish women writers (1998: 108), while in relation to Portugal, Cláudia Pazos Alonso observes a ‘direct correlation between a society’s developments and the appearance of women writers within the society’ (1996: 24). Accordingly, critics have noted how seismic shifts in the social and political climate inspired a surge of politically-motivated writings by women in Spain (Johnson, 2003: 276; Kirkpatrick, 2003: 28) and Portugal (Ferreira, 2001: 129). Increased educational and professional opportunities meant that women were able to produce, read and purchase literature as never before. In Spain, an upsurge in short pamphlet-style novellas paved the way for female authors to make a living from writing, while Anne Cova credits Castro Osório with establishing her own publishing house (Cova, 2011: 371). Literary salons afforded wealthy, well-connected women a means of engaging with the cultural sphere, as the development of women’s ideological and creative autonomy became interchangeable and interconnected.<sup>24</sup> This section provides an overview of the critical and social contexts of women’s writing in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal in order to clarify the critical approach.

Given the interdisciplinary, transnational and multilingual nature of this feminist literary study, this research makes an important contribution to two distinct critical fields: the burgeoning field of Iberian Studies and feminist literary criticism. As Robert Patrick Newcomb outlines, scholars working in Iberian Studies centre their efforts on exploring how ‘peninsular literary and cultural studies might be reimagined, and reinvigorated, by placing the Spanish and Portuguese canons into critical dialogue with each other’ (2015: 196). In addition to *A New History of Iberian Feminisms*, a sociological study that consciously situates itself within an Iberian Studies critical

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<sup>24</sup> João Esteves observes how, from the end of the nineteenth century, literary salons in Portugal would play ‘an influential role in the intellectual development and advancement of women in Portuguese society’ (2018: 106), while salons in Spain, notably the Lyceum Club founded in 1926, ‘played a significant role in developing a site of intellectual practice and collective participation for women’ (Leggott, 2008a: 95; also see Cole, 2000: 11-2; 16; 173; Leggott, 2008b: 148).

context (2018: 3), another recent publication in the field, *The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies*, is dedicated to critical analyses of cultural production, stating its aim to ‘promote a more comparative mode’ in peninsular studies (2017: xxiii). The past decade has witnessed a wealth of studies that have contributed to the methodological reformulation of this constantly evolving discipline, including *Reading Iberia: Theory/History/Identity* (Buffery, Davis and Hooper, 2007), *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula* (Aseguinolaza, González, Domínguez, 2010), and *Looking at Iberia: A Comparative European Perspective* (Isasi Pérez and Fernandes, 2013), while the comparable socio-political backdrops in Spain and Portugal have invited comparative literary approaches, with *Legacies of War and Dictatorship in Contemporary Portugal and Spain* (Ribeiro de Menezes and O’Leary, 2011) and Gabriel Paquette’s study of the link between liberalism and literary romanticism in the two countries (2015).

The bringing together of Spanish and Portuguese literature is not a twenty-first century phenomenon. Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho argued in 1912 that Spanish(-language) and Portuguese literatures share a common heritage: ‘As duas litteraturas, que por tantos seculos se confundiram, que se separaram depois como *irmãs inimigas*, tiveram ambas uma hora de esplendor, que intimamente as uniu’ (1913: 163; emphasis added). Observing the historical links between Spanish and Portuguese writing, Vaz de Carvalho argues that the turn of the century was a productive era for literature in both countries. Though she does not reference women’s writing explicitly, her personification of Portuguese and Spanish literatures as ‘irmãs’, given ‘literature’ is feminine in Romance languages, evokes the question of gender and, retrospectively at least, taps into the parallels between female-authored fiction in Spain and Portugal that form the basis of this analysis.



A review of recent work in Iberian Studies raises two important methodological and ethical concerns that this study aims to account for. The first is how, despite critics' best intentions, Castilian-language output still dominates this field, as evidenced by the fact that, of the fifty chapters in *The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies* (2017), only one foregrounds Portuguese cultural production, Isabel Capeloa Gil's analysis of film during the Second World War (2017: 501-14). While the volume offers a wealth of thought-provoking comparative analyses that include Portuguese works, the relative dearth of English-language criticism of Portuguese literary studies, particularly in comparison to Castilian works, at least in my view, makes clear the need for critics to consciously confront this critical lacuna by providing sufficient scope to analyses of Portuguese works. As Joan Ramon Resina argues in *Del hispanismo a los estudios ibéricos*, this concern is one fundamental objective of his disciplinary reformulation of Iberian Studies: '[T]he rise of Hispanic studies condemned non-Castilian cultures to the outer darkness' (2013: 2). My decision to include two Portuguese authors in this study, along with one Spanish and one Catalan writer, is an attempt to account for the continued dominance of Spanish-language output in Iberian Studies, aiming, insofar as is possible, to provide a transnational peninsular study that does not relegate Portuguese works to an afterthought.

The second point of contention with recent critical output in Iberian literary studies is the absence of female-authored literature. Again, *The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies* (2017) is a case in point, as only two analyses centre on women's writing. Just as the dearth in English-language critical analyses of Portuguese literature denotes the need for a conscious effort by critics to account for this relative absence, so too is there a continued need for feminist literary critics to dedicate their efforts to female-authored fiction. The need for further study of Portuguese female authors has

been deemed a ‘political urgency’ by Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos Alonso (2011: 14; also see Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2009: 180; Sadlier, 1989), while Emilie Bergmann and Richard Herr argue that a lack of critical attention to Spanish women’s writing has created the ‘erroneous impression that women have been literary outsiders throughout the century’ (2007: 2).<sup>25</sup> Even when socio-political progress and educational reforms counterpoised the personal, pragmatic and cultural limitations that impeded female creativity, women writers were still subordinate to their male counterparts. Feminist scholarship also observes how relatively few female authors from this period are well known today (Johnson, 2002: 42; Leggot, 2008: 13-4; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2009: 171), or ‘canonised’ (Holmes, 1996: xii; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011: 208). The predominantly male literary canons in early twentieth-century Spain<sup>26</sup> and Portugal<sup>27</sup> offer one reason that many examples of women’s writing from this geographical and historical context remain overlooked.

Hispanic and Lusitanist feminist criticism has noted that the nature of canon formation means that highest value is reserved for works written by men (see Brown and Johnson, 1997: 50). In ‘Uma história na História’, a seminal work on women writers in twentieth-century Portugal, Chatarina Edfeldt addresses the implications of this bias, concluding that a lack of socio-political and literary context, the view that women’s writing was homogeneous, and a disregard of texts with a feminist argument meant that women writers pre-1950 were ‘quase apagadas’ (2006: 149). Importantly, Edfeldt also notes that women writers were rarely associated with literary movements, and this negatively impacted the formation of a female literary lineage. This is reiterated by Owen and Pazos Alonso in relation to the *Orpheu* or *Presença* circles in Portugal

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<sup>25</sup> The concern of Bergman and Herr is also applicable to Portugal as *100 Livros Portugueses de Século Vinte* only includes one female-authored text before 1950, Irene Lisboa’s *Solidão* from 1939 (Pinto do Amaral, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> See: Arkininstall, 2009: 13; Bellver, 2001: 11; Brown, 1991: 14; Hart, 1993: 3.

<sup>27</sup> See: Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011: 19-20; Pazos Alonso, 2007: 611.

(2011: 70)<sup>28</sup> and Emilie L. Bergmann argues the case too of Spain and its *generaciones* (2007: 2). Critical analyses have been conducted and bio-bibliographical resources have been compiled, therefore, with the aim of reclaiming the ‘forgotten’ women writers of Spain<sup>29</sup> and Portugal;<sup>30</sup> a collective feminist initiative that Owen and Pazos Alonso refer to as the ‘archaeological retrieval of lost women’s work’ (Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011: 14). The anti-feminist legislation and literary censorship enforced by the authoritarian, patriarchal dictatorships that would dominate the political landscape in twentieth-century Spain and Portugal make the ‘recovery’ of these authors all the more necessary.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of promoting women writers is not just a concern for present-day feminist literary scholars. Aubrey Bell’s 1922 study of Portuguese literature, for instance, observes how relatively few women writers or female-authored texts form part of the national canon (1922: 324), while Carmen de Burgos recognises in ‘Literatura portuguesa: las escritoras’, an article published in (the Spanish-language) *Cosmópolis* in 1921, the existence of ‘un interesante grupo de mujeres, poco estudiado, cuya obra diseminada se hace difícil recoger’ (1921: 75). Pioneering efforts to collate, catalogue

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<sup>28</sup> Though Irene Lisboa was writing poetry during the same period, Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos Alonso observe that her work ‘is very different indeed from that of both her immediate predecessors (the *Orpheu* generation) and her peers (the *Presença* generation)’ (2011: 72).

<sup>29</sup> See: Brown, 1991; Cole, 2000; Conde, 1954, 1967, 1971; Fox-Lockert, 1979; Galerstein, 1986; Pérez, 1988. The website *The Atlantis Project: Women and Words in Spain, 1890-1936*, compiled by Kirsty Hooper, is also a helpful resource.

<sup>30</sup> See: Edfeldt, 2006, *et. al* 2009; Ferreira, 2002: 124; Flores, Duarte and Collares Moreira, 2009; Lopes de Oliveira, 1983. The online Portuguese blog, *Silêncios e memórias*, is also an excellent online resource. Though not expressly focused on women writers, Ana Barradas’ aptly titled *Dicionário de mulheres rebeldes* (2006) and *Dicionário no feminino (séculos XIX-XX)* (Osório de Castro and Esteves, 2005) are also informative references.

<sup>31</sup> Censorship during the Franco dictatorship in Spain effectively ‘weeded out prewar feminist writing’ (Johnson and Bieder, 2017: 2), as strict controls and the influence of the Church impacted what type of literature could be published (Davies, 1998: 186). Patricia O’Byrne’s analysis of post-War writings takes into account how censorship was particularly detrimental for women’s writing, as she aims to highlight the ‘importance of post-war women novelists, especially those in danger of being forgotten’ (2014: 22). In Portugal, a combination of sexist male critics, the fact that female-authored work was rarely reprinted and a conservative social climate which prioritised women’s domestic role over creative potential placed social and practical constraints on women writers during the dictatorship (see Edfelt, 2006; Ferreira, 2000; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011: 70; 206).

and disseminate female-authored fiction from the early decades of the twentieth century in Portugal include Nuno Catarino Cardoso's *Poetisa portuguesas* (1917), *Escritoras portuguesas* by Tereza Leitão de Barros (1924), the first history of women writers in Portugal, Albino Forjaz de Sampaio's *As melhores páginas de literatura feminina (poesia)* (1935) and, *Livros escritos por mulheres*, a collection published by the CNMP after an exhibition of female-authored works in January 1947. In Spain, key works include *Las escritoras españolas* by Margarita Nelken (1930) and *La novela femenina* (1930), a collection of short stories and extracts by Spanish women writers (including Graupera). As well as offering a medium for the promotion and development of feminist discourses, women's magazines and newspapers proved another important outlet for female-authored creative writing. Two editions of the Portuguese periodical *Alma Feminina*, for instance, include a list of female-authored works entitled 'Biblioteca Feminina' (1923) and 'Biblioteca Feminista' (1925) and the magazine *Eva* includes short stories by women (including Maria O'Neill and Emília de Sousa Costa), while the Spanish publications *Acción* and the women's supplement of *Las Noticias* also include female-authored fiction.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, it is of central importance to this study to focus on female authors who have received little or no critical attention. Though key examples of feminist literary criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century centred on 'feminine writing' (or *écriture féminine*) in Spain (see Ballesteros, 1994; Ciplijauskaitė, 1988; Redondo Goicoechea, 2001: 20) and Portugal (Allegro de Magalhães, 1987, 1995), this thesis, in line with Owen and Pazos Alonso's *Antigone's Daughters?*, is not interested

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<sup>32</sup> Articles about female authors, readers and feminist fiction are also found in the press. Examples include 'Escritores y libros feministas' (1923) in the 'Suplemento Femenino' of *Las Noticias*, and 'A mulher e a literatura' in *Alma Feminina* (Carmo, 1936).

in 'sexing the text' (2011: 16-7).<sup>33</sup> Rather the objective is to explore how female authors voiced women's ambiguous, and often paradoxical, relationship with the public sphere in their works, with a view to augment understanding of female-authored literary history and first-wave feminism in Spain and Portugal. While the decision to focus on female-authored fiction carries the risk of unduly attributing homogenous characteristics to women's writers, a concern that is noted by feminist critics,<sup>34</sup> one benefit of a multilingual, transnational approach, as observed by Edfeldt, is that it highlights how female-authored fiction establishes a dialogue with hegemonic patriarchal norms that surpasses national borders (2006: 137). By considering the selected authors and works in a national, Iberian and feminist literary context, therefore, the study aims to highlight how the potential of fiction to simulataneously reflect, critique and hypothesise afforded women a medium through which they could reorientate and (re)imagine the female experience in the public space at a time when debates about women's ideological agency were heightened.

Before summarizing my methodological approach, it is worth pausing to consider one key critical assumption that underpins this thesis and, arguably, feminist literary studies more broadly: the consciousness-raising potential of fiction. That is not to suggest, of course, that literature that is not overtly propagandistic or has a less

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<sup>33</sup> The Spanish communist and writer María Teresa León (1932-1988) provides an interesting take on 'women's writing' in an interview from 1935. When asked whether '[l]a literatura femenina' can be distinguished from 'la literatura masculina', she insists not but explains that, as the majority of canonical writers are male, 'la literatura española escribe con tendencias masculinas' (cited in Marrast, 1984: 60-1). For León, thanks to the great strides made in relation to women's emancipation in early twentieth-century Spain, '[n]uestra literatura es una literatura sin sexo' (cited in Marrast, 1984: 60-1). Though León's argument is overly idealised in relation to the extent (and permanence) of women's emancipation in Spain, her argument points to how women's socio-political and creative emancipation are interrelated and, perhaps unconsciously, reflects how male-dominated literary canons shape women's writing.

<sup>34</sup> As Akiko Tsuchiya explains in relation to women writers in post-Franco Spain, '[t]he privileging of a stable category of "woman" – and, by extension, any essentialistic notion of women's writing – must be questioned in light of the diversity of voices and visions characterizing women of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and class origins, as well as sexualities' (2003: 215). Hilary Owen observes how some female writers in Portugal prefer to avoid what she terms 'ghettoisation' of women's writing (1996: 3), while Carol Maier notes that Spanish women writers are concerned that by being categorized as a 'female' author, their work may be 'trivialised' (Maier, 1990: 21).

tangible ideological agenda lacks a political subtext or the potential to influence the reader in such a way that it can feed into public debate; quite to the contrary, in fact, it could be argued that less formulaic texts or works that unexpectedly subvert generic convention are more engaging and therefore make a greater impact on the reader. It is for this reason that the analyses give due consideration to the literary, as well as political, conventions of the selected works. A prerequisite for all ideologically-motivated fiction, of course, is its ability to attract as wide a readership as possible, which points to two important considerations for my analyses: the readership and popular appeal of the selected texts. For reasons I will now outline, both of these issues are as problematic as they are significant.

Turning firstly to probable readers, it is extremely difficult to establish any satisfactory conclusions about who was buying and reading the works selected for close analysis here; a common complaint amongst critics of early twentieth-century Spanish women writers (see, for example: Labanyi, 2007: 76; Louis, 2002: 97). While any details about readership that can be determined or inferred are considered in the chapters, the fact that all of the authors published numerous literary works over careers that spanned several decades would suggest that they were profitable for publishers and, henceforth, were relatively successful. The fact the authors continued to publish would, furthermore, imply that they believed that their fiction was having the desired effect, which points to the focus of my study: how these four women – as writers and activists – used fiction to conceptualise and disseminate their views. As will be seen in the analyses, a consideration for the authors' *envisaged* reader based on close readings of the works helps develop our understanding of the ideologies and aims that underpin their fiction. The second point is that the popular appeal of the authors and texts was a crucial component of their politicised literary output. This raises the question of literary

or aesthetic ‘quality’; an abstract, subjective qualification that is, in part, to blame for women writers’ exclusion from literary histories. As Ann Heilmann recognises in her analysis of English feminist fiction, ‘high’ culture is gendered male, with ‘supposedly “masculine” (serious, aesthetic, form-orientated, important art)’ privileged over the “feminine” (popular, polemical, content-orientated, inessential’ (2000: 7). Indeed, Tania Modleski’s seminal examination of the popular romance, Gothic and soap opera genres, she explains, was motivated by the fact that, despite their popularity, ‘very few critics have taken them seriously enough to study them in any detail’ (1984: 11). The eclectic array of genres that arise in the chapters – including the romance plot, but also ranging from socialist realism to the *Bildungsroman* – indicates not only the broad scope of this research, but also a concerted effort to avoid limiting or steering the discussion based on a pre-determined notion of how or where feminist beliefs can be made manifest in literature.

As the foregoing indicates, this research is positioned at the intersection of Iberian and feminist literary studies, offering a female-centric approach to the male-dominated critical field of Iberian Studies that exemplifies what Silvia Bermúdez and Roberta Johnson term the ‘complex web’ (2018: 7) of feminist consciousness in Iberia. Rather than an attempt to blur important distinctions between the women’s movements in Spain, Portugal and, indeed, Catalonia (Graupera was Catalan), my defence of Iberian Studies is a critical acknowledgement of the illuminating, productive points of enquiry that arise through comparative studies that highlight commonalities and shed light on the shared experiences of Spanish and Portuguese women. The benefit of narrowing the scope of this research to the Iberian Peninsula, as demonstrated in the Introduction thus far, is that it underlines how these debates manifest uniquely in female-authored fiction in response to the comparable socio-political contexts,

interrelated feminist movements and male-dominated literary canons in Spain and Portugal. This context, I would argue, invites a *comparative*, not homogenising, approach.<sup>35</sup> With this in mind, I am conscious only to use the adjective ‘Iberian’ when it is my expressed aim to highlight points of comparison; the impact of the Catholic Church on the women’s movements would be one good example of this. Similarly, while focusing on a specific historical period is necessary if we are to appreciate the impact of legal and political systems on the development of feminist debates and activity as transcribed in female-authored fiction, the analyses also take into account a more historically comprehensive perspective of feminist thought and women’s writing in the Peninsula as required. By exploring how socio-political reform and first-wave feminist debates are inflected in female-authored fiction, this study traces a female, and feminist, literary heritage in Spain and Portugal that makes an important contribution to feminist criticism and Iberian Studies and aims to facilitate and promote future research.

### **Fictionalising Feminisms: Selection Process, Chapter Summaries and Critical Approach**

This study is, in its essence, a literary historical account, based on the inherently symbiotic nature of women’s writing and women’s emancipation which aims to highlight how an examination of non-canonical female-authored fiction can develop our understanding of how women used literature as a tool for engaging in (all forms of) political debate in early twentieth-century Iberia. Returning to Edfeldt’s examination of women writers and the Portuguese literary canon highlights how focusing on female-authored texts that engage with political matters is particularly key. Considering various

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<sup>35</sup> Santiago Pérez Isasi provides an illuminating discussion of the extent to which we can consider Iberian Studies ‘comparative’ in ‘Iberian Studies: A State of the Art and Future Perspectives’ (2013: 11-26), given the field centres on ‘the consistent and deliberate consideration of the Iberian Peninsula as an interconnected, multilingual and multicultural political, identitarian and literary polysystem’ (2013: 11).



factors that contribute to women's exclusion from the Portuguese literary canon, Edfeldt concludes that works by female authors who were politically active – in leftist and/or feminist politics – was particularly in danger of being neglected or misrepresented:

‘[P]ode ser detector que o discurso histórico-literário dominante evidencia um *blind spot* em relação aos conteúdos das reivindicações políticas desta literatura’ (2006: 135).

When such women are included in literary histories, furthermore, Edfeldt observes that details of their socio-political activity are rarely acknowledged or overly generalised in literary histories and, consequently, their works and ideas are considered non-consequential:

Quando o discurso histórico-literário está a reduzir e negligenciar o conteúdo político desta literatura, transmite a ideia de que se tratam de textos sobre uma determinada temática, produzidos por e para mulheres, não tendo, por isso, interesse justificado para o discurso dominante.

(2006: 137)

The decision to select four diverse authors for close analysis in this thesis is informed by Edfeldt's observations here. Rather than include writers who broadly share the same ideological convictions, such as socialism or anarchism, or conduct a comparative analysis that centres on a particular theme, such as divorce or education – both of which would lead to enlightening, productive areas for research – my aim here is to identify and examine non-canonical women writers voicing *their* beliefs through fiction. In line with Edfeldt, non-canonical is understood as women writers whose fiction has not attracted *significant* critical attention; meaning both extensive and detailed. The eclectic array of subject matter and various interpretations of feminism

that arise in the Chapters should therefore be understood as an effort to avoid the over-generalisation or misrepresentation of female writers that Edfeldt recognises as detrimental to recuperating a female literary tradition. Drawing primarily on the feminist approaches of Davies' *Spanish Women's Writing, 1849-1996* (1998) and Hilary Owen's *Portuguese Women's Writing, 1972-1986: Reincarnations of a Revolution* (2000), this thesis firmly grounds the analyses in the socio-political and historical contexts in which the works were published.<sup>36</sup> Owen's study is one example of Portuguese literary criticism that explores the relationship between socio-political progress and female-authored fiction in Portugal,<sup>37</sup> as critics note a surge in women's writing from the 1970s onwards (see Kauffman and Klobucka, 1997: 27). Similarly, the post-dictatorship years in Spain saw a boom in women's writing,<sup>38</sup> and scholars have observed female authors' fictionalised accounts of socio-political change.<sup>39</sup> The study, therefore, makes an important contribution to feminist literary criticism of Spanish and Portuguese authors throughout the twentieth century by tracing the ideological and creative foremothers to the women writers who engaged with the transitions to democracy and the evolution of second-wave feminism in their works.

The initial stages of the research conducted for this study involved extensive archival research in order to find works by authors not known to the majority of critics who, to varying degrees, were all active in public life. Without seeking to suggest an arbitrary distinction between an author's socio-political activism and literature, as the two are undoubtedly related, this outline does indicate that the selected authors were not

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<sup>36</sup> While the aims and methodology of this feminist study point to new historicism, the literary theory that centres on exploring intellectual thought through literature, feminists have criticised new historicism's crude approach to sex and gender (see, for example, Fleissner, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Newton, 1989; Salkheld, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example: Macedo, 2009: 22; Moers, 1986: 159; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011.

<sup>38</sup> See: Brown, 1991: 13; Hart, 1993: 1; Nichols, 1992: 17; Tsuchiya, 2003: 212.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example: Davies, 1991: 108; Prádanos, 2013: 209; Weaver, 2013.

entirely dependent on fiction as a means of advocating their views. While the chapters include key biographical details, a brief overview of the authors is helpful here.

Matilde de la Torre was a lifelong socialist and feminist who would become one of the first Spanish *diputadas* when she was elected for the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) in 1933. Born in Cantabria, De la Torre represented Oviedo as a politician. She publically campaigned for workers' and women's rights throughout her life, and would dedicate her political career to promoting and facilitating women's involvement with socialist initiatives. Despite her relative anonymity nowadays, her name pervades contemporary press commentaries on pivotal events in the political history of the Spanish left, most notably her tireless efforts to defend the striking miners during the Asturian Revolution of 1934 and her determined defence of the Republic during the Civil War. All of De la Torre's written output is political. From her first publication *Jardín de damas curiosas* (1918/19), which is an epistolary novel that overtly advocates feminist reform, she would go on to publish several works, including a political history of Spain, *El ágora* (1930), an autobiographical account of the Spanish Civil War, *Mares en la sombra: estampas de Asturias* (1940), and *El banquete de Saturno: novela social* (1931), a sensational account of a socialist revolution which forms the basis of the analysis in Chapter One. Other than a short-lived marriage to a cousin who resided in Peru, which ended in annulment after just eight days, De la Torre remained single and never bore children. She fled to Mexico during the Civil War, where she would remain until her death in 1946, and would not receive the same levels of posthumous critical interest as her better-remembered friends and colleagues, such as Dolores Ibárruri and María Martínez Sierra, despite the important contributions she made to socialist and feminist activism.

Ángela Graupera began her writing career by working as a war correspondent for *Las Noticias* during the First World War and Greco-Turkish conflict and, thanks to her longstanding professional collaboration with the anarchist magazine *La Revista Blanca*, published over forty novellas throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The majority of her fiction adheres to the propagandistic, formulaic models that characterised the *La Novela Ideal* and *La Novela Libre* collections; typically short, uncomplicated narratives that packaged anarchist ideals for a growing reading public. Of the figures examined in this thesis, Graupera is the most enigmatic and allusive, as little information about her personal or professional life is known other than what can be inferred from press articles published during her lifetime. We do know that she spent most of her life in her native Catalonia and that, like so many progressives, intellectuals and revolutionaries, appears to go into hiding during the Civil War. Despite the anarchist politics of *La Revista Blanca*, the biographical details of Graupera's life and political involvement that are available reveal she identified most closely with socialist causes and Catalan nationalist movements. She was particularly concerned with improving women's relationship with the formal political domain, and her activism centred on Catalan women's social, legal and political emancipation; exemplified by the two manifestos she signed defending the political parity of Catalan women in 1934: 'Manifest a les dones de Catalunya' and 'Un manifest a les dones d'esquerra'. Given her final publications were printed in 1936 – the same year all references to her in the press cease – it would be logical to conclude that she died in the conflict, becoming another forgotten martyr of the republicans' struggle.

Maria O'Neill was a committed republican, feminist and socialist who had a successful career as a writer, publisher and editor. While she lacked the opportunity to articulate her beliefs through formal political channels, reflecting women's exclusion

from electoral politics under the Portuguese Republic, O'Neill made use of other public for a to advocate her feminist ideals. She directed the women's publication *Almanach das Senhoras* from 1911 to 1925, during which time the publication became focused on disseminating an expressly feminist agenda, and advocated women's social and political parity in a series of public lectures. The most radical is her 1928 speech 'O voto às mulheres', in which, as the title indicates, she unequivocally defends women's suffrage, apparently galvanised rather than deterred by the increasingly traditionalist, conservative Ditadura Militar that had come to power in 1926. She is also listed as a member of the Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portuguesas (CNMP) from 1927, further evidencing her emphatic, public opposition to the patriarchal politics of the regime. O'Neill's extensive fictional output includes children's stories, poems and narrative prose. Of her diverse, eclectic writings, it is in her novels that O'Neill engages with feminist concerns most explicitly. Love, marriage and relationships are a reoccurring subject matter in her fiction, reflecting both O'Neill's focus on the female experience and her own torrid personal life, which included several marriages, affairs and an illegitimate child. She died in 1932 on a return voyage from Brazil, and is mainly remembered by critics as the grandmother of Alexandre O'Neill, an author whose contribution to Portuguese letters is unquestionable. The contribution made by Maria O'Neill to Portuguese literature and socio-political debates has, however, been excluded from literary histories.

The career of Emília de Sousa Costa spanned over four decades, during which time she became a leading figure in the fight for women's access to education. She gave numerous public lectures advocating reform, founded a charity to allow underprivileged girls to attend school and worked as a teacher in Lisbon. Of the authors examined in this thesis, Sousa Costa was the most vocal advocate of feminism and, at the same time, had

the most conservative views. She held a firm belief that women should dedicate themselves to family life, a stance she promoted in key writings published throughout her long career: *A mulher no lar* (1916), *Ideias antigas de mulher moderna* (1923), *Olha a maldade das mulheres* (1923) and *Na sociedade e na família* (1937). Through these texts, which read as conduct manuals, Sousa Costa romanticises women's role within the family and disseminates her feminist principles to a wide female readership, arguing that women deserved to be recognised as equal intellectual and moral beings to men. In particular, Sousa Costa vehemently defended women's role as educators, which she considered a natural extension of the maternal, nurturing duties. The majority of her vast fictional output was made up of children's stories, many of which she dedicated to her own children and grandchildren. The popular fiction Sousa Costa published was aimed at a female readership and manifests the same tensions between reform and tradition that characterise her feminist politics. Since her death in 1959, she has mainly been remembered for her efforts to reform women's access to education. The significance of Sousa Costa's contribution to the women's movement in early twentieth-century Portugal is illustrated by the fact that a commemorative stamp was dedicated to her to celebrate the centenary of the First Republic in October 2010. Nevertheless, her writings have lacked an in-depth critical discussion, meaning the socio-political currency of her fiction has yet to be fully explored.

As these overviews demonstrate, one of the most innovative features of this study is the diversity of the selected writers. Although the authors selected for inclusion centred their efforts on a range of initiatives, they all maintained a shared interest in promoting women's emancipation and, critically, all capitalised on the medium of fiction as a means of projecting the female experience onto (male) ideological discourse and shaping a place for women in the public space at a practical and theoretical level.

By focusing on women who had access to public fora, the study aims to establish why these women considered fiction a useful tool for political engagement, exploring why, in certain circumstances, literature may be preferable to non-fiction writings, public addresses or direct activism. The varied life and works of the authors speak of a conscious effort to mirror the plurality of feminist thought and avoid artificially homogenising female-authored fiction. By combining a comprehensive, broadly feminist, ideological approach with a narrow temporal focus, I aim to illustrate how literature afforded female activists the flexibility to transcribe women's ambiguous, mutable and tenuous relationship with the public/political space, which manifests itself uniquely at this juncture in Iberian history, charting the complexity, evolution and paradoxes of first-wave feminist thought that are borne out in female-authored fiction.

Despite my efforts to avoid reinforcing a nation-state model of literary analysis, in line with contemporary critical research, not least of all Iberian Studies, a clear distinction does arise. While O'Neill and Sousa Costa (both Portuguese) focus more explicitly on feminist concerns in their fiction, an overt (leftist) socio-economic commentary is evident in the works of De la Torre (Spanish) and Graupera (Catalan). Comparing the works of Spanish authors María Martínez Sierra (1874-1974) and María Teresa León (1903-1988) with the Portuguese Angelina Vidal (1847-1917) and Maria Veleda (1871-1955) further exemplifies the seeming reluctance of Portuguese women writers to engage with the 'formal' political landscape through literature. Although all of the women were active in leftist politics, all socialists except for Teresa León who was a communist, socio-economic discourse is only evident in the Spanish writers' works.<sup>40</sup> The findings of this study reflect the apparent absence of socio-economic

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<sup>40</sup> Critics note, for instance, the left-wing themes in the works of Martínez Sierra (Blanco, 2003: 19) and Teresa León (Carazo, 2003: 139; Celma, 2003: 150), while Veleda's only fictional output, *Casa assombrada* (1923), centres on spiritualism and the examples of Vidal's poetry that could be uncovered did not engage with socialist issues, despite the fact she published prolifically in *A Voz do Operário*.

politics in Portuguese women's writing. Rather than consider this distinction a hindrance, however, it could be taken as evidence that the socio-political climate shapes female-authored fiction, as it mirrors how suffrage was granted in Spain but not in Portugal. While I elaborate on this contrast in the Conclusion, considering what it means for feminist approaches to Iberian Studies, it is worth highlighting before examining the selected texts. The chapters are ordered with the dates of publication in mind so that they chart a shift in mood from the optimism with which feminists greeted the Republican governments to a sense of resigned compromise, while the first and final analyses 'book end' the study in such a way as to reinforce how female activists with diametrically opposing views on suffrage could make use of fiction to engage with feminist debates in a similar fashion. Rather than organise the works chronologically, which would be impractical when considering more than one work by the same author, as is the case in Chapters Two and Three, the analyses follow a gradual move from a more explicit engagement with 'formal' political structures to a form of public engagement that relates to the domestic space. Juxtaposing the selected authors' works in one corpus denotes how this the socio-political climates in both countries became increasingly conservative, reactionary and patriarchal; an ideological shift that is tangible in women's writing from this period. For the reasons indicated above, this means that the Spanish authors are examined first.

Chapter One centres on De la Torre's novel *El banquete de Saturno* (1931), a curious, multifaceted work that details the rise and fall of a socialist government in Spain. De la Torre, I argue, uses the novel as a testing ground to highlight the principal failings of socialist doctrine, as she sees it, proposing an alternative version of egalitarian reform to the authoritarian model imposed by the Soviet Union that, unsurprisingly, would benefit from female input. In Chapter Two, I focus principally on



Graupera's *Los rebeldes* (1933), examining how the novella reflects the author's vision for women's role in the social revolution she envisages. The analysis draws on other examples of Graupera's fiction, most notably *La pequeña rebelde* (1933) and *Sacrificio* (1933), to illustrate how the narrative forms part of a broader social and literary project for the author, as she experiments with a variety of literary strategies in an effort to communicate her ideas more effectively. Chapter Three's examination of O'Neill's work also charts the author's attempts to redress or rework her ideas and her literary strategies. Focusing on three of O'Neill's novels, *Drama de ciúme* (1913), *Ilusão desfeita* (1915) and *A víbora* (1930), the analysis argues that reading the works as a trilogy reveals how the author perverts the romance plot as a means of underlining how writing can be both an oppressive and liberating tool for women that, if manipulated correctly, can be an effective public medium. The final chapter centres on Sousa Costa's short story 'Quem tiver filhas no mundo' (1933), published in a collection of the same name, examining how the work reads as a *Bildungsroman* that charts the development of feminist discourse in Portugal. Published the same year that the Estado Novo was officially inaugurated, the work, I argue, can be read as a directive to the women's movement at what was one of the most pivotal moments in its history, encapsulating the resigned compromises and adjustments the feminist movements would have to make to survive under patriarchal, authoritarian regimes.

As this outline suggests, each chapter broadly relates to a specific element of women's emancipation made possible by the Republics: political parity in Chapter One; civil marriage, secularism and abortion legislation in Chapter Two; the divorce law in Chapter Three; and education in Chapter Four. Though this range of topics may appear diverse, it mirrors the plurality of feminists' objectives and indicates the possibility of conducting a productive analysis of women's writing that does not artificially

homogenise female-authored fiction, or the women's movement more generally. Crucially, it provides the necessary scope to examine how the displacement of the gendered public/private dichotomy, made possible by the feminist reforms of the Republics, is tangible in female-authored fiction at this juncture in Spanish and Portuguese history. While the selected texts have little in common in terms of subject matter, genre or style (quite like their authors), they do share two key points of comparison: all of the narratives engage with women's precarious relationship with public discourse and the male-dominated political space; and, critically, all have a dialogic quality that underlines how fiction can compensate or account for the absence of female voices in (all forms of) political discourse. Reading the works within their geographical and historical context, this analysis asks how the selected authors disclose their own socio-political concerns in their fiction, resisting, subverting and reclaiming women's place in the male-dominated public domain.

## Chapter One

# Matilde de la Torre: Sexing Socialism

‘No he conocido nunca espíritu más indomable unido a la más atrayente suavidad femenina, mayor eficacia con más dulzura’

*Una mujer por caminos de España* (1952), María Martínez Sierra (1989: 220-1)

Matilde de la Torre (1887-1946) was one of five female *diputadas* elected to office in the 1933 elections, winning a seat in Oviedo for the Partido Socialista de Obrero Español (PSOE). She first joined the Party in 1931 and would be re-elected as a socialist in the elections of 1936. De la Torre dedicated her political career to workers’ causes, defending the right to strike, supporting unions and championing the working classes in Spain. A vocal critic of fascism and war, she frequently condemned politically-sanctioned violence and oppression and would continue to defend freedom, individual liberty and the socialist cause during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), fleeing to Mexico after the Nationalist victory in 1939, along with many other republicans, where she later died. De la Torre’s lasting legacy would be her efforts to involve women in socialist activism and trade unions. Dedicating much of her political career to this aim, she prioritised the rights of women in the workplace and supported women whose husbands were on strike. A key example occurred in 1934 during the miners’ strike in Asturias. Along with Dolores ‘la Pasionaria’ Ibárruri (1895-1989), a figure who would be remembered in communist folklore for her anti-fascist ‘No pasarán’ speech (1936) during the Civil War, De la Torre collected food and supplies to aid the strikers and offered practical support to the wives and families of striking and imprisoned workers.

In 1933, the year she was elected to the Cortes, De la Torre spoke at a series of events organised by the Juventudes Socialistas to encourage women to vote (Calderón Gutiérrez, 1984: 77) and began co-directing the PSOE's women's section, along with Matilde Cantos (1898-1987) and Matilde Huici (1890-1965), a group known collectively as the 'Three Matildes' (Tavera 2005: 214). As her work with her Party's women's section would suggest, a defining characteristic of De la Torre's political career was her collaboration with her female colleagues. She shared a close personal and professional relationship with María Martínez Sierra (1874-1974),<sup>41</sup> a fellow socialist, and took part in a series of shared initiatives with Ibárruri. From July 1934, for instance, she co-directed the Comité de Mujeres contra la Guerra y el Fascismo with Ibárruri, Martínez Sierra and Isabel Oyarzábal (García, 2013: 21-2) and, from 1937, she presided over the Asociación de Mujeres Antifascistas along with Ibárruri, Cantos and Huici (Tavera, 2005: 212; also see Ibárruri, 1979: 191; Zambrana Moral, 2009: unnumbered). Despite making an important contribution to women's roles in government politics, De la Torre is often overlooked in analyses of leading female

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<sup>41</sup> Critics have noted the close relationship between De la Torre and María Martínez Sierra (Blanco, 2007: 81; Leggot, 2008: 85; Prat, 1994: 12), and evidence of this can be found throughout the 1930s. There were documented incidents of them attending meetings together (*La Libertad*, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1933: 3; *Luz*, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1933: 1; *La Libertad*, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1933: 8; *Nuevo mundo*, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1933: 9; *La Voz*, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1935: 9) and meeting socially (*El Sol*, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1934: 2). Antonina Rodrigo provides a detailed account of correspondence between the two women while in exile following the fall of the Second Republic (1994: 310-3).

figures in early twentieth-century Spain and she is routinely overshadowed by her more famous colleagues.<sup>42</sup>

Her written output has received even less critical attention. De la Torre's writing career is mostly limited to her prolific output in left-wing press, notably *El Socialista*, the paper of the PSOE, *La Libertad* and *Avance*.<sup>43</sup> Her fiction defies categorisation as it includes an eclectic mix of genres, subject matter and media. Notable examples include an epistolary feminist novel, *Jardín de damas curiosas* (1918/19; henceforth *Jardín*),<sup>44</sup> *Don Quijote, rey de España* (1928),<sup>45</sup> a political and cultural history of Spain, *El ágora* (1930), a critical commentary about the Spanish Restoration, and *Mares en la sombra* (1940), a fictionalised autobiography of her experiences during the Civil War. The salient point of contrast between all of these works is her sustained interest in the political and legal structures in Spain, a subject matter that is tackled in various forms in all of De la Torre's literary output. The Spanish literary critics familiar with her writings also make this association in relation to De la Torre's non-fiction<sup>46</sup> and

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example: Aguado, 2005: 132; Álvarez-Uría, 2013: 639, 640; Branciforte, 2009-2010: 47; Capel Martínez, 2007: 39, 2008a: 46, 47, 2012: 28; Delgado and Jerez, 2008: 44; De la Paz, 1993: 74; Domínguez Prats, 2009: 76; García Colmenares, 2010: 54; Gonzalez-Allende, 2010: 83; González Hoyos, 2014: 24; Gutiérrez Bringas, 1989: 322; Lafuente, 2012: unnumbered; Lines, 2015: 26; Luque Muñoz and Solano Fernández, 2008: 35; Mangini, 1995: 29, 34-5, 77; Monterde García, 2010: 276; Nash, 1998: 374, 2003: 536; Plaza Agudo, 2011: 55; Saiz Viadero, 2006: 3; Sánchez Blanco, 2013: 120; Suárez, 2002: 46; Trueba Mira, 2002: 183; Villalaín-García, 2012: unnumbered. Alpert (2007) omits De la Torre entirely, while other critics observe how little has been published on her life and works (Domínguez Prats, 1998: 1237; Severiano Delgado Cruz, 2008: 12). Frances Lannon mentions De la Torre in a footnote along with other elected *diputadas* in her study of women during the Civil War but does not provide details of her life or accomplishments (1991: 213-4). Furthermore, in her discussion of leading female figures of early twentieth-century Spain, Neus Samblancat Miranda provides only one reference to Matilde de la Torre and classes her as a musician, based on her folk singing, rather than listing her amongst the group of *diputadas* (2006: 10).

<sup>43</sup> In her study *¡Salud, compañeras! Mujeres socialistas en Asturias (1900-1937)*, María Antonia Mateos provides a detailed analysis of De la Torre in the press, particularly *Avance* (2007: see, in particular, 133-48).

<sup>44</sup> The exact year of publication is unclear, as the cover of *El banquete de Saturno* dates it as 1919 while news of its recent publication can be found in *Mundo gráfico* as early as 13<sup>th</sup> May 1918.

<sup>45</sup> In the first edition of her *Una mujer por caminos de España*, María Martínez Sierra contends that the work was unfairly overlooked: '[P]asó inadvertido y que hubiera debido ponerla en primera fila entre los ensayistas españoles del siglo XX' (1989: 219).

<sup>46</sup> See: Fernández Segura 2012: 33-4; Taillot 2009: 85-6.

fiction,<sup>47</sup> although none appear to examine her work in any detail. One possible reason much of her literary work has gone unnoticed is that the personal library of De la Torre in Santander was burnt after the Spanish Civil War (Lloréns and Aznar Sole, 2006: 341).

The work that forms the basis of the present analysis is *El banquete de Saturno: novela social* (1931; henceforth *El banquete*), which tells of a failed socialist dictatorship. The very existence of *El banquete* is indicative of political change. The blurb of the novel states the text was written ‘hace ya algunos años, cuando aun nadie creía en la posibilidad de una República española’ (De la Torre, 1931: 4), while a newspaper report in *El Sol* published in September 1931, five months after the establishment of the Republic, explains that the work was penned under the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera but that the author had refrained from publication ‘por el temor a la misma, temor muy justificado’ (*El Sol*, 11<sup>th</sup> September 1931: 2). This analysis explores how De la Torre envisions women’s contribution to socialist doctrine and activism in *El banquete*, arguing that the author uses the novel as a means of engaging with socialist and feminist debates and underlining the benefits of female (and feminist) contributions to socialist thought. I argue that the author disassociates herself from an immanently flawed socialist theory by identifying socialist rhetoric with a male protagonist, providing an insistent contemporary contribution to political debates through its critique of the Soviet Union and suggesting a re-conceptualisation of socialist rhetoric that benefits from female input. Drawing on a range of sources to contextualise the subject matter of the work, including Marxist writings and critics, socialist literary models, anti-Soviet Spanish travelogues and feminist Marxist

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<sup>47</sup> See: De la Hoz Regules 2012: 232; García Santos 1980: 24; Núñez 1998: 404. María Francisca Vilches de Frutos names Matilde de la Torre as one of eight authors whose relationship with politics and press writings resulted in *la narrativa social* (1982: 32-3), literature with a social message, although she does not make it clear whether she is referring to De la Torre’s fiction or non-fiction, or both.

scholarship,<sup>48</sup> I maintain that *El banquete* constitutes a self-conscious contribution to contemporary socialist discourse. The analysis begins with an overview of the narrative, before exploring how De la Torre appears to sex socialist discourse male through her depiction of an androcentric socialist revolution.

### **Outline of *El banquete de Saturno: novela social* (1931)**

*El banquete* is a curious, multifaceted novel that, in many ways, defies categorisation as it incorporates a multitude of genres, political theories, literary tropes and classical references. The narrative is, nevertheless, relatively straightforward, telling of a proletarian revolution that leads to a socialist-communist Republic in Spain that, once in power, becomes a corrupt, authoritarian dictatorship. Following the success of the Spanish revolution, a series of uprisings occur across the world and an international socialist alliance is formed. The Spanish government falls under a coup d'état, led by a disillusioned group who had once fought for the revolutionary forces, and the international community fails, splintered by different aims and expectations that lead to a horrific war that results in devastation and millions of deaths. The conclusion to the novel is tentatively optimistic. Reflecting on the failings of the regime, the workers look to the future, believing that now this revolutionary model has been tested out and

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<sup>48</sup> I am conscious of the potentially problematic nature of conflating socialism and communism. There are three reasons that, for much of the analysis, I use both labels: De la Torre herself appears to conflate socialism and Marxism/communism, as evidenced by her use of 'antimarxista' to describe opposition to socialism (*La Libertad*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1935: 6); Marxist doctrine formed part of her Party's manifesto (De Esteban and López Guerra, 1982: 120), again suggesting an almost indistinguishable parallel in this context; and, most importantly, a close reading of *El banquete* suggests that the author uses the terms interchangeably. This is exemplified by two scenes in which characters identified with Marx, one through his name (*BS*: 201) and another through his facial hair (*BS*: 16), are considered 'socialists' rather than 'communists' specifically. The terms, furthermore, were sometimes used interchangeably, partly because Marxist theory informed socialist ideology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Paul Thomas observes, the boundaries between the two are therefore often unstable, particularly, Thomas explains, as the nineteenth century progressed: '[T]he sharpness of the distinction between socialism and communism came to be blurred [...] Socialism was becoming more of a working-class movement that was increasingly inclined to look to Marx and Engels, who were becoming revolutionary elder statesmen, for guidance and an imprimatur' (2008: 14). See the 'Principles of Communism' for Friedrich Engels's explanation of how communism differs from socialism (1971: 186-7).

proved to fail, a more just, egalitarian administration is possible. The majority of *El banquete* is told from the perspective of a first-person narrator, Julio Miroles, a factory worker who joins the strike and becomes a government official after the uprising. A lifelong socialist who is committed to the revolution, Julio grows increasingly disillusioned with the corrupt, tyrannical regime. His doubts are exacerbated by his personal loyalties to the Fornés family, Miguel, Lena and Jaime; lifelong friends of the protagonist who work in the factory and are opposed to the strike and revolution. After the fall of the regime, Julio plans to leave his activism behind, hoping to enjoy a contented family life by having children with Lena and returning to his 'simple life' as a factory worker.

*El banquete* is fundamentally an ominous account of a failed socialist experiment and classical references that reinforce the literary and political character of the work can be found throughout the text. The titular reference to the god Saturnus encapsulates the nexus of satire and (anti-)utopia that characterises the work.<sup>49</sup> The eponymous deity is usually portrayed holding a sickle and wheat-sheaf (Berens, 2007: 18), evoking Marxist imagery, while the feast in his honour encompasses egalitarian principles (Berens, 2007: 200; Elliot, 1971: 10). The narrative is interspersed with infrequent, surreal extracts that allegorise the principal failings of the regime, such as a fantastical depiction of ancient gods goading the strikers during the violent uprising and a satirical depiction of the Wall Street crash that critiques the capitalist model. As this outline suggests, *El banquete* is as much a boastful display of the author's creative skill and breadth of knowledge as it is a complex political satire. My focus here is on how De la Torre explores the nuances of socialist thought in the novel, beginning with a discussion of how she critiques the overbearing, depersonalising form of solidarity that is enforced by the socialist regime.

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<sup>49</sup> As Robert C. Elliot explains: '[U]topia and satire are ancestrally linked in the celebration of Saturn' (1970: 24; also see 1970: 21-3; Kumar, 1987: 104-5, 109).



As the first section of the analysis will demonstrate, the author can be seen to disassociate this failed experiment from her own understanding of socialism by identifying the corrupt regime with her male protagonist, Julio.

### **Sexing Socialism? The Female Author's Disidentification with Male-Voiced Socialism**

Focusing on a particularly tense, eventful or precarious juncture in political history demonstrates how literature can function as a manifestation of the author's ideological development and a means of documenting the current political climate. The elasticity of literature – that is, its ability to simultaneously critique and hypothesise, encapsulating nuances and paradoxes – makes it a particularly beneficial public medium for women given their historic exclusion from public life, even more so at a time when debates surrounding women's ideological autonomy and relationship with the public/political domain were heightened. This chapter focuses on a work which exemplifies how fiction can prove an effective means through which a female author can contribute to contemporary debates, participating in a dialogue dominated by male voices in such a way as to underscore women's exclusion from political discourse(s). As a means of establishing the androcentric quality of *El banquete*, this section seeks to establish how De la Torre identifies the corrupt socialist regime in the narrative with a male protagonist, Julio, underlining the predominance of male voices in socialist discourse and pointedly disassociating herself from the failed, androcentric model of socialism that he embodies. To this end, the discussion first outlines the links between the protagonist and the uprising, then explores Julio's ideological doubts and growing disillusionment with the regime, and ends by examining how the characterisation of the protagonist relates to the author. Rather than simply constituting a suitable alternative to

actively joining in political debates, fiction, as this analysis will demonstrate, can, in many cases, be a preferable tool for engendering a transformative political project as it affords the writer/activist the flexibility to work through her own ideological doubts whilst outwardly maintaining an unfaltering commitment to the(ir) cause.

Given *El banquete* is one of relatively few socialist works to be authored by a woman, and certainly one of the earliest in Spain, it is somewhat unexpected that the author chooses to mediate the narrative through a male narrator. The inevitable tension that arises when a female author explores her own political convictions through a male protagonist is particularly pertinent for a work that was published at a time when women's right and capability to participate in political dialogue was central to feminist and socialist debates. Julio's references to Marxist discourse exemplify how textual crossdressing – a female author voicing her ideas through a male protagonist – can simultaneously (re-)assert and undermine the woman writer's ideological autonomy. The protagonist's critique of 'Capital Vampiro!' (*BS*: 32), for instance, which draws on the 'vampire' analogy employed by Marx in *Capital* ([1867]1976: 416, also see 342), along with Julio's disparaging retort that Miguel allows himself to be 'bought' by refusing to join the strike ('comprado') (*BS*: 37), echoing the slavery imagery that is employed in communist writings,<sup>50</sup> illustrates both the (female) author's nuanced knowledge of political theory and implies a not unproblematic attempt to eschew the issue of gender. While it is, arguably, not possible to overlook the significance of gender or sex when considering the 'formal' political domain in any geographical or historical context, De la Torre's decision to make use of a male narrator in a work

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<sup>50</sup> For instance, in *Capital*, first published in 1867, Marx argues that the workers must pass a law to create 'an all-powerful social barrier by which they can be prevented from selling themselves and their families into slavery and death by voluntary contract with capital' (1976: 416). In relation to slavery, it should be made clear that Marxian ideology did not class the proletariat as slaves, rather it argued that the two were comparable. Friedrich Engels explains that whereas a slave is sold 'once and for all', the proletariat sells himself 'by the day' and 'by the hour' (1971a: 172; 1971b: 165).

published at time when anxieties surrounding women's political subjectivity were heightened appears particularly pointed. Rather than depict a positive account of a socialist revolution told from the perspective of a female protagonist, the author uses the narrator's sex as a way of distancing herself from the failed, corrupt regime in *El banquete*. Julio can be seen to personify the uprising and government, which is illustrated by charting the character's development throughout the narrative: initially identified as a socialist (*BS*: 33; 52; 92; 238), worker (*BS*: 199; 217) and union member (*BS*: 27; 37; 52), Julio confesses how his personality changes after the rebels take control of the state: 'Amo mi profesión gubernamental sobre todas las cosas y a veces... (¡perdón!) he desgustado la embriaguez del triunfo de los héroes y, acaso, me tuve por un semidiós...' (*BS*: 283).

Not only does the protagonist's transformation from an egalitarian idealist to an egocentric narcissist reflect the shift in the character and mood of the revolutionary regime, but Julio also functions as a mouthpiece for the ideology and rhetoric that underpins the uprising. There is a clear emphasis on dialogue in the novel, which is particularly striking in the opening pages in which Julio recounts his recollections of an exchange between the male workers and factory boss, Pepet Espalter:

[Espalter] – ... El capital que yo heredé en esta fábrica, era de diez millones de pesetas. Ahora bien: entendedme: Este capital no es solo dinero. No os vayáis a figurar un montón de pesetas más alto las chimeneas de la fábrica [...]

(El pueblo oyente: – ¡Ah, ladrón! Confiesas que somos materia capitalizable! ¡Que tu padre nos dejó en tu poder como si fuéramos máquinas...!) [...]

– Esperad un momento. Tenéis razón. Vosotros, mis obreros de “La Jereza” sois partes de mi capital. Pero yo, a mi vez, soy vuestro capital único: ¡Yo soy rico!

(– ¡Ah, bandido! ¡Y lo confiesas!) (BS: 8-9)

In this ‘back and forth’, which continues over four pages, the workers can be seen to mimic a Greek chorus,<sup>51</sup> answering Espalter in unison as one homogenous mass. The dialogic quality that characterises the narrative is also used as a means of depicting the collective reasoning that spurs the revolution:

– ¡Quién lo diría del patrono Espalter?

– ¡Ahora se verá en pequeño qué es la Revolución Social!

– ¡Siempre fué Pepet muy socialista!

– ¿Socialista? ¿Por dónde?

– ¿Sabéis? Esto es sencillamente lo que él dijo: Que está cansado de ser rico.

– Mejor para nosotros, que estamos cansados de ser pobres. (BS: 10)

These convoluted debates mirror the claustrophobic, tense atmosphere in the build up to the uprising, while the dialogue, which is visually jarring to the reader, connotes the fast-paced surge of activity and textually inscribes the tension between the individual and collective that underpins *El banquete* through the innumerable, nameless voices that contribute to a continuous stream of dialogue.

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<sup>51</sup> As a literary or theatrical device, the Greek chorus is typically a ‘homogenous group’ that ‘consists of non-individualized and often abstract forces [...] that represent higher moral or political interests’ (Pavis, 1998: 53).

Acting as a spokesman for the rebels, the protagonist's speech is invested with the notion of collectivism and egalitarianism that sparks the revolution. When trying to coerce Miguel to join the strike, for instance, he uses the third-person plural ('nosotros') (*BS*: 96; 130) to present himself as the voice of proletariat and, in a particularly tense scene during the violent uprising, Julio must convince an armed, unidentified soldier that he is also a revolutionary. He achieves this through strategic use of language, calling out '[p]ueblo' several times (*BS*: 141), and clarifies that the two men are fighting for the same cause by shouting '[e]res tú *nuestro*... ¿verdad?' (*BS*: 142; emphasis added). Julio's ideologically-loaded language exemplifies the emphasis on dialogue in *El banquete*<sup>52</sup> and underlines the link between the character and the revolution he (initially) supports. Not only does the author present her (male) protagonist as a personification of this flawed socialist model but she also uses Julio as a mouthpiece to criticise the government, and this point is emphasised by his self-reflexive prompts to pay attention ('entiéndase') when describing the success of the revolution (*BS*: 183) and a failed attempt to overthrow the new regime (*BS*: 194). Through this double-edged approach, De la Torre is able to condemn the events in the narrative and, at the same time, maintain a critical distance from the perverted form of socialism that is portrayed in the novel.

The representation of the oppressive, overly-restrictive model of solidarity and collectivism that is enforced by the government is an illuminating example of how the protagonist both indexes and critiques the failings of the regime. Following the revolution, the new 'República Social-comunista' (*BS*: 186; 208; 253; 258) enacts a series of Marxist/socialist policies: there is a redistribution of wealth (*BS*: 214), a national bank is introduced ('Banco Social-comunista Español') (*BS*: 218) and personal

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<sup>52</sup> The amount of dialogue and debate in the narrative also points to another classical source that informs *El banquete*: Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, which focuses on a banquet to celebrate the festival of Saturnalia and is comprised of a series of (male-voiced) dialogues.

property is seized by the state (BS: 213).<sup>53</sup> Ironically, or perhaps not, the government's egalitarian reforms only serve to worsen the proletariat's plight as wide-spread hunger, a concern that plays a key role in initiating the uprising, becomes a national concern (BS: 7; 31; 49; 50; 52; 57; 110). The government's response is a characteristically ineffective take on socialist rhetoric that is portrayed satirically in the novel. Communal eating halls are opened and made obligatory for all citizens,<sup>54</sup> while cooking and eating in private is banned. Rather than resolve the crisis, the national canteens only serve to dehumanise the citizens, which is illustrated in a strikingly poignant scene in which an elderly woman pitifully laments that she can no longer cook for her family (BS: 256-7). On an international scale, the socialist alliance is unable to find any common ground as the countries prioritise the interests of their own citizens (BS: 302), leading to tensions which result in a catastrophic war with millions of lives lost; a somewhat ironic end to a union built with the aim of achieving 'universal solidaridad' (BS: 270).<sup>55</sup>

The protagonist can be seen, on the one hand, to internalise the tensions between individualism and collectivism that characterise the failings of the socialist experiment in the narrative. An illuminating example is found during the uprising, as Julio's shift from the third-person plural ('nosotros') to the singular voice ('yo') illustrates this conflict. Although his stream of consciousness begins by considering the views of his comrades, Julio's thoughts are interrupted by his sudden musings about a public bus he uses frequently and therefore considers his personal property: 'Siento algo así como la propiedad de un medio de locomoción que me sirve y me espera con fidelidad

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<sup>53</sup> *The Communist Manifesto* argues for the '[a]bolition of all rights of inheritance' and the '[c]entralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly' (Marx and Engels, 2009[1848]: 28).

<sup>54</sup> This detail exemplifies the eclectic array of sources that inform the novel as both Thomas More's *Utopia* and the Spanish travelogues about post-revolution Russia (see Purkey, 2013: 30) make reference to communal canteens.

<sup>55</sup> As Engels outlines in the 'Principles of Communism': 'The communist revolution will [...] not be a national revolution alone [...] This is to be a universal revolution, and will, therefore, have a universal field for its operations (Engels 1971a: 182-3).

consciente' (BS: 106). Reading the protagonist as a personification of the revolutionary rhetoric he espouses here would suggest a lack of self-awareness that the author is only too keen to highlight, as Julio's sense of ownership towards the bus is incongruous with Marxist doctrine.<sup>56</sup> The fact that his doubts occur during the revolution, before the rebels' objectives become distorted under the new regime, connotes an ideological ambiguity that a reader does not automatically identify with the author. Julio's lack of conviction,<sup>57</sup> in this case, could reflect both the flawed ideology that underpins the uprising and De la Torre's own reflections on the nature of (socialist) revolution and collectivism. By attributing these not unreasonable misgivings to a figure associated with a failed socialist uprising, however, De la Torre is able to process these issues without undermining her own commitment to the cause. Read retrospectively, this would be a particularly pressing concern given that she would go on to be one of only three female diputadas for the PSOE in 1933.

Another, more creative, means that De la Torre plays on the characterisation of the protagonist to make her own political point is through the echoes of socialist realism in *El banquete*. The author's resistance to uniformity and solidarity is manifest in the very structure of the novel as she evokes the socialist literary paradigm and subverts it from within. Drawing on a genre that was becoming increasingly popular in Spain at

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<sup>56</sup> As stated in *The Communist Manifesto*: 'The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on class antagonism, on the exploitation of the many by the few. In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property' (Marx and Engels, 2009: 20).

<sup>57</sup> A further, more visual, example, also occurs during the uprising, as the protagonist describes the rebels as one homogeneous mass: 'Tenemos hambre canina. Siete horas de trabajo en la Casa del Pueblo nos han secado la garganta y el estómago' (BS: 105). He then considers the impact of the revolution, implying a sense of isolation from the collective body he forms part of, seemingly unwilling or unable to devote himself entirely to the cause: '¡Soy solo! ¡Si triunfo... para mí; si muero... no dejo lutos ni lágrimas detrás de mí' (BS: 105).

this time,<sup>58</sup> the author satirises the ideologically resolute socialist hero through her depiction of Julio. While the protagonist's role as a spokesman and advocate for the uprising mirrors prototypical traits of the socialist hero (see Clark, 1997), Julio's faltering commitment to the collective and gradual disillusion with the revolution reads as a conversion narrative in reverse. The novel is insistently self-reflective about its rejection of the socialist model. The brief appearance of a fictionalised Emília Pardo Bazán,<sup>59</sup> for instance, who takes the form of a conservative aristocrat Dama Parda (*BS*: 84-5), makes us think of Pardo Bazán's *La revolución y la novela en Rusia* (1907),<sup>60</sup> a work credited with popularising Russian literature in Spain (Purkey, 2013: 14), while one of Julio's colleagues sardonically underlines the most salient flaw of literary propaganda: 'Los que no conocen a Tolstoi ni a Andreiew ni a Gorki ni a Trotski ni a Lenin siquiera, son los mujika. No los han leído nunca, entre otras razones, porque no saben leer' (*BS*: 40). The literary context at the time of the novel's publication would suggest a conscious effort on the author's part to resist literary convention that engenders the depersonalisation and unification she aims to critique in the narrative.

Katerina Clark notes a discernible shift from the late 1920s as socialist fiction became

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<sup>58</sup> Critics note how socialist literature became popular in Spain in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Fuentes, 1980: 31, 35, 38; Purkey, 2013: 13).

<sup>59</sup> There are further links between the authors' works that suggest De la Torre was familiar with Pardo Bazán's extensive output. Pardo Bazán's 1903 articles on Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1972: 149-54) and Joaquín Costa and *caciquismo* (1972: 155-61), for instance, focus on the same subject matter and figures as De la Torre's political biography *El ágora* (1930), while the tensions between individual liberty and a united workers' movement in *El banquete* echo Pardo Bazán's reports on strikes in Germany. Her observation that the political right successfully quashed or undermined strike action by putting an emphasis on individualism (1972: 73) seems particularly pertinent.

<sup>60</sup> The negative depiction of this character suggests a tension between the two women which is somewhat unexpected given Pardo Bazán would introduce a Spanish readership to August Bebel's *Women Under Socialism* (1879), publishing a translation in 1893 (*La mujer ante el socialismo*), and writes of her support for socialism in *La vida contemporánea* (1972: 72-3). Pardo Bazán's (conservative) contribution to feminist thought in Spain, furthermore, illustrates how, personal differences aside, it is intriguing that De la Torre is so publicly hostile to a figure with whom she shared much in common. While critics note Pardo Bazán's typically frosty relationships with her female contemporaries (see Bieder, 1993 and Tolliver, 2001), a consideration for (the character) Dama Parda's objections to the redistribution of land in *El banquete*, which she criticises for being unchristian and sarcastically refers to as '[r]iqueza social' (*BS*: 84), might suggest that De la Torre's issue relates to Pardo Bazán's politics (in all senses). In his discussion of Pardo Bazán's ideological stances, Robert Hilton acknowledges her moderate understanding of socialism, which is counterbalanced or undermined to some degree by her staunch Catholicism. He therefore describes her position as relating explicitly to Christian Socialism (1954: 15-6).



‘more closely controlled, and a narrower range of literary approaches was allowed’ (1981: 32),<sup>61</sup> demonstrating the contemporaneous quality of *El banquete*.

As well as using the characterisation of the protagonist as a symbolic rejection of the sense of homogenisation and conformity that De la Torre problematises in *El banquete*, the author also makes use of the character to verbalise what, in all probability, is her own critique of the international socialist alliance. This is evidenced by juxtaposing De la Torre’s views with Julio’s criticism of the international congress. In a speech delivered in 1935, the author would underline how, to her mind, socialism and individual liberty are analogous, arguing that socialism will triumph as ‘las masas lo que quieren es libertad’ (*La Libertad*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1935: 6), while Julio’s condemnation of the regime in the narrative illustrates how the administration impedes individual liberty: ‘Cuánto más socialista sea ese Congreso, más tendrá a intervenir en nuestros propios asuntos’ (*BS*: 295). There are multiple (inter)textual dialogues at play here. Comparing Julio’s critique of the international alliance with Marx’s aim of achieving ‘equality through the abolition of the principle of personal property and an absolute community of wealth’ (1971[1848]: 79)<sup>62</sup> illustrates how the narrative engages with, rather than simply echoes, communist rhetoric. The protagonist, in this sense, functions as a mediator, allowing the author to work through her doubts about Marx’s ideas without undermining the cause. Although socialism is, in Julio’s opinion, inherently flawed, as evidenced by his critique of the international congress, De la Torre’s position is more nuanced and, arguably, suggests greater conviction. The

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<sup>61</sup> Clark attributes this to the ‘cultural revolution’ launched by Stalin in Russia in 1927 (1981: 31). For further details of literary and artistic propaganda in Soviet Russia, see: Dobrenko, 2011b: 398; Ferré, 2011a: 50; 63-4; Lodder, 2011: 109. The parallels between *El banquete* and the Soviet Union are examined later in the chapter.

<sup>62</sup> This quotation is taken from *The Revolutions of 1848-49*, based on writings published in the same year as *The Communist Manifesto*. It is worth highlighting that Marx differentiates between socialism and Marxism in this context, explaining that the aim of socialism is ‘the realisation of the idea of equality by means of the equal distribution of goods, dependent on labour’ (1972: 79). My justification for often conflating the two in this analysis is explained earlier.

conclusion to *El banquete* supports this reading as the protagonist wants to return to his former work in the factory (*BS*: 289; 305) and quits his political activism: ‘Y la sociedad... ¡que la arregle otro! Yo he puesto ya mi grano de arena. Estoy cansado’ (*BS*: 304). If we understand Julio’s departing remarks self-reflexively, the activist who would take his place was, conceivably, De la Torre herself given the publication of the novel preceded her impressive political career. The ambiguity of ‘otro’ can be read in relation to the author’s role in *El banquete*: an allusive figure who informs Julio’s political rhetoric and, at the same time, can be seen to undermine her fictional creation by chronicling his faltering commitment to achieving egalitarian reform.

Comparing the character of Julio with the protagonist in De la Torre’s epistolary novel *Jardín* (1918/19), aunt (‘tía’) Pulquería, accentuates how the author uses sex as a means of underlining her detachment from the protagonist in *El banquete*. Unlike Julio, the female protagonist in *Jardín* is almost demanding to be read as a fictionalised (re-)creation of De la Torre as she advocates two issues that were critical to the author’s feminist views: suffrage (*JD*: 62; 70; 76; 78-9; 83; 92; 97; 128; 154) and women’s education (*JD*: 272; 274).<sup>63</sup> De la Torre’s commitment to improving women’s educational opportunities was, like her dedication to raising women’s political consciousness, a key component of her activism. During the 1930s, she delivered talks at the Lyceum Club and the Residencia de Señoritas (Mangini, 2006: 136) and spoke at the Asociación Femenina de Educación Cívica (Rodrigo, 1994: 241), and she founded a co-educational school, the ‘Academia Torre’, between 1917 and 1928, which was modelled on the ideas of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Martínez Cerezo, 2000a: 16; Olarte Martínez, 2010: 23). Although both protagonists broadly share the ideological convictions of the author, it is De la Torre’s female character who most clearly evokes

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<sup>63</sup> For her work on this initiative, according to Susana Tavera, the author was (almost certainly sardonically) dubbed ‘Platón con faldas’ (2005: 214). It is possible that De la Torre was aware of this nickname given the similarities between *El banquete* and Plato’s *Republic*.

the author's position,<sup>64</sup> whereas Julio, conversely, is identified with the problems the author associates with her socialist convictions. Rather than (re-)construct a fictionalised version of herself, as she appears to do in *Jardín*, the author uses the protagonist in *El banquete* to underline key details and work through her own ideological doubts in such a way as to not undermine her own commitment to socialism. The male protagonist, in this sense, functions as a proverbial scapegoat, tarred with the failed regime he embodies, allowing the author to avoid the sense of 'guilt by association' that Krishan Kumar notes plagued many left-wing writers in the climate of post-revolution Russia (1987: 382). One obvious benefit of using a male protagonist to achieve this sense of disidentification is that it discourages a reader from unduly conflating the author and protagonist, which is particularly tempting when the two share broadly the same ideological convictions.

Rather than a tacit acknowledgement of women's lack of political agency or a suggestion of resigned defeat, De la Torre, somewhat paradoxically, makes an emphatically feminist point through her male-dominated narrative that reads as a derisive critique at her male characters' expense. By creating a distance between the author and the protagonist in *El banquete*, De la Torre invites the reader to collude in her critique of the perverse socialist revolution that Julio personifies. Before considering what this suggests about the author's *envisaged* reader, it is worth pausing to outline what we can infer about the probable readership of *El banquete*. A brief, unfavourable review of the novel published in the USA in 1932 indicates that the work reached an

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<sup>64</sup> The somewhat bolshie, abrupt tone of Pulquería also, to my mind, evokes the author.

international audience;<sup>65</sup> an inference supported by the fact that the publisher, Mentora, also published works that centred on international politics in the same year, including Mario Aguilar's *El proceso Dreyfus* (1931), Giuseppe Torre's *El fascismo al desnudo* (1931) and Grigorii Zinov'evich Besedovskii's *Memorias por un diplomático soviético* (1931). Although any details about print runs are unavailable – much less purchasing figures – the popularity of the socialist realist novel in Spain at this time, noted earlier, along with the publication of Besedovskii's *Memorias por un diplomático soviético* (1931), connotes that the publisher and author were at least hopeful of a large, politically-engaged readership given the subject matter of *El banquete*.

While a left-wing reader is strongly implied by the subject matter and references to the socialist realist genre, the author's sex problematises any assumptions about the sex of the readership. Rather than use a male pseudonym or gender-neutral initial ('M'), De la Torre published *El banquete* under her full name, unequivocally taking ownership of her novel, which, in this socio-political and geographical context, was a bold and admirable move. The other male-authored titles released by Mentora in the same year suggest that De la Torre capitalises on this surge of politicised writings – undoubtedly spurred by the establishment of the Second Republic – to contribute her own *female* voice to the male-dominated political commentaries that made up the editor's other publications in 1931. In doing so, she ensures that her novel would reach the highest possible readership, many of whom would have had little interest in feminist or female-centric issues and, more significantly here, a female-authored socialist novel. Thus,

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<sup>65</sup> An extract of Joseph Fucilla's review, published in the 'Spanish Fiction' section of *Books Abroad*, reads as follows: 'Though she has intended the volume as propaganda for her special political creed, the author recognises that there is a mountain of human weakness made up of selfishness, ignorance, lack of perspective, unpreparedness to face ideal conditions, etc. which must be levelled before her Utopia can become fact. The novel does not have a single character who has enough energy to be propelled by his own legs, and is almost destitute of gripping incidents. The possibilities of many original character creations and tense dramatic situations are there, but the author does not have sufficient imagination and narrative skill to develop them' (1932: 210). Given the entrenched bias of male critics at this time, which is discussed in the Introduction, one cannot help but wonder what reception the novel may have received if it had been published under a man's name.

although a consideration for the publisher's other output indicates that *El banquete* would likely reach the author's intended market of left-wing intellectuals who were conscious of the international political context, it also implies a largely male readership; a detail that De la Torre seems to acknowledge through the emphasis on male voices.

The sex of the author's intended reader is ambiguous. Despite crafting a narrative that is undoubtedly more accommodating and familiar to a male reader given it centres on male characters in an almost-exclusively male work environment, De la Torre's personal convictions and professional trajectory make it unfeasible that she did not at least hope for her work to reach a female readership. Her decision to publish *El banquete* under her own name could, indeed, be understood as an understated invitation to women readers, as she effectively markets the work as relevant to women. As women and men's relationship with formal political debate was so starkly different in this context (and with Marxism in particular, as will be seen in the next section), it stands to reason that the reader's sex would have shaped their interpretation of the novel. For a male reader to collude in the female author's critique, he must assume an ideological agency to the author that supersedes that of the protagonist. He could, furthermore, be inclined to identify with the protagonist, whose development throughout the narrative would function as a mirror that critically reflects the male reader's doubts, failings and inconsistencies. In this sense, De la Torre's narrative affords her an ideological superiority over her male protagonist and reader that would go some way in explaining her seemingly conciliatory use of a male protagonist.

A female reader, on the other hand, is, perhaps, more willing to approach the flawed hero critically as, like the author, any sense of identification between reader and protagonist is immediately problematised by sex. The solidarity amongst left-wing

women that characterised De la Torre's political career is, therefore, manifest here, as female reader and author collude, sharing in their critique of a male socialist who personifies a corrupt androcentric doctrine. The dialogic quality of the work accentuates the male-dominant nature of the failed regime in the narrative because, of the plethora of voices that engage in heated debate and ideological discussion in *El banquete*, all but two are male. The sex of the protagonist, in this sense, serves a double purpose, as it functions as a metaphor for the 'Other', subverting the male-female power dynamic through the author's implied disidentification from the corrupt socialist dictatorship that is personified by the male protagonist, and underlines the predominance of male voices in socialist discourse. The next section of the analysis develops these points by examining how De la Torre portrays female voices in *El banquete*.

### **'Men of the World, Unite!': Conflict between Emancipation of Women and the Worker**

Despite a shared belief in social reform and equality, Marxism and women's emancipation have a complex relationship. Although communist discourse proposes that women's emancipation is a natural consequence of workers' liberation, suggesting that the capitalist economic system is responsible for class and gender inequality,<sup>66</sup> feminist critiques of Marxism observe that conflating capitalist and patriarchal social structures occludes problems which specifically or disproportionately affect women. Marxism's focus on the economic system, critics have argued, distracts from a genuine aim for women's emancipation (see, for example, Guettel, 1974; Hartmann, 1981: 2-3;

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<sup>66</sup> In *The Communist Manifesto*, the bourgeois are blamed for women's oppression as it is claimed that they view wives as 'a mere instrument of production', and it is argued that communists would eradicate this problem (Marx and Engels, 2009: 25). Citing Charles Fourier, Marx outlines how, at least in theory, social reform and gender equality are inherently interrelated: 'The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation' (1957: 259). This quotation has been reproduced as printed, although critics who cite the same sentence write, '[t]he degree of female emancipation' (Haug, 2015b: 39; Meyer, 1977: 86).

Haug, 2015a: 81);<sup>67</sup> a tension between the emancipation of women and the worker that was debated by De la Torre's Party in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Although the PSOE established a secretariat for 'women's issues' in 1918, as Frances Lannon notes, 'there was always a debate about whether a preoccupation about women was a distraction from the primary concern with class' (2011: 277). Tensions between socialist and feminist discourses were heightened at this juncture in Spanish political history. The first socialist *diputadas* elected to the Cortes, Margarita Nelken and Victoria Kent voted against women's suffrage in October 1931, believing it would hamper the socialists' electoral success. The only other female *diputada*, Clara Campoamor, the communist De la Torre went on to collaborate with once elected to office, defended women's right to vote in a rousing speech.<sup>68</sup> In the vote that followed, Spanish women were granted the right to vote, yet the only three female *diputadas* in the chamber remained divided on the issue: Campoamor voted in favour, Kent voted against, and Nelken abstained (Davies, 1998: 106). *El banquete* was published just a month earlier when debates and anxieties were intensified.

Building on our discussion of gender, sex and voice in the narrative, this section explores how female voices are portrayed, focusing on the two most prominent female characters in *El banquete*: Lena Fornés and María Zarja. While voicing socio-economic discourse through a male protagonist could, on the one hand, be a conscious effort on the part of the female author (at least ostensibly) to attribute a sense of authority, veracity or legitimacy to her views, De la Torre's decision to use Julio as a mouthpiece

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<sup>67</sup> Michèle Barrett, for example, states, in reference to 'the oppression of women by men', that Marxism 'has tended to pass over [it] in silence' (1988: 8), while Catherine V. Scott refers to the doctrine's 'blind spot about gender' (1995: 88).

<sup>68</sup> In this speech, made in the Cortes on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1931, Campoamor argues: '[S]ólo aquel que no considere a la mujer un ser humano es capaz de afirmar que todos los derechos del hombre y del ciudadano no deben ser los mismos para la mujer que para el hombre' (cited in *El País*, 1 October 2015: unnumbered). Contemporary sources for this quotation have proved difficult to find. Joyce Tolliver also cites Campoamor (2011: 248), without providing a source.

for a flawed application of her beliefs suggests a power play between author and protagonist that, in this instance, is invested with sexual and gender politics, as the author emphatically reasserts her own ideological stance over that of the protagonist. De la Torre, in other words, possesses a critical awareness and sense of justice that the male socialist lacks, affording her the moral highground.

Of the two women, Lena features most frequently in the narrative as she is the object of the protagonist's affection. The character can be seen to personify the conflict between Julio's personal desires and ideological beliefs because, like her brothers, she opposes his revolutionary politics. The two engage in frequent debates about the strike, with Lena refusing to take part as she believes work is an honourable endeavour: 'No se puede dejar de trabajar, Julio... Como se pueda, donde sea y como sea... cuanto se hace por lograr trabajo honrado es honroso' (*BS*: 61). Through her romanticised depiction of hardwork, Lena simultaenously underlines her emphatic rejection of socialist principles and, evokes the Marxist concept of 'false consciousness', considered by Engels, which denotes an uncritical acceptance of the capitalist economic model: 'He works with mere thought material which he accepts without examination as the product of thought, he does not investigate further for a more remote process independent of thought; indeed its origin seems obvious to him' (Engels, 1968b[1893]: np). Although Lena's brothers share in her objections to the strike in *El banquete*, which invalidates a simplistic female/conservative male/revolutionary binary, the use of the male pronoun in this description underlines the significance of Lena's sex. Given De la Torre's commitment to involving women in socialist activism in her political career, it is somewhat unexpected that the most prominent female character in the narrative is opposed to the strike. It is worth reiterating here that, at the time of publication, three left-wing *diputadas* held seats in the Cortes. Reading Julio as a manifestation of the communist



rhetoric he espouses, the pair's arguments invoke the problematic link between emancipation for women and the worker that characterises Marxist doctrine. Lena's objection to the uprising and strike implies a tension or disharmony between women and the left, with the pairs' heated debates illustrating the animosity between women and the socialist doctrine that Julio represents. In many ways, Lena and Julio's relationship functions as an ideal microcosm for this conflict as the sense of ambiguity or understanding that characterises women's place in and relationship with Marxist rhetoric is reflected in their relationship: it is never explicitly stated that the two are romantically involved. Rather the reader sees Lena through Julio's eyes, meaning her views, behaviour and character are mediated through a socialist male figure. The leading female character in *El banquete*, in other words, is reduced to what the male socialist thinks or assumes about her. The author can be seen to underline how Julio shapes the reader's perception of the other characters through his surname, Miroles; a form of 'I see them' ('les miro').

The dynamic between the pair during their debates reads as an allegory for the limited recognition of women's ideological agency in communist rhetoric. Just as Julio makes strategic use of language to index socialist ideology figuratively, speaking for and on behalf of the worker, when arguing with Miguel, as noted in the previous section, he again employs the first-person plural to reinforce his point: '¿Quieres dar a entender que yo, que "nosotros" en nuestra inferioridad mental no comprendemos vuestros derechos?' (*BS*: 64). When speaking to Lena, the use of 'nosotros' is invested with gender-political significance as his initial lapse into the first person, emphasised by the use of quotation marks, implies that he prioritises his personal affection for Lena over their ideological conflict. The contrast between the singular (tú/yo) and plural voice ('nosotros'/'vuestrs derechos') connotes how the characters' relationship

functions as a microcosm for the broader ideological divide, while Julio's (accurate) use of the generic masculine and the ambiguous way he identifies Lena with the opposing side, through his description of 'vuestrós derechos' (rather than 'vosotras/os'), encapsulates women's unstable relationship with socialist discourse.

Juxtaposing this exchange with a similar back and forth in *Jardín* (1918/19) would suggest that the ambiguous depiction of gender is strategic on the author's part. In *Jardín*, the significance of gender is immediately obvious to the reader as, when debating feminist issues with her nephew, Pulquería underlines how their personal disagreement relates to a broader ideological divide by using the first-person feminine plural ('nosotras') and addressing her nephew as 'vosotros' (*JDC*: 34; 38; 55; 220; 222-3; 298) when musing about a future government that would be felicitous to feminist reform.<sup>69</sup> Switching focus from a hypothetical woman-centric initiative in *Jardín* to a contemporary political reality in *El banquete*, De la Torre plays on language to explore women's experiences and roles within this context. The lack of clarity in the text as to whether, to Julio's mind, he considers Lena amongst a female, male, or mixed group could be read in relation to the dearth of female-specific legislation in socialist doctrine. That is to say, the character's linguistic ambiguity, which stands out when compared with his specificity elsewhere and the examples found in *Jardín*, textually inscribes the absence of female-specific concerns in the socialist rhetoric that he represents. The sex of the protagonist here is critical, as it suggests that, for De la Torre, this erasure constitutes a form of patriarchal oppression. There are other, more allusive ways that Julio's speech serves to undermine or negate Lena's ideological agency. His refusal to facilitate or reinforce Lena's point of view during their debate, for instance, could be read in reference to the unrealised expectation of support and guidance that is implied in

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<sup>69</sup> Read retrospectively, Pulquería's vision looks forward to the Second Republic.

Marxist doctrine: ‘Quiere saber si yo adivino el resto. Pero yo no la ayudo’ (*BS*: 61). Julio’s retort to Lena when she tries to impress upon him the difficulties faced by non-strikers, furthermore, can be understood as a tacit acknowledgement of the absence of meaningful consideration of women’s rights: ‘[N]o comprendemos vuestros derechos’ (*BS*: 64). De la Torre, in this instance, can be seen to voice a critique of socialist discourse through her male protagonist, emphasising the patriarchal (or at least androcentric) nature of the theory and undermining the male figure who embodies it through a satirical self-reflexive critique at the character’s expense.

As well as highlighting a conceptual flaw in socialist doctrine, Julio’s perception of Lena as an uncritical conduit for conservative rhetoric taps into the interface of socialist and feminist discourses, specifically women’s suffrage and relationship with leftist politics. Julio’s reflections when Lena is defending her decision to break the strike illustrate this point as his inner thoughts suggest an unclear or inconsistent understanding of her ideological agency. Although Lena is speaking, Julio contemplates how the Sindicato de Empleados Libres is flailing due to Miguel’s resistance (*BS*: 61), apparently oblivious to the impact of Lena’s abstention. By associating Miguel’s actions with Lena’s speech, the protagonist attributes an ambiguous level of political agency to Lena that echoes the commonly used argument against women’s suffrage which centred on the reasoning that women already contribute to political matters by influencing their male relatives.<sup>70</sup> What is interesting here is how Julio’s perception of Lena’s agency highlights a patriarchal undertone to feminist and socialist discourses, as he acknowledges that she is defending the views he opposes (indeed, he argues with her frequently) but does not appear to hold Lena responsible for her actions.

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<sup>70</sup> Concepción Arenal, for instance, made this argument in her seminal *La mujer del porvenir* in 1884: ‘Cuando sea ilustrada, influirá en la política en el voto del hermano, del esposo, del hijo, del padre y hasta del abuelo’ (2009: 87).

The fact that his ignorance is probably self-imposed so as to avoid viewing the object of his affection in a negative light underlines the paternalistic undertone of the protagonist's perception of Lena. Grounding this reading firmly within its historical context, Julio's inability to recognise Lena as an autonomous individual with her own views alludes to Kent and Nelken's reasoning for opposing suffrage. Kent believed that Spanish women were not yet 'politically sophisticated enough to support the socialist cause' (Tolliver, 2011: 247), while Nelken did not think that Spanish women were sufficiently prepared or experienced to vote. As Nelken argued in 1919, it would only be when 'una cultura femenina tan alta como la masculina' was realised that women should vote: 'Este será el mejor feminismo, y él conducirá naturalmente, *racionalmente*, al voto de las mujeres' (1975: 192; original emphasis). Here, De la Torre appears to imply a patriarchal and paternalistic undertone to the arguments presented by Kent and Nelken which, again, is emphasised by the protagonist's sex.

What is particularly curious about the depiction of Lena is how the figure is, on the whole, portrayed in a favourable light by the author. When describing her opposition to the strike, for instance, Lena's reasoning is logical and, arguably, admirable, as she emphasises the honourable nature of work ('trabajo honrado es honroso') (BS: 61). The female/conservative male/revolutionary binary that is implied by the Lena/Julio dynamic suggests that there is a conflict between the author's socialist and feminist beliefs. Although De la Torre was not, at this point, elected to office, evidence of her support for women's suffrage is found in *Jardín*, published over ten years before the 1931 ballot. It stands to reason, therefore, that, on this issue, De la Torre would have differed from her socialist colleagues who prioritised their socialist beliefs over women's rights. Other than the obviously problematic nature of assuming political convictions based on a voter's sex, Gerard Alexander also provides a nuanced,

convincing argument to disprove any trend, focusing on claims that the electoral victory of a right-wing coalition in 1933 (when De la Torre was first elected) was due to women disproportionately voting for conservative parties (1999). It could be argued, based on this close reading of Julio and Lena's relationship that De la Torre was, unlike Nelken and Kent, more optimistic about women's potential for political debate and critical reasoning, whatever their view.

De la Torre's efforts to involve women in socialist initiatives would suggest that the author was conscious of this tension and sought to account for this potential problem in her political career, while her collaboration with other left-wing female politicians implies that, unlike her socialist colleagues, De la Torre prioritised her feminist loyalties over an uncritical loyalty to socialism. A close reading of one exchange between Lena and Julio evidences this point. Although Julio is pointedly silent, refusing to engage with Lena when she is critical of the uprising, she continues, undeterred: 'Pero yo no la ayudo y ella continua. Y espera un momento mi réplica, que ella conoce; mi réplica en defensa de los derechos del trabajador, que tantas veces hemos discutido en nuestra larga amistad' (*BS*: 61). As the protagonist's lack of assistance does not deter or impede Lena's dialogue, in the diegesis and at a textual level, De la Torre implies a victory for female-voiced ideological debate, no matter what the point of view. The fact that the first female socialists elected to office opposed women's suffrage, fearing that women lacked the critical faculties to process political debates is, therefore, undermined by Lena's confident display. The male protagonist can be seen to internalise this paradox as despite his earlier claim that he appreciates her 'pensativa cabeza' (*BS*: 27), in practice, Julio does not credit Lena with having informed, reasoned opinions, and views her as an uninformed extension of her brothers and male colleagues. The implication here is that, despite a shared belief in social reform and equality, socialist and feminist

objectives are often incongruous and, crucially, the intersection of the two can be seen to highlight a fundamental flaw inherent to both: prioritising the collective good over individual liberty.

While a tension between women and leftism is implied by Lena's opposition to the strike, the relative absence of the only female socialist character in the narrative, María Zarja, connotes women's isolation within socialist circles. An advocate for social(ist) justice (*BS*: 89), María is the leader of an (exclusively female) union for seamstresses (*BS*: 10)<sup>71</sup> who is celebrated for achieving concessions from the factory boss during a strike (*BS*: 10; 23). The details of her activism, however, are not revealed. Comparing the depiction of María's ideological autonomy alongside her textual subjectivity illustrates how the author draws the reader's attention to the character's virtual absence in the novel as a comment on women's role in socialist activism. The erasure of women, whether it be conscious or inadvertent, is illustrated by an English translation of the famous rallying cry from *The Communist Manifesto*: 'Working men of all countries, unite!' (Marx and Engels, 2009: 44; emphasis added).<sup>72</sup> The character's limited role in *El banquete* is emphasised by the fact that she speaks at the Sala de Conferencias (*BS*: 122) and, although she 'loses out' on the role of socialist (anti-)hero to Julio, María documents current events (*BS*: 258). There is a tangible contrast, in other words, between how much impact María seems to have in the diegesis based on what the reader can piece together and how much information is outlined by the (male) narrator. Paradoxically, then, María is at the same time exposed and unseen, effective

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<sup>71</sup> The name of the union, 'Obreras filadoras', suggests that De la Torre had Catalonia in mind when writing the novel, as 'filadora' is Catalan for 'seamstress' ('hiladora' in Spanish). Bearing in mind that the author was from Cantabria, it is possible that the echo of Catalan alludes to the *Semana Trágica*, a week-long series of violent clashes in 1909 between the army and a combination of workers, anarchists, socialists and republicans. It is likely that the bloody, violent nature of this conflict inspired De la Torre's description of the uprising in *El banquete*.

<sup>72</sup> While the original German translates literally as 'workers' or 'proletariat', and is therefore gender-neutral, the fact that this is a commonly cited translation is, nevertheless, significant.

and powerless, articulate and mute; functioning as a convenient metaphor for women's relationship with socialist thought and activism at this point in Spanish political history.

For Julio, there is a tangible tension between the way he views María as a woman and as a socialist. The undertones of misogyny that are suggested by Julio's comments about María's beauty are mitigated somewhat by his positive description of her as comparable with famous female figures known for their involvement with social change, such as Carlota Carday, a figure of the French Revolution, Louise Michel, a French anarchist who fought for a social revolution, and Saint Teresa de Ávila, the Spanish mystic and writer (*BS*: 24). The ideological, temporal and geographical gulf that is implied by comparing contemporary French revolutionaries with a Spanish figure who, despite her monumental contribution to feminist thought in Spain, is nevertheless associated with Catholicism and a more moderate approach than is implied by the French revolutionaries illustrates how, in Julio's eyes, a politically-engaged Spanish woman is a *rara avis*. The author herself evidenced women's involvement with socialist activism, as did several other famous figures, including Pardo Bazán, and this emphasises how Julio's suggestions are intended critically to highlight the limitations and blind spots of socialist thought.

De la Torre underlines the misogynistic undertones to socialism by mediating the description of María through Julio, whose comments about her beauty and sensitivity (*BS*: 10; 24; 241) suggest that for the protagonist, María is a woman first and a political figure second. She therefore acquires a double subalternity that is imposed on her by the protagonist and the author as she is objectified by her socialist (male) colleague and through her (in)visibility within the narrative. As the only leftist female character in *El banquete* it stands to reason that a reader would be inclined to identify María with the author. Not only do the character's socialist activism and union

involvement mirror De la Torre's socio-political work, but the fact she is so outnumbered by male figures relates to the author's own career. De la Torre was, for example, the only female delegate to attend the II Congreso Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra (*Luz*, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1932: 6). Julio's focus on her appearance, read retrospectively, also brings to mind a description of the author published in the press in 1937: '[R]efinada en el corazón y cultísima en el intelecto; llena de suavidad como la miel y las rosas' (Mela, *La Libertad*, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1937: 4). The author, as this suggests, would have been acutely aware of the specific, seemingly innocuous, obstacles faced by female activists.

Viewing the character of María through Julio's eyes, the latter functioning here as a critical conduit for leftist activism in a practical sense, could suggest that De la Torre's envisaged readership were predominantly the revolutionary men that she associated with the foundations of socialist thought she displaces in the novel. The publishing context of *El banquete*, discussed earlier, would support such a conclusion. By depicting María in this way, the author is using the narrative as a mirror to critically reflect the behaviour and expectations of this section of her readership. While readers of both sexes would have understood how the description of María relates to her sex, particularly given De la Torre underlines this point through references to her appearance, the impact on a female reader would form an intratextual female solidarity between reader, author and character. Thus, and building on my earlier comments, a male reader is forced to confront his own ignorance, whereas a female reader is inclined to identify with the overlooked, yet politically articulate and morally just, figure of María. There is, furthermore, an undertone of ridicule at the protagonist's expense that invites the female reader to collude with the author as, despite his nuanced ideological views and important government work, Julio's perception is clouded when it comes to



women. While his adoration of Lena gives the reader a sense of a lovesick adolescent, the protagonist's attraction to María implies that Julio's critical faculties, and, by extension, those of the socialist (male) workers he represents, are tainted or weakened by his sexual and romantic desires. Although the nuances of this reading would almost certainly be lost on a male reader at the time of publication, Julio's unsatisfied longing would likely amuse a female reader more familiar with romantic fiction.

The protagonist's description of María's accomplishments offer a productive means of concluding this section as it exemplifies how the coming together of socialist doctrine and women's ideological agency, represented allegorically by Julio and Lena's relationship and internalised in the characterisation of María, functions as a catalyst for highlighting the failings inherent in socialist and feminist discourses. For the protagonist, María's ability is notable even when compared with her male colleagues: '[U]no de nuestros más puros prestigios societarios; uno de los mejores oradores, además, que hablan español en el mundo...' (BS: 10; emphasis added). Julio's insistence that she is impressive on an international scale suggests both the protagonist's admiration for the female activist and her competence, as he uses the generic masculine plural ('uno de nuestros') to both negate Lena's individual agency and celebrate María's successes. Although women of both political viewpoints are relegated to the shadows by men, Julio's recognition of María's ability suggests that if a truly exceptional left-wing woman is able to 'join the party' (practically and figuratively), she may be as equally competent as men and, crucially, her accomplishments will be acknowledged alongside those of her male comrades. Rather than undermine María's accomplishments by considering her a leading 'female' voice, a limiting compliment frequently attributed to the author by contemporary and present-day critics, Julio compares her favourably

amongst men, a point which is emphasised by the fact that María is the leader of a women's union ('Obreras filadoras').

Comparing the two female characters illustrates how, in both cases, rejecting or dismissing women's ideological agency can be damaging to the socialist cause: Lena opposes revolutionary politics and María, who is evidently skilled and capable, is ignored. De la Torre can be seen to try to harmonise the conflicting socialist and feminist values that she herself embodied through María. Whereas Lena is identified with her brothers and potential lover, María is aligned with her male colleagues suggesting that workers' activism *could* be a more tolerant environment for professional women. Socialism, in this sense, could be a natural ally of the workers' movement under the right circumstances, while it categorises women in relation to the family. Lena's rejection of revolutionary politics, however, affords her a liberty not available to María, who must negotiate her dual lack of political voice as a female socialist, as the female characters' degree of ideological agency is paralleled with their visibility in the narrative. This contrast underlines how, for De la Torre, there is a tangible tension between womanhood and socialism that undermines her personal political objectives. The analysis now builds on these observations, considering how De la Torre explores the ways in which female – and feminist – input could benefit socialist ideology.

### **Marx's Minerva: Re-defining Women's Role in the Development of Socialist Discourse**

Arguably the most obvious advantage of exploring the re-conceptualisation of political ideologies through literature is its multiple interpretative layers, which leave room for the nuances, contradictions and depth of political discourse; a quality we could describe as elasticity. Harbours the potential to reflect, instruct and hypothesise, fiction can

function as an experimental testing ground for working through different resolutions to the problems of society. As the analysis thus far has demonstrated, De la Torre uses the narrative as a means of exploring the failings of socialist discourse, intimating that women's exclusion from revolutionary politics undermines the socialist cause. The aim of this section is to examine how De la Torre explores women's role in the evolution of socialist thought, arguing that the author presents women's practical and theoretical input as critical. Building on our discussion of the depiction of the female characters in *El banquete*, the examination first considers how Lena's relationship with Julio relates to the development of socialist thought, then considers the implications of María's suggestions for socialist reform, which, unsurprisingly, differ from those of her male comrades, and concludes by examining the echoes of a distinctly feminist take on egalitarian reform that is evoked in the narrative. Given my aim to explore how De la Torre presents women's contribution to revolutionary politics in the novel, it may be unexpected to start with the most conservative female character in the work: Lena.

While it was argued in the previous section that Julio attempts to undermine her political agency, mirroring the practical and symbolic silencing of women in socialist discourse that was heightened at this period in Spanish political history, Lena does, nevertheless, function as a catalyst for the protagonist's ideological development. As this discussion will evidence, socialist thought and gender politics – models of behaviour based on expectations of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' – and sexual politics – the dynamic between women and men – are interrelated for De la Torre.<sup>73</sup> The author can be seen to play on hegemonic gender norms and the (hetero-)sexual dynamic to denote Lena's indirect influence over the protagonist's gradual disillusionment with the

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<sup>73</sup> When referring to the power play between women and men in relation to Lena and Julio, I term this (hetero)sexual politics given they are, we presume, in a romantic relationship. This is repeated in the following three chapters in order to clarify instances where the female/male dynamic relates to an intimate or sexual union.

socialist revolution in such a way as to underline how, rather than being a hinderance, gender is key to her political agency.

In an exchange more befitting of romantic fiction than an ideologically-loaded political commentary, Lena and Julio share a tender moment during the violent uprising that alters the protagonist's perception on the revolution. The pair take shelter and, visibly frightened, Lena seeks comfort from Julio by holding onto his arm: 'Lena tiene miedo. Siento que su mano tiembla sobre mi brazo y me arrastra en un movimiento de retroceso hacia el fondo del pasadizo' (*BS*: 119). Though this scene appears to be a hyperbolic account of the narrator's romantic fantasy, reinforcing a patriarchal dynamic of men protecting vulnerable women, it is an important turning point in Julio's ideological development. Through his emotional connection with Lena, Julio begins to empathise with the opposition he had previously considered a 'montón idiota' (*BS*: 105), he reflects on the suffering and terror that the uprising causes. Although Julio's close friend and Lena's brother, Miguel, dies tragically during the fighting, the protagonist's thoughts are centred solely on protecting Lena. He pointedly avoids any discussion about Miguel's fate in order to 'tranquilizarla' (*BS*: 120) and, rather than join his comrades, he prioritises Lena's well-being by finding her a safe hiding place away from the violent clashes, a kindness that Lena acknowledges and appreciates (*BS*: 121).

Though the chaotic nature of the revolt mean that Lena's vulnerability and fear are undoubtedly justified, the significance of gender is emphasised by the fact that Julio reveals his own fears and trepidation during the uprising (*BS*: 105; 114; 150). Rather than being genuinely heroic and courageous, that is to say, Julio effectively fulfils the role expected of him as a man. While this scene is undoubtedly problematic from a feminist perspective, since it appears to reinforce a paternalistic male/protector female/victim dynamic, the protagonist's reactions are more akin to a lovesick

adolescent than a domineering figure of patriarchal authority. The sense of sexual tension between the two, implied by Julio's comment that he feels Lena's hand 'tremble' (or, perhaps 'quiver') on his arm, furthermore, suggests the protagonist's frustration rather than a brewing romantic encounter. Whether we understand this scene as a genuine, albeit poorly executed, attempt at writing romance or a further example of the satire that pervades *El banquete* (I am inclined towards the latter), what is clear is that the author plays on gender politics in order to imply that Lena has some impact on the protagonist's unravelling commitment to the revolutionary cause. If De la Torre wrote this scene with a female reader in mind, drawing on the formulaic romance novels demarcated for a female audience that were hugely popular in the early decades of the twentieth century (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), Julio's account is more likely to invite a wry smile at the male protagonist's expense than invoke a romantic – or sexual – fantasy.

Situating this reading with its historical context, it could be argued that De la Torre taps into the tensions between socialist and feminist beliefs in such a way as to satirise an assumed lack of ideological agency based on gender, suggesting a degree of political influence that is consubstantial with prototypically 'feminine' characteristics, specifically sensitivity and vulnerability. It is precisely because of her anxiety and fear, that is to say, that Lena prompts Julio's flailing commitment to social revolution. This episode mirrors an earlier exchange in which Julio dismisses Lena's opposition to the strike by insisting that she speaks out of fear ('miedo') (*BS*: 62), revealing his paternalistic understanding of Lena and her views. While Lena's behaviour appears to prove Julio's reasoning, De la Torre shifts the emphasis from Lena's anxieties to the protagonist's flailing commitment to his socialist convictions. The author can be seen to subvert the implied lack of autonomy that speaking out of fear would suggest, affording

the character a degree of textual agency that effectively compensates for the way Julio, and the socialist doctrine he embodies, dismisses her critical ability. Lena's impact on the protagonist, that is to say, influences the progression of the narrative, with this scene constituting a pivotal moment in Julio's character development. The implied link between political and textual agency that this suggests is illustrated by the tangible shift in Lena's language that occurs after this point. Although she evades subjectivity through the use of the impersonal during an early debate, using 'se puede' and 'se hace' even though she is referring to Julio (*BS*: 61), Lena pointedly aligns herself with the anti-revolutionaries during a later argument: '¿Tú crees que solo tú sufres en esta lucha social? Piensa que nosotros... también sufrimos, Julio...' (*BS*: 178). Capitalising on politically-loaded language, Lena uses Julio's strategy against him, subverting his paternalistic reactions to her anti-revolutionary views by identifying conservatism with a mixed-sex collective ('nosotros') and socialism with a singular, male voice ('tú'). Lena's *political* impact here, therefore, relates to socio-economic theories and sexual politics in equal measure.

By implicitly affording Lena an autonomous political identity that is invested with (hetero-)sexual politics, the author depicts how patriarchal convention engenders conservative rhetoric. Julio's treatment of Lena appears to undermine communist discourse at a base level, as the protagonist's perception of their exchange effectively counters Engel's argument that communism would revolutionise relations between the sexes, believing that the abolition of private property, which made women reliant on their husbands, and the introduction of communal education, Marxism would 'transform

the relations between the sexes into a purely private affair' (1971a: 185).<sup>74</sup> Not only does the protagonist describe himself in the protector role but his commitment to the cause falters. The fact that this scene is told from Julio's perspective only serves to emphasise the hypocrisy of socialist doctrine that this implies. Considering De la Torre's understanding of feminism in relation to Julio's thoughts at the end of the narrative exemplifies how the interface of gender and government politics is borne out in *El banquete* in such a way as to underline how socialism hinders its own development by excluding women. As indicated earlier, the novel concludes with Julio planning to leave his political activism behind, hoping instead to start a family life with Lena. Drawing on a common trope in Soviet literature (Purkey, 2013: 117), Julio believes that his dream of having children with Lena will lead to the metaphorical birth of the revolution: '[M]i estirpe de revolucionario transmitiendo a nuestros hijos todo su talento y toda mi ánima de luchador impertérrito...' (BS: 304).

The protagonist's designs to abandon his activism and focus his attentions on a family life with Lena imply that transition between political and domestic life is possible, for men at least, and Julio's fantasy further emphasises the need for continued reform and re-workings of revolutionary models. Although the narrative charts his ideological development, the notion of women's ideological autonomy continues to elude him. To some degree, we might conclude here that De la Torre's approach is counterproductive as the subtlety of the subtext is unlikely to resonate with a male reader. There is, however, the potential for an intratextual solidarity between the author and a female reader through this female-authored critique of women's place in contemporary socialist rhetoric.

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<sup>74</sup> Engels argues a similar point in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* from 1884, stating that communism will create 'a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other considerations than real love, or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences' (1968a: 508).

By envisaging Lena as the mother of ideologically committed offspring, the protagonist can be seen to quash her political agency, as both a socially-engaged worker and a woman. Not only are her views dismissed as inconsequential, she becomes a vessel for the socialist revolution that she does not support; a fate that encapsulates the conflict between leftist and feminist discourses that are explored in the narrative. Evoking Gorky's *Mother* (1906),<sup>75</sup> the author touches on the critical impact of a maternal-figure on the evolution of socialist thought in *El banquete* through the singular reference to Julio's mother, as the protagonist recalls how her death due to employers' negligence emboldened his revolutionary convictions (*BS*: 32). The inevitable tension between De la Torre's socialist and feminist loyalties, however, is tangible, as the impact of Julio's mother on the development of Julio's ideological consciousness, and, by extension, socialist thought, is sacrificial rather than empowered. An allegorical reading makes clear the symbiotic link between the development of socialist and feminist discourses, as the child that Julio envisages would combine the notion of women's ideological autonomy associated with Lena with the socialist thought personified by the protagonist. Synthesising these oppositional, inherently paradoxical ideologies through biological reproduction rests on the assumption that this fusion is organic and instinctive, as motherhood functions as a metaphor that bridges the gap between a feminist and socialist initiative. Building on our discussion of how comparing the characters of Lena and María suggests that leftist politics are more open to less prescriptive roles for women, the fact Lena's greatest impact of political development is through her hypothetical child reinforces how the conservative view she is identified with is invested with hegemonic gender norms. As the novel was written after De la Torre's brief marriage to a cousin in 1917, which was annulled after fifteen

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<sup>75</sup> Gorky's work was popular in Spain in the early decades of the twentieth century (Purkey, 2013: 16) and, from the turn of the century until the 1930s, he published in Spanish periodicals, such as *España*, *Octubre*, *El Sol* and *Nueva Cultura* (Purkey, 2013: 48).



days and produced no children,<sup>76</sup> it is likely that, at this point in her life, De la Torre considered socialist activism and motherhood as two distinct paths, with each of her female characters following alternative routes.

The merging of feminist and socialist concerns is made manifest in the characterisation of María. Given that she embodies the author's fundamental ideological principles, it is not unexpected that the ideas she proposes are presented favourably. During pivotal debates about how to approach the uprising, María voices her belief that a just society should be achieved without bloodshed: 'Pero es espantoso que necesitemos del laboreo de los cañones para poder sembrar la justicia social... Es como si se preconizase el suicidio para la curación de las enfermedades' (*BS*: 89). María's hope for a non-violent revolution directly opposes Julio's support for 'un socialismo revoltoso' (*BS*: 32), a contrast that implies that armed struggle identified with men (Julio) and peaceful reform is associated with women (María). Since the subsequent rebellion results in a bloody, violent conflict, a counter narrative is implied in which socialist revolution is engendered by a peaceful, female-led uprising. By questioning any organic link between socialism and armed conflict, the narrative points to another ideological failing of Marxist writings which, in this instance, has a gender-political subtext. A female (or 'feminine') perspective, this implies, is crucial to the re-conceptualisation of socialist thought, as qualities traditionally associated with 'femininity', such as tenderness, docility and nurturing, are positively projected onto (male) political doctrine. Just as Lena's influence over the protagonist relates to gender and sexual politics, then, so too does María's understanding of socialist reform. The nexus of prototypically 'feminine' behaviour and critical reflection that this suggests is

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<sup>76</sup> Little biographical information about this marriage is available. According to one source, the union was carried out 'por poderes' – that is, a 'proxy marriage' – as the groom was residing in Peru. Following the wedding, De la Torre began adding 'de Gutiérrez' to her signature, appropriating it as a pseudonym that she continued to use even after the marriage was annulled, and she spent her remaining years living alone and caring for her disabled brother (Saiz Viadero, 2010: 325-6).

reflected in María's nickname in the factory, where she is known as 'la Minerva' of the Casa del Pueblo (*BS*: 24; 308), a reference to the goddess of learning, useful arts and 'feminine' accomplishments (Berens, 2007: 47) and 'the thinking, calculating, and inventive power personified' (Smith, 1881: 449).

María's suggestion of a non-violent revolution in *El banquete* evokes an extra-textual female-voiced socialist dialogue as De la Torre uses the character means of expounding her own opposition to violent conflict and, at the same time, points to a distinctly female – and feminist – socialist network. For the author, socialism and war were ideologically incongruous, as she believed bloodshed only served to fuel the capitalist machine: '[L]a guerra solo sirve para defender los intereses del capitalismo y destruir la Humanidad' (*La Libertad* 27 August 1935: 8; *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 27 August 1935: 12). This idea is tangible in *El banquete*. Although the (male) strikers endeavour to carry out an uprising which does not adhere to the 'obscuro dogma de Moloch' (*BS*: 123), the subsequent revolution is allegorised in the narrative in a peculiar scene in which the spectre of Moloch, symbolising war, conflict and violence, oversees the uprising. Moloch's description of his callous domination over the population suggests that he is orchestrating, rather than passively witnessing, the brutality: 'Yo que tengo siete hornos de fuego para consumir la Fuerza humana [...] ¿No veis cómo yo me río de vuestras precauciones?' (*BS*: 307). The workers' collectivised struggle for justice, this suggests, is an illusion, pointing to the powerlessness of the revolutionaries, dictated by a ruthless, parasitic force, alluding to a Marxist understanding of a capitalist employer. De la Torre appears to emphasise the way in which the revolutionary model suggested by María, and undoubtedly supported by the author, constitutes a more authentic and productive realisation of socialist values.

The most immediate concept evoked by the link between non-violence and a female character is the historic relationship between women and pacifism, as anti-war movements were an early means through which women could participate in public activism.<sup>77</sup> Although a reader may be tempted here to oversimplify De la Torre's depiction of women as Lena's fear and María's opposition to violence appear to reinforce expectations of female behaviour, the author's strong criticism of the assumed link between women and pacifism suggests otherwise. As she outlines in 'Feminismo y pacifismo', De la Torre was unequivocal in her rejection of the assumed pacifist nature of all women: 'Las mujeres no somos pacifistas por doctrina y ni aun por sentimiento. Es más: las hembras en general no son pacifistas: son hembras nada más' (1934: 57-8).<sup>78</sup> Rather than simply a mouthpiece for the author's views or an embodiment of the female-centric pacifist movement, María calls to mind a pioneering figure who was influential in the development of socialist and feminist theories: Flora Tristan (1803-1844). Tristan's seminal *L'Union ouvrière* (1843) would encourage a united workers' movement<sup>79</sup> five years before the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*,<sup>80</sup> and, unlike the writings of Marx and Engels, Tristan's work makes specific reference to female workers, which she emphasises in the section 'Le pourquoi je mentionne les femmes' (1843: 43-70). While Tristan's emphasis on female workers mirrors De la Torre's commitment to involving women in socialist and union causes, which is to be expected of female socialists, her revolutionary manifesto differed crucially from Marx

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<sup>77</sup> As Estrella Cibreiro and Francisca López outline, 'there is a historical connection between women and non violence' and, crucially, 'there exists a broad correlation between feminism and pacifism' (2013: 5). Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* from 1938 is a prime example, as she argues for an end to all armed conflict (1992).

<sup>78</sup> Note the use of the first-person plural ('somos') as De la Torre identifies with the women she is speaking on behalf of, a point that was made in relation to *tía* Pulquería in *Jardín* earlier in the analysis.

<sup>79</sup> Tristan calls for 'L'UNION OUVRIÈRE' throughout the work and emphasises the need for female and male workers to unite: 'UNION UNIVERSELLE DES OUVRIERS ET OUVRIÈRES' (1843: 4). Marie Collins and Slyvie Weil-Sayre offer an intriguing summary of the parallels between Marx and Tristan in 'Forgotten Feminist and Socialist' (1973), a title that could well be applied to the focus of this chapter.

<sup>80</sup> Marx always refused to meet Tristan in person and rubbished rumours that began circulating in 1925 that her writings had influenced his ideology (Collins and Weil-Sayre, 1973: 229; 230).

and Engels on one fundamental point: her staunch opposition to violent revolution. The immanently gendered contrast between violent conflict and peaceful reform that is personified by Julio and María, then, can be applied to socialist doctrine on a broader, more conceptual level, as Julio and María, on this issue at least, can be considered fictional re-creations of Marx and Tristan. Julio's frequent mimicking of communist rhetoric would support this reading, as would the comparison between María and French female activists in the narrative (*BS*: 24).

María's lack of visibility in the text should, with this in mind, be read as a symbolic reference to Tristan's erasure from the history of socialist discourse; a parallel which implies that *El banquete* taps into a socialist feminist network that is manifest in María. Just as María's vision for a humane socialist uprising constitutes a female-led alternative to the nightmarish, male-voiced dystopia that occurs in the narrative, the character's (and author's, in this case) ideas also point to a female-voiced socialist discourse that has, like María, been silenced by more vocal male comrades. For De la Torre, the successful realisation of revolutionary, egalitarian values would only be achieved thanks to women's active contribution to socialist doctrine and activism and, before she would dedicate her political career to defending these ideals, fiction would afford her a means of making her contribution to socialist and feminist debates. The final section of the analysis exemplifies this point by exploring how De la Torre uses the novel as a means of engaging with contemporary socialist discourse.

### **Satirising the Soviets: Textualising Contemporary Socialist Discourse**

The early decades of twentieth-century Europe proved fertile ground for political satire and dystopian fiction as the Soviet Union prompted a wealth of fictionalised critiques that scrutinised the regime. Although the most (in)famous example of an anti-Soviet

anti-utopia<sup>81</sup> to be borne out of the Spanish context is undoubtedly George Orwell's *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (1945), De la Torre's *El banquete* would engage with the same questions of totalitarianism, individual autonomy and political integrity over a decade earlier. While the analysis thus far has illustrated how De la Torre uses the novel to work through her own ideological doubts and highlight the theoretical failings of socialist doctrine, all of which relate to a tension between her socialist and feminist convictions on some level, the chapter concludes by recognising that the author uses the work as a means of (self-)consciously contributing her (female) voice to contemporary critiques of the Soviet Union, reacting against a recent shift in socialist discourse in Spain. To this end, the analysis first explores the intertextual references to anti-Soviet travelogues in *El banquete*, then examines how De la Torre's depiction of the regimes relates to contemporary debates in Spain and concludes by considering what her ideas suggest about socialism in early twentieth-century Spain and women's ideological autonomy. Rather than try to work within a system that was, at the time of the novel's publication, a hostile environment for women, De la Torre, as I will demonstrate, uses *El banquete* to chronicle, scrutinise and oppose the Soviet model, as the novel manifests the female-voiced socialist rhetoric that it seeks to promote.

The sense of foreboding that the events in Russia evoked on an international scale was particularly acute in Spain as the Spanish left looked to Russia for a revolutionary model. The Revolution aroused 'great sympathy' from Spanish socialists and anarchists (Alba and Schwartz, 1988: 4) and left-of-centre political groups such as the anarchists, communists and radical-socialists saw the Bolsheviks as an example to be followed (Gómez, 2002: 67). Spaniards' interest in Russia, Víctor Alba explains, was

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<sup>81</sup> While the dystopia is the more commonly cited antithesis to the utopia, critics often identify anti-Soviet literature with the 'anti-utopia', as it connotes a nightmarish, satirised perversion of the utopia (see Hillegas, 1967: 147; Kumar, 1987: 49, 381-3). For further details of the utopian genre and socialism, see: Kumar, 1987: 49; Stites, 1989: 13; Suvin, 2016.

logical given the two countries had much in common: labour movements primarily organised by the anarchists rather than Marxists; political control exercised by an elite, with limited democratic reform; and, above all, the fact that in both Spain and Russia ‘the peasant was reduced to almost servile status’ (1983: 1). The Bolshevik Revolution galvanized elements of the Spanish left to such an extent that 1917 marked the beginning of a three-year period which would become known as the “*trienio bolchevique*”, the end of which coincided with the founding of the Communist Party in 1920’ (Gómez, 2002: 66; also see Fuentes, 1980: 30). Against this political backdrop, De la Torre constructs a narrative that hypothesises a scenario in which the Russian revolutionary model is transposed onto a contemporary Spanish context. Following a workers’ strike which leads to an October revolution, the new government becomes more oppressive than the previous regime; a distortion of ideological convictions that is typical in anti-utopian works from the beginning of the twentieth century (Franková, 2013: 212). The conspicuous critique of the Soviet Union is evidenced by the name of the police force, ‘Ejército Rojo’ (BS: 190; 209; 227; 293), and De la Torre depicts the regime’s leader César in such a way as to make his identification with the corrupt, hypocritical Soviet regime unmistakable. Described as a dictator (BS: 209; 259; 278), echoing his Roman namesake,<sup>82</sup> who enforces ‘la Tiranía Socialista’ (BS: 255), César mimics Soviet rhetoric. His musings about how to manage ‘[l]os indeseables’ (BS: 191), for instance, echo the Soviet policy of ‘stamping out’ opposition deemed ‘enemies of the people’ (Čavoški, 1986: 22-3), while Lenin’s belief that people needed an *intelligentsia* to guide them (Ferré, 2011a: 56) is evoked by César’s objection to suffrage, as he believes that the *pueblo* is ‘socialmente niño y necesita tutores’ (BS: 177).

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<sup>82</sup> The plot’s setting, *Urba*, can also be understood as an oblique reference to the authoritarian nature of Ceasar’s rule as it evokes the Latin for ‘city’ and, one could argue, alludes to Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*. The work tells of the history of Rome, and Livy writes repeatedly about the need for one man to take control, ‘be he [a] dictator or individual of extraordinary courage’ (L’hoir, 1990: 240).

A tension between the author's attempt to present her own (female) opinion on the tyrannical socialist regime, both in the novel and in real life, and desire to present her reflections in an authoritative way is tangible in the intertextual dialogue she constructs with male-authored works. The most salient example is *Setenta días en Rusia: lo que yo vi* (1925; henceforth *Setenta días*), the travelogue by Ángel Pestaña, a member of the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), that documents his experiences in Bolshevist Russia. De la Torre includes a fictionalised recreation of Pestaña in her work who takes the form of Agustín Espada, a young anarchist doctor. While the allusion to Emília Pardo Bazán, mentioned earlier, is a satirical mockery of a woman De la Torre presumably had a tense personal relationship with, the depiction of Pestaña is, for De la Torre, uncharacteristically positive. Initially a supporter of the regime, Espada is the only character in the novel who is not ridiculed or undermined by the author in one form or another. He acts as the voice of reason in the narrative, publicly criticising the regime and highlighting inconsistencies and hypocrisy. He accuses the government of taking political prisoners and 'persiguiendo al pueblo mucho más crudamente que nunca lo hicieron los burgueses' (*BS*: 255) and condemns the power-driven leaders he calls 'proletarios endiosados' (*BS*: 256), an ironic slight given the secularism of Marxist doctrine.<sup>83</sup>

While Espada's vocal opposition to César's government mirrors the objections of many Spanish leftists who travelled to Russia, there are various intertextual references that suggest De la Torre consciously draws on *Setenta días* in an attempt to imbue her opinions with a sense of veracity or legitimacy. The most persuasive evidence to suggest that De la Torre had Pestaña's travelogue in mind when writing the novel is the similarity between the titles of De la Torre's work and a chapter in *Setenta días* entitled

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<sup>83</sup> Karl Marx famously declared religion 'the opium of the people' and argued that '[t]he abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness' (1970: 131; original emphasis).

‘Gran fiesta y banquete’ (1925: 92-9) as she appears to make this link clear to her readership. The workers’ debates about the Russian economy (*BS*: 21), furthermore, mirrors Pestaña’s references to Russia’s failing economy (1925: 56; 90; 130; 156), while the examples of Russian words in *El banquete*, such as ‘muljik’ (*BS*: 42), also mirrors Pestaña’s work. The character of Espada most closely resembles Pestaña when criticising the state-run communal eating halls which, as noted earlier, dehumanise and oppress the citizens. He openly criticises the canteens for inhibiting individual liberty and sardonically muses about the meaning of ‘igualdad’ (*BS*: 257), echoing Pestaña’s observations about citizens’ hunger (1925: 196), collectivised food rationing (1925: 133) and regimented eating schedules (1925: 16-7; 46), a focus that, read retrospectively, captures the political climate more accurately than the author could have envisaged as it reflects recent historical accounts and would foreshadow the Soviet famine of 1932-33 that immediately followed the publication of the work.

Though innumerable (mostly left-wing) Spaniards travelled to Russia,<sup>84</sup> including many women,<sup>85</sup> there is no evidence to suggest that De la Torre visited the socialist state and, as such, it was travelogues like *Setenta días* that most likely shaped her perception. The author’s decision to draw on Pestaña’s work specifically, however, is curious, as there were examples of popular travelogues authored by members of the PSOE, such as Fernando de los Ríos’ *Mi viaje a la Rusia soviética* (1921) and Julio Álvarez del Vayo’s *La nueva Rusia* (1926),<sup>86</sup> for her to reference. Characterising Espada as an anarchist makes De la Torre’s apparent rejection of socialist-authored works

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<sup>84</sup> Accounts of the socio-political climate in Russia also came from the political right. The right-wing press interpreted the October revolution ‘as the triumph of evil over good’ (Gómez, 2002: 67), and travelogues by conservative authors were published in the 1920s, such as Vals i Taberner’s *Un viatger català a la Rússia de Stalin* (1928) and Diego Hidalgo’s *Un notario español en Rusia* (1929) (see Gómez, 2002).

<sup>85</sup> It is well documented that María Teresa León and Dolores Ibárruri visited the Soviet Union several times, and María Martínez Sierra, De la Torre’s close personal friend and political ally, was a member of the *Asociación de Amigos de la Unión Soviética*, a group founded in April 1933 (Alba, 1983: 153).

<sup>86</sup> Mayte Gómez calls these examples ‘landmark books’ as, unlike earlier Spanish writings on Russia, they ‘were written by political leaders who travelled to the country personally’ (Gómez, 2002: 68).



appear pointed. The fact that her flawed protagonist shares the name of Álvarez del Vayo, whose work, as Lynn Purkey notes, commends ‘the rapid growth in electrification and industrialization during the decades following the Revolution’ (2013: 25), would suggest that, having consulted a range of these travelogues, the author has formed her own opinion that is not always in consonance with her (male) socialist comrades’ views. Rather than ‘toe the “Party” line’, then, De la Torre draws on the work of an anarchist as it most closely mirrors her perspective. The fact that the author looks to an anarchist is particularly significant as it implies a tolerance towards the socialist’ greatest opponent on the left,<sup>87</sup> and, typically for De la Torre, reinforces her political point, as it alludes to the anarchists’ fundamental ideological priority: individual autonomy. The characterisation of Espada, that is, is doubly-invested with a sense of personal liberty as he defends these values and is identified with a political ideology that is characterised by these beliefs. The author’s tacit approval of anarchist ideals is evidenced elsewhere in *El banquete*, most notably the reference to the French anarchist Louise Michel (*BS*: 24), mentioned earlier, and in a debate about divorce (*BS*: 69); a topic that further illustrates the forward-looking nature of the work given divorce would be legalised in Spain just four months after the novel’s publication.<sup>88</sup> De la Torre, nevertheless, remained a committed socialist throughout her life. Whether her loyalty to the socialists suggests admirable conviction or, as is also likely, stemmed from her desire to become a *diputada*, which would not have been possible given anarchists typically reject

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<sup>87</sup> The tensions between socialism and anarchism in Spanish political history are discussed in the next chapter. The conflict between these two, broadly similar, political movements was heightened during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) when infighting aided the Nationalists’ victory. Pertinently for this analysis, part of the reason that tensions between the two sides boiled over was down to the Soviet Union’s interference, as a sense that Russia was unduly favouring the communists caused resentment from anarchists.

<sup>88</sup> Divorce was legalised under the Constitution of the Second Republic promulgated in December 1931 (Art. 43).

government structures in all forms,<sup>89</sup> what is clear from this analysis is that De la Torre often disagreed with her socialist comrades on two key points: female suffrage and Socialist Russia.

Grounding *El banquete* firmly within its historical context illustrates how the author uses the novel to add her (female) voice to contemporary socialist debates, offering what to her mind was a much-needed directive to her socialist colleagues. As noted at the beginning of the section, Spanish socialists looked to Russia for a revolutionary model given the social and political parallels between the countries. Communication between socialists in Russia and Spain was first established on January 24<sup>th</sup> 1919 in an address directed explicitly to the ‘leftist elements of the PSOE’ (Alba, 1983: 3); a specification that reflects the tensions within the author’s Party. Although the PSOE and *El Socialista*, the Party and paper of De la Torre, were generally more cautious than others on the left, maintaining a ‘dignified silence’ following the Revolution in Russia (Gómez, 2002: 67), there were more extreme factors of the Socialist Party. The Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), the trade union allied with the PSOE, for instance, was headed by Francisco Largo Caballero, a figure deemed ‘the Spanish Lenin’ for his revolutionary stance (Gunther, Ramón Motero and Botella, 2004: 35). The period immediately preceding the publication of the novel was particularly pertinent as debates surrounding how the Party would respond to Russia intensified. Although the majority of Spanish socialists condemned the regime in Russia in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, basing their opinions on De los Ríos’ *Mi viaje a la Rusia soviética*, which is highly critical of the regime,<sup>90</sup> there was a tangible shift during the late 1920s and early 1930s as attitudes to Russia began to relax and the

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<sup>89</sup> As mentioned in the next chapter, however, Federica Montseny, is one clear exception as she became Minister of Health in 1936.

<sup>90</sup> As Maite Gómez notes, De los Ríos ‘condemns post-Revolutionary Russia for ‘sacrificing individual freedom and for lacking real democracy’ and many socialists attributed a legitimacy and veracity to De los Ríos’ travelogue given his standing within the PSOE (Gómez, 2002: 71).

socialist press began to ‘express a good deal of enthusiasm’ for Soviet policies (Gómez, 2002: 71).

Against this backdrop, De la Torre constructs a novel that is insistently self-conscious about its contribution to these debates. There are explicit references to the Russian government (*BS*: 42; 77; 226) and, alluding to the communication between Soviet Russia and Spanish socialists, the rebels in *El banquete* are directed and informed by their Russian comrades. The uprising is initiated at the Russians’ behest (*BS*: 89) and, after the successful revolt, César continues to look to Russia for guidance (*BS*: 192). In the chapter ‘Los indeseables’, an overt reference to the Soviet purges, César reveals his admiration for the ruthless methods employed by his Russian mentors:

No estamos en el caso de Rusia, desgraciadamente. Rusia pudo matar o desterrar a los que la estorbaban, porque ella tuvo la ventaja enorme de constituir una excepción y su lucha pudo desenvolverse en una libre eliminación de sus propios venenos... (*BS*: 192)

The forward-looking quality of the novel, which is the only detail that José Domingo notes in his brief summary of *El banquete* (1973: 149), implores the reader to consider César’s reflections as a very current, critical political concern.<sup>91</sup> The author can be seen to emphatically underline the contemporaneous quality of the work as the rebels’ musings about the Russian government imply that the action takes place in 1932 (*BS*:

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<sup>91</sup> The relevance of the work is evidenced by the numerous anti-Soviet works published in Spain around this time. Another anarchist, Vicente Pérez (Combina) published *Un militante de la C.N.T. en Rusia* in 1932, which condemned the limited democratic process (Purkey, 2013: 22), while a work of fiction from the same year, Ilia Ehrenburg’s *España: república de trabajadores* (1932), pointed to the ‘factionalism and individualism lacking in Soviet politics that so disturbed Spaniards’ (Purkey, 2013: 23). The allusions to individual liberty in *El banquete*, then, point to one element of post-Revolution Russia which was frequently condemned by Spaniards, while the dates of these other works, particularly Ehrenburg’s novel, indicate that De la Torre was ahead of the curve.

226),<sup>92</sup> the date of a meeting, ‘20 de octubre de 193...’ (BS: 122).<sup>93</sup> While the tyranny, hypocrisy and brutality of the socialist regime in *El banquete* seems to be a comment on the dangers of collaborating with the Russians, in the narrative and in reality, this view is also articulated by Jardeña, one of the few socialists who tries to maintain his ideological integrity under the regime: ‘No; no hablemos de Rusia cuando tratemos de la actual transformación del mundo’ (BS: 226). Through these self-reflexive references, De la Torre addresses her readership directly. Having reached the logical conclusion that the publishing details of the novel strongly suggest a politically-engaged, internationally aware left-wing reader, reading *El banquete* in this light suggests that De la Torre aims her novels at individuals in positions of power or influence. At the time of publication of course, the majority of these figures would have been male; a political reality that makes the use of a male narrator appear all the more strategic.

In this instance, her envisaged reader is, conceivably, a member or representative of the PSOE. It is worth underlining here that, although various (male) characters make explicit references to Russian politics, Julio does not offer any views on Russia. The protagonist’s silence can be considered an acknowledgement by the author that, given his identification with the fictional regime, a reader would be unwilling to follow his directive. While the callous dictator César reflects favourably on the Russian model and Jardeña, a minor character, is more prudent, Julio’s position is unclear. Reading the characters’ prominence in the text as symbolic of their political agency, with César in a position of authority and Jardeña a fleeting, ineffective participant in the debates, suggests a worrying indictment from De la Torre about the

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<sup>92</sup> The characters note that the Russian government has been in power for three ‘lustrums’. As the Revolution took place in 1917, this would mean the narrative is set in 1932.

<sup>93</sup> The date ‘193...’ points to a possible source of influence on *El banquete*. In his study of science fiction in Spain, Carlos Sainz Cidoncha mentions ‘La República Española de 191...’ by Domingo Cirici Ventalló and José Arrufat Mestre. The work, Cidoncha explains, is a satire, and was published in 1911 in anticipation of a republican government in Spain (1976: 10).

current climate: extremist voices are dominating socialist dialogue and, alarmingly, they are looking to Russia.

Fiction arguably proves a useful medium through which De la Torre can navigate the tensions between her desire to contribute her female voice to the plethora of male voices, both in the narrative and in real life, and recognition that a woman's opinion may not be taken seriously, using her male characters as a veil to add a sense of legitimacy or veracity to her views. De la Torre's forward to the work, with this in mind, is as provocative and sardonic as the narrative itself: "*El banquete de Saturno: novela social*" no es más que una novela' (BS: 9). Rather than passively accept her implied inferiority, as she seems to imply through her preface to the novel, De la Torre uses her male characters as puppets for her bidding, which is evidenced most clearly by the double-edged meaning of César's reflections: 'No estamos en el caso de Rusia' (BS: 192); as the author makes a self-reflexive pun at the tyrant's expense. From an examination of this work, it seems almost incredulous that debates pertaining to women's ability to reason and their suitability for political debate were rife at this period in history. Not only does the author unpack, remodel and critique socialist thought, she does so in such a way as to disassociate her own views from the failed, corrupt socialist experiment that she documents in the narrative and evidences an ample knowledge of classical, literary and political writings.

While we can only speculate about the probable impact on her readership, I am inclined towards some tentative conclusions based on the socio-political and literary contexts. The first is that *El banquete* likely reached a large left-wing readership at a time when debates in socialist circles mirrored the key issues highlighted by De la Torre: the realisation of socialist doctrine, which was made possible by the proclamation of the Second Republic; female suffrage; and Soviet Russia. From this, it

could be argued that the work was, at the very least, met with great interest by De la Torre's target readers. The second point worth emphasising is that *El banquete* would have harboured an extra nuance or subtext for a female reader that, based on De la Torre's political career, we can assume was an intentional convergence of the author's literary strategies and ideological ideals. Perhaps the most meaningful conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that the narrative engages with and manifests the notion of an isolated female, socialist voice in male-dominated debates; a concern De la Torre would devote her life to tackling. As she would chair the PSOE's women's section after her election to office, the core thesis she expounds in *El banquete* was realised.

The most polyvalent, peculiar work that is examined in this thesis, *El banquete* is a productive starting point for our examination as it exemplifies how the interface of women's ideological autonomy and all forms of political discourse was a battle ground borne out on the pages of female-authored fiction. By playing on gender and sexual politics as a means of distinguishing between her views and the flawed ideas she associates with men and an androcentric version of socialism in her narrative, De la Torre (re-)asserts her political subjectivity as a socialist and feminist and her creative autonomy as a female author.

## Chapter Two

# Ángela Graupera: Politicising Femininity

‘la distinguida escritora doña Angela Graupera, una de las escasas mujeres intelectuales que sienten la inquietud especulativa y repercutir en su sentimiento la injusticia social’

Federica Montseny, *La Revista Blanca*  
(1<sup>st</sup> January 1928: 456)

Ángela Graupera (1890-c.1936) was a left-of-centre social and political activist from Catalonia who defended socialist and workers’ causes as well as the legal, social and political rights of women. She began her writing career as a wartime correspondent for *Las Noticias* when working as a nurse in Greece and Serbia during the First World War and Greco-Turkish conflict, and went on to publish forty novellas and numerous short stories through the anarchist publication *La Revista Blanca* during the 1920s and 1930s. As indicated in the previous chapter, anarchism shared many objectives with socialism and Marxism, as it advocated egalitarianism, social justice, and solidarity (Cruz-Cámara, 2015: 19), opposed private property (Álvarez Junco, 1976: 189) and was affiliated with workers’ movements and unions (Casanova, 1985: 9; Cleminson, 1995a: 23; Gutiérrez Molina, 1993: 21; Kaplan, 1977: 135-6).<sup>94</sup> Graupera’s own allegiances reflect the ideological common ground between the two movements as she published most of her fiction in *La Novela Ideal* and *La Novela Libre*, two collections published

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<sup>94</sup> Anarchism was more popular than socialism or Marxism in early twentieth-century Spain (Heywood, 1993: 23; Maurice, 1990: 5). As touched on in the previous chapter, the main ideological distinction between the two is anarchism’s focus on individual liberty and freedom. Critics note that, while anarchism is more flexible and ambiguous, Marxist doctrine is more rigid and dogmatic (Bookchin, 1977: 16; Cleminson, 2005: 372; Kern, 1978: 19). The fundamental ideological contrast between the two doctrines, however, centres on the intervention of the state. While Marxism argues for a period of stability governed by an authoritarian regime, anarchism maintains its belief in individual liberty, proffering a non-interventionist state following revolution (Bookchin, 1977: 22-3; Christie, 2000: 2). In light of this, it is necessary to bear in mind that, although the two doctrines share fundamental aims and views, anarchism has an unconditional belief in the rights of the individual that Marxism lacks.

by *La Revista Blanca* that sought to proliferate anarchist ideals, yet contemporary press reports reveal that she supported socialist causes. She attended meetings supporting socialism and workers' rights throughout the 1930s, and there is evidence that Graupera was a member of the *Agrupació Femenina de Propaganda Cooperatista*, an organization established in 1931 dedicated to female workers, socialists and activists who tried to encourage women to get involved with unions (Miró and Garcia, 2012: 1).<sup>95</sup> As her involvement with this group suggests, Graupera was a vocal critic of women's social, legal and political subordination in early twentieth-century Spain. She gave numerous speeches in favour of women's emancipation throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, and her influence was such that she held leading roles in women's-rights organisations. In 1926, Graupera was named the vice-president of the *Agrupación Femenina Patriótica*,<sup>96</sup> and she became the vice-president of the *Ateneo Republicano Femenino* in 1928. As well as supporting leftist and republican groups, Graupera was also a supporter of Catalan nationalism, which is evidenced by her involvement with the organising committee that put forth the 'Asamblea de constitución del Front Únic Femení Esquerrista' (Real Mercadal, 2003: 1101), a splinter group of the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) (Real Mercadal, 1998: 24) that supported 'la dona liberal catalana' (Barbero Reviejo, 2006: 37) and advocated women's suffrage (Palau, 2007: 226).

As this overview demonstrates, much of Graupera's activism centred on women's roles in broader ideological movements, including socialism and Catalan

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<sup>95</sup> Graupera is listed as a member of this group in the online catalogue of the *Arxiu Històric del Socialisme Català*, presumably having joined at some point during the early 1930s. The details of the author are not stated on the webpage.

<sup>96</sup> No details are available pertaining to an organisation with this title. There are, however, references to a *Unión Patriótica* during the 1920s (see, for example: Álvarez Rey, 1987: 20; Winston, 1985: 249), and it is logical to infer that Graupera was involved in a women's splinter group related to this association. The relatively well-known *Agrupación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas* would later form in 1929, following on from initiatives by female members of the *Unión Patriótica* (Arce Pinedo, 2006: 160). A less likely possibility is that this is a reference to a group called the *Agrupación Femenina Socialista*, given Graupera's socialist involvement. This organisation was operating at this time, although critics are undecided as to when and where it was formed. Possibilities include Madrid in 1906 (Aguado 2011: 151), Barcelona in 1911 (Luis Martín, 1993: 42) or Madrid in 1912 (Álvarez Parrondo, 2007: 405).



nationalism, and she focused her efforts on social reform and women's emancipation. This chapter explores how Graupera visualises the roles of women and men in the social, political and sexual revolution that she advocates in her novella *Los rebeldes* (c.1933).<sup>97</sup> The work, published as part of the *La Novela Ideal*, forms the basis of the present analysis as it provides a comprehensive overview of the author's socio-political ideals, engaging with a range of ideas that resurface in other examples of her fiction, and exemplifies how she used fiction as an instructional tool.

Before outlining my fundamental arguments, it is necessary to establish the probable readership of the novella given the literary context of the work. Although it was not possible to unearth any details about print-runs or purchases of *Los rebeldes* specifically, pertinent details can be inferred from the publisher. As Richard Cleminson explicates, the *La Novela Ideal* series enjoyed a large readership of those sympathetic to anarchist philosophy:

Hundreds of anti-religious novelettes were published, often focusing on love and sexuality, and they were extremely popular in libertarian circles. According to Federica Montseny, who was editor of the series and published stories in it herself, between 10,000 and 50,000 copies of such novelettes were printed weekly. (1995b: 118)

In addition to making an informed assumption about the readers' ideological beliefs from the series, we can also conclude two other critical details. Firstly, the manner in which the pamphlet-style novellas were printed and sold indicates that readers would

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<sup>97</sup> For all of Graupera's novellas that do not include a date of publication, I have suggested an approximate date based on advertisements in the press. An advertisement for *Los rebeldes* was printed in *La Revista Blanca* on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1933 (1933: 252).

subscribe to the series, often purchasing works in ‘batches’ (‘lotes’),<sup>98</sup> rather than select works by certain authors or about certain subject matters. This is important as it demonstrates how, by disseminating her views through this collection, Graupera’s readership was not limited to (almost certainly female) readers only seeking female-centric or feminist works. The second point is that the works tended to have been read by women and men of all ages; a point Montseny, the series editor, makes in her autobiography, as she boasts that contributions were enjoyed by ‘jóvenes y viejos de ambos sexos’ (1987: 56).

Bearing in mind, then, that the probable readership of *Los rebeldes* included a relatively diverse readership in terms of sex, age and literary preference, I argue that Graupera works within traditional gendered norms, reformulating the heterosexual dynamic as a means of displacing and rethinking the female/domestic male/political binary in order to convey a harmonious, collaborative relationship between the sexes that will revolutionise society. As I will demonstrate, Graupera identifies governmental and economic politics with men and the public space and appropriates the maternal role in order to present women’s ideological authority as consubstantial with their sex and the domestic domain. While the male characters’ political agency, meant here in all senses, is unmistakable in the novella, there are oblique references in the narrative to suggest that their ideas have been shaped by women. This analysis suggests that by charting the shift in perspective of a male conservative who is impressed by the female-led revolutionary model that he witnesses, the work produces a metafictional construction of conversion that underscores the intersection of governmental and gender politics.

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<sup>98</sup> Advertisements for these ‘lotes’ frequent the pages of *La Revista Blanca* throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Reading the work as a political manifesto – as the author and publisher undoubtedly intended – and building on Antonio Prado’s examination of anarchist reworkings of the romance plot, this analysis will illustrate how Graupera leads the reader to this realisation in such a way as to ensure that her fictionalised political experiment will make an impact beyond the confines of the literary text. I aim to expand on Prado’s analysis, which includes two of Graupera’s other novellas, *Padre y verdugo* (1932) and *En familia* (1933),<sup>99</sup> in order to situate the author’s understanding of the interaction between the public/political and private/domestic within the broader context of first-wave feminism in Spain. By considering Graupera’s work outside of a restrictive categorisation of anarchist fiction, I argue that the author constructs a multifaceted, nuanced work which reflects on and reimagines women’s ideological agency. Following an overview of *Los rebeldes*, the analysis first examines how Graupera identifies class and economic political theories with her male characters, only to counter this dominant narrative by using the characters as a conduit for her own views, before moving on to examining how the subtext of the class and economic debates in the narrative and the depiction of prostitution and abortion suggest that governmental political discourse is inflected by gender politics. The chapter then goes on to examine how the female characters’ ideological agency is conveyed and concludes with an analysis of maternity in the novella, a role that encapsulates how Graupera highlights a hidden link between domestic duty and socio-political activism in her fiction.

### **Outline of *Los rebeldes* (1933)**

The novella tells of Pedro and Micaela, an unorthodox couple and the eponymous

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<sup>99</sup> Although Prado references *En familia* as without a date of publication, the copy I consulted was printed in 1933.

‘rebeldes’ who are shunned by the traditional locals in their hometown as they refuse to follow societal or religious convention. The couple’s forward-looking, revolutionary views are a source of tension with their neighbours, particularly Pedro’s traditional, conservative brother, Tomás, and his pious, reactionary wife, Inés. At the beginning of the narrative, Pedro and Tomás own and manage their family’s farm in an undetermined, rural area of Spain. After Micaela becomes pregnant, she and Pedro marry in a non-traditional, secular ceremony which outrages Tomás who, under pressure from Inés, banishes Pedro from the family estate. Pedro and Micaela set up a home in the country and cultivate the land, living a prosperous, contented existence, while Tomás’ own marriage to Inés begins to disintegrate. The return of the brothers’ long-lost sister Marieta worsens the already failing relationship between Tomás and Inés, as Inés refuses to allow Marieta to return to the family estate when she arrives pregnant and unmarried. In desperation, Marieta seeks sanctuary with Pedro and Micaela who offer practical and emotional support. Time passes and Inés and Micaela become mothers, while Marieta loses her child. Inés is a cold distant mother, abandoning her husband and two young children, including a baby daughter who, Tomás fears, is in danger of dying of starvation. As a last resort, he makes contact with his estranged brother and sister-in-law and asks Micaela to breastfeed the child. She does so willingly, tenderly caring for her niece and nephew. Tomás finally concedes that Pedro and Micaela’s non-traditional marriage is superior to his own traditional union, acknowledging that they live a morally superior existence.

### **‘Male’ Politics: Class and Economic Discourse Sexed Male**

The most salient contrast between leftist and conservative stances in relation to class and economic politics in Graupera’s fiction is depicted through the debates between

Pedro and Tomás in *Los rebeldes*. The novella begins, for example, with Pedro arguing for ‘una sociedad, un mundo diferente, sin hambrientos, sin esclavos y sin herederos’ (*LR*: 6), only to be abruptly cut off by his brother: ‘Hay normas a seguir, leyes y costumbres que acatar’ (*LR*: 7); and the two share a heated exchange about their upcoming marriages that illustrates how their contrasting morals and politics is visually represented through a ‘back and forth’ in the text:

[Pedro] Nos casaremos libremente [...]

[Tomás] –Sin cura, sin misa, sin... Comprendo. Queréis vivir como bestias; como los perros y los cochinos. ¡Pero eso que intentas es una monstruosidad! [...]

[Pedro] –El gesto mío, de amorosa posesión, será idéntico al tuyo. Tomás, con una ventaja moral. (*LR*: 29)

In this section, I argue that Graupera identifies economic and class political discourse with her male characters in order to undermine the assumed ideological authority of men and the ‘male’ political/public domain. She does this by voicing her own ideological position through Pedro and Tomás, using the male characters as mouthpieces for her own (female) views. To this end, this section first outlines how the structure of the brothers’ debates suggests an association between socio-economic discourse and men, then examines how Graupera’s ideological ambiguity is manifest in the characterisation of Pedro, and concludes by examining how the author embeds an ironic subtext within Tomás’ socio-political argument in order to direct the reader’s attention to the textual clues that reinforce and nuance her socio-economic commentary.

The hostility between the siblings is the first indicator of the progressive/traditional dichotomy in the novella, as they embody diametrically opposing ideologies, a contrast that is acknowledged by both Pedro (*LR*: 9) and Tomás (*LR*: 11). While Tomás is a tyrannical brute (*LR*: 3; 10; 16; 62) who is described as ‘conservador, rutinario y en extremo cumplidor de los preceptos impuestos por la Iglesia’ (*LR*: 4), the characterisation of Pedro exhibits his progressive politics (governmental, in this instance), as he is a hard worker who lives a modest life (*LR*: 7; 22; 22; 24), denounces inequality and injustice (*LR*: 53), and expounds his vision of ‘una sociedad, un mundo diferente, sin hambrientos, sin esclavos y sin herederos’ (*LR*: 6). Pedro rejects religious convention, likening worshipers to slaves (*LR*: 4; 5), and is the only man in the village who refuses to attend mass (*LR*: 3; 6). Pedro and Tomás’ exchanges take the form of a quasi-Socratic dialogue, as Tomás defends the capitalist model while Pedro advocates social and economic reform. The brothers’ arguments juxtapose their conflicting outlooks, while the structure of their debates combines the blunt didacticism of anarchist fiction and the ‘inconclusive and open-ended’ ideological discourse that Roberta Johnson observes in her discussion of the ‘philosophical novel’ in early twentieth-century Spain (1993: 7), a paradigm that she models on the Platonic dialogues. By textually inscribing the brothers’ opposing politics, the author accentuates the importance (and prevalence) of the debate, conceptualisation and perception of socio-economic theories. Not only is such discourse reserved for male characters in *Los rebeldes*, which suggests an overt critique of women’s exclusion from these debates, Graupera underlines the androcentric nature of socio-economic rhetoric by articulating the ideas through two brothers; a relationship that implies a familial, organic male-centric network that is upheld by societal convention, mirroring the male-dominated public/political domain.

While Tomás' avid defence of the capitalist model is overt, Pedro's own ideological affiliation is not stated explicitly, as his belief in 'una sociedad, un mundo diferente, sin hambrientos, sin esclavos y sin herederos' (*LR*: 6) complements leftist politics in its broadest sense. Though his values reflect a broadly leftist stance, the character is not labelled as an anarchist, communist or socialist in the narrative, an ideological ambiguity that appears pointed given the specificity we find elsewhere in Graupera's oeuvre. Not only does Graupera make explicit references to anarchism in another of her novellas, *La pequeña rebelde* (1933), in line with the political agenda of her publisher,<sup>100</sup> other examples of female-authored fiction from 1930s' Spain make a clear distinction between anarchism and socialism.<sup>101</sup> Graupera, on the other hand, seems to amalgamate the ideologies' shared objectives in the characterisation of Pedro. By eschewing rigid categorisation, Pedro, and Graupera, suggest an all-encompassing take on liberal politics, which, to some degree, appears to symbolically reconcile anarchism and socialism, resolving a tension that the author herself embodied through her conflicting loyalties to her socialist activism and anarchist publisher. Crucially, Pedro's inexact allegiance, if indeed, he follows any *one* creed at all, evokes the uncertainty surrounding Graupera's own stance. The interpretation of the character of Pedro as a fictionalised manifestation of the author's socio-political views is supported by the double-edged threat that Tomás aims at his brother: 'Hay que *segar* a la mala hierba devoradora de cosechas' (*LR*: 6; emphasis added). As well as a reference to the

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<sup>100</sup> Although *La Revista Blanca* was an anarchist publication, there is a suggestion that Graupera maintained a degree of authorial autonomy. In response to a complaint from a reader regarding an article written by Graupera, an anonymous writer for *La Revista Blanca* explains how the publication gives Graupera freedom to publish what she wishes given her skills and as such, 'hemos de ser un poco indulgentes con ella' (*La Revista Blanca*, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1927: xii).

<sup>101</sup> Examples can be found throughout this tumultuous decade, including Federica Montseny's account of the October Revolution, *Heroínas* (1935/36) and María Teresa León's reflections of the Spanish Civil War, *Estrella roja* (1937), along with Matilde de la Torre's *El banquete de Saturno* (1931), as discussed in the previous chapter. Despite the seismic social, cultural and political changes that occurred between the publication of each of these works, a clear distinction between socialists and anarchists is evident in each of the narratives.

brothers' manual labour, the use of 'segar' ('reap') alludes to both Marxism and Catalan nationalism as it evokes the image of the sickle and the title of the national anthem of Catalonia, *Els segadors* (see Llobera, 2004: 38).<sup>102</sup>

Though it is not uncommon for literature to include fictional (re-)creations of its author, the character's gender raises the question of why, in this instance, the author voices her message of social reform through a male character. There are several points to consider here. Firstly, Graupera's decision to associate class and economic politics with male characters suggests that she is responding to readers' expectations about traditional gender norms and is conscious that the work was marketed to a mixed-sex readership, as outlined at the beginning of the chapter. The fact that the reception of her writings was a concern for the author is evidenced by looking at her non-fictional output, as she touches on women's lack of authority on 'formal' political matters in an article published in *Las Noticias* in 1914, as she prefaces her opinion on the government in Greece with the following disclaimer: 'Yo, aun cuando mujer é ignorante de intrigas políticas y palaciegas, estoy segura de adivinar, sin temor de equivocarme, de dónde salen los golpes y la mano que los dirige' (10<sup>th</sup> April 1914: 4). The hyperbolic, overly-apologetic tone of Graupera's addendum reveals her exasperation, and implies a sardonic critique of women's supposed lack of interest in governmental matters. It is worth pointing out here that the author does not justify her right to publicise her opinion on other public matters in her contributions to *Las Noticias*, such as her moral objection

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<sup>102</sup> In addition to the details mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Graupera is also listed amongst a range of women endorsing a manifesto for the 'Front Unic Femení Esquerrista de Catalunya', a Catalan independence movement with ties to the ERC, which supported class equality, access to education for all and intellectual freedom (Real Mercadal, 2003: 225-6, 2006: 219, 236). Graupera's attendance at Catalan nationalist meetings in the early 1930s is also documented in the press, and so too is her political involvement with the ERC. Catalan identity is commented on in one of Graupera's novellas, *Amor que vuelve* (n.d.), in which the Catalan language and accent are a source of solidarity between the characters in a foreign land, as is the collective heritage of the Catalans.



to the barbarity of war<sup>103</sup> and her empathy for citizens who are struggling as a result of an embargo (the ‘bloqueo’).<sup>104</sup> As such, her admission could be considered a strategic means of evading censorship<sup>105</sup> or, more interestingly, as a way of drawing the reader’s attention to the fact that governmental discourse is, typically, reserved for men.

Although there are two decades between the press article and the publication of *Los rebeldes*, such an interpretation is also supported by comparing the work with *La pequeña rebelde* (1933), a novella about an anarchist female protagonist. Although the ideologically-charged content of *La pequeña rebelde* is unmistakable, the work does not include a commentary on land or economic reform, as is found in *Los rebeldes*, as female-voiced revolutionary views in Graupera’s fiction lack an explicit engagement with governmental political discourse. Just as she counters this exclusion in her press article by going on to outline her point of view regardless, an irony she underlines through her exaggerated, insincere expression, Graupera can be seen to undermine, and at points mock, men’s assumed authority on ‘formal’ political matters in *Los rebeldes* by self-evidencing that women can understand the arguments and rhetoric. This is evidenced by the subtext that underpins Tomás’ comments. While the character seems

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<sup>103</sup> Beginning with her first article published on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1914, Graupera’s horror is apparent, as she describes, ‘montones de cadáveres, en confusión indescriptible, con los rostros exangües y los ojos pasmados ante el espanto de la muerte’ (1<sup>st</sup> November 1914: 3). She emphasises the barbarity of the Germans (2<sup>nd</sup> January 1918: 4) and the atrocities committed by Bulgarian guerrilla fighters (the komitadki) (20<sup>th</sup> April 1916: 3; 5<sup>th</sup> April 1917: 3), and frequently repeats how disgusted she is by the reality of war (see, for example: 7<sup>th</sup> December 1914: 3; 20<sup>th</sup> February 1916: 3; 16<sup>th</sup> August 1916: 31 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1917: 3; 31<sup>st</sup> July 1918: 3). As well as detailing the atrocities, Graupera is emphatic about the sheer quantity of injured persons (see, for example, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1914: 3; 16<sup>th</sup> February 1915: 4; 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1915: 4; 21<sup>st</sup> January 1918: 3).

<sup>104</sup> She writes of the poor conditions under the *bloqueo*, enforced rationing of food, water and coal (15<sup>th</sup> February 1917: 3; 8<sup>th</sup> March 1917: 3), and repeatedly refers to the effects of hunger (14<sup>th</sup> January 1917: 3; 6<sup>th</sup> February 1917: 4; 24<sup>th</sup> February 1917: 3; 5<sup>th</sup> March 1917: 3; 16<sup>th</sup> March 1917: 4; 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917: 4; 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1917: 3; 21<sup>st</sup> October 1917: 3; 14<sup>th</sup> February 1918: 3; 28<sup>th</sup> April 1918: 3).

<sup>105</sup> Graupera comments in one article that her pieces have been ‘interrumpidas’ (29<sup>th</sup> December 1915: 2) and, in another, how she is wary of what she divulges (10<sup>th</sup> December 1915: 3).

to do this intentionally at points to antagonise his brother,<sup>106</sup> for example, in the reference to Marxism and Catalan nationalism discussed above, there are instances where Graupera uses Tomás as a mouthpiece for the views he despises as a means of doubly asserting her own political authority, as both a leftist and a woman. The most salient example of this in the narrative is when Tomás admonishes Pedro for advocating social reform as he believes that they are successful under the current system: ‘Pedro, seremos nosotros los desposeídos, los que tendremos derecho a las tierras y a nuestra vez, las arrebataremos a sus nuevos propietarios’ (*LR*: 6). By repeating Pedro’s argument, Tomás reiterates, and therefore reinforces, a leftist economic argument, and as a male conservative (Tomás) unwittingly channels the viewpoint of a female progressive (the author). Through this two-pronged approach, the author can be seen to confront the tension between socio-economic theory and women’s ideological subjectivity by capitalising on her authority as an author to manipulate the character’s speech in such a way as to discredit his point and his assumed jurisdiction.

The reader can therefore collude in Tomás’ humiliation, as the character and his beliefs are admonished at multiple textual levels: by Pedro (at a diegetic level), the author (at an extra-diegetic level) and the reader (at an interpretative level). While a liberal reader is, to a degree, inferred by the fact the novella was published through the anarchist press, it is, nevertheless, noteworthy that Graupera invites the reader to question the subtext of Tomás’ political commentary. In doing so, she encourages critical reflection on such discourse as she compels the reader to (re-)consider the multiple layers of the dialogue through her subversion of the character’s beliefs. With this in mind, it could be argued that Graupera makes use of a prescriptive, instructional

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<sup>106</sup> A further example can be found in Tomás’ ominous warning to his brother: ‘Eres de otro rebaño. Un rebaño que destruiremos’ (*LR*: 7). The use of ‘rebaño’ [‘flock’] alludes to a religious congregation, which can be read as a direct affront to Pedro’s secularism, while Tomás’ use of the first-person plural (‘destruiremos’) could also be read as an oblique subversion of the solidarity and collectivity associated with Pedro’s left-of-centre views.

literary paradigm and, at the same time, embeds an added subtext as a means of encouraging an active, introspective reader. In Graupera's narrative, the shifts in ideological perspective undoubtedly function as a consciousness-raising exercise for the reader, but also leave room for a reader inclined to identify with Tomás. It is worth reiterating here that, from what we know about *La Novela Ideal*, this would mean that Graupera is inviting a male reader to reflect on their own ideological beliefs and doubts. A female reader, on the other hand, who was as equally likely to read the work, would be less invested in this male-voiced socio-economic discourse. The combination of propagandistic and self-reflexive elements in the narrative, two seemingly oppositional, literary paradigms, indexes the depiction of ideological subjectivity in the narrative: blunt didacticism is identified with men's assumed authority while allusive conjecture reflects women's pointed omission. As this contrast suggests, the author touches on a tension between gender and governmental politics by making Tomás voice the views he despises, engaging with this directly by adding a gendered subtext to Tomás' conservative rhetoric. The next section now examines some examples to illustrate this point, considering how the author's approach can be understood in relation to women's ideological agency and what it suggests about her use of fiction to present these views.

### **(Gender) Politics: The Gendered Subtext to Male-Voiced Ideological Discourse**

Although it would be counterproductive to draw an arbitrary distinction between gender politics and socio-economic theory in any temporal or geographical context, our examination of De la Torre illustrates how the interface of the two was particularly tense at this juncture in Spanish political history. Not only were debates surrounding women's right and ability to contribute to political discourse heightened, but tensions were particularly acute within leftist circles. At the time Graupera was writing *Los*

*rebeldes*, furthermore, the first elections in which Spanish women would vote were about to be held – the novella advertised in September 1933 and the elections occurring in November – which returned a right-wing coalition; a result that was attributed to women voters.<sup>107</sup> In the previous section, it was argued that Graupera undermines men’s assumed ideological authority by articulating and explicating socio-economic political theory through male characters, in order to put across her own leftist views, implying her own political subjectivity as a leftist and a woman. Building on this, the examination that follows explores instances in which allusions to hegemonic gender norms are embedded in the brothers’ dialogue, arguing that Graupera makes use of polysemantic diction as a means of underscoring the intersection of socio-economic theory and gender politics at a conceptual level. To this end, this section first examines how Graupera embeds the interface of governmental and gender politics into Tomás’ rhetoric, then examines how feminist discourse inflects Pedro’s beliefs, and ends by exploring how Graupera constructs an intertextual dialogue in her works to parallel two oppressive social structures: capitalism and patriarchy.

While the brothers’ debates centre mainly on issues of class and finances, Tomás’ criticism of Pedro’s leftist stance can be understood in relation to gender. During one exchange, Tomás ridicules men who hold progressive ideas as a means of mocking his brother, arguing that it saps them of their masculinity: ‘Dejan de ser hombres, los que gritan contra la propiedad, niegan a Dios y quieren seamos todos iguales’ (*LR*: 5). For Tomás, to advocate equality and denounce religion and private property (concepts which echo both anarchism and Marxism) equates to a diminishing of virility, an idea which connotes a link between conservatism and traditional gender roles and, significantly, implies that a fixed understanding of masculinity upholds a

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<sup>107</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, Gerard Alexander (1999) provides a convincing argument to counter the suggestion that women disproportionately voted for conservative Parties in these elections, schewing the vote.

conservative, traditional outlook. This suggests a displacement of gendered expectations of behaviour, as Tomás, once more, articulates an anti-exemplary argument that Graupera invites the reader to denounce. Paradoxically, Tomás' insult underscores how gender relates to social and economic reform from both a traditionalist and progressive perspective: while conservative economic and class politics reinforces hegemonic gender norms, revolutionary ideas are aligned with traditional gender roles. The latter reading, of course, is unintentional on the character's part, as Graupera cannot resist mocking Tomás by embedding an added meaning to counterpoise, subvert and ridicule his conservative rhetoric.

The author's manipulation of Tomás is accentuated by the fact that he effectively articulates a leftist position as both anarchist and Marxist thought blamed capitalism for women's oppression.<sup>108</sup> Whether Tomás is intentionally addressing an element of progressive politics (in all senses) that he disagrees with or unconsciously proves a link that upholds anarchist and Marxist philosophy, the character functions as a conduit for the views he abhors, as Graupera capitalises on her authorial authority to undermine the character's ideological autonomy. The interface of gender and government politics that is central to my reading of the repetition of 'garras' suggests an interplay between leftist and feminist discourses. On the one hand, Tomás' claim that reformists '[d]ejan de ser hombres' offers some insight as to why the ideological dichotomy Graupera constructs in the novella is modelled, ostensibly at least, on two brothers. Not only does it connote Tomás' rigid definition of masculinity, as discussed above, it also implies that the author envisaged a mixed sex readership. Remembering

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<sup>108</sup> As Mikhail Bakunin argues in *The System of Anarchism*: 'The expression "social equality with men" implies that we demand, along with freedom, equal rights and duties for men and women – that is, equalization of the rights of women, political as well as social and economic rights, with those of men; consequently, we want the abolition of family and marriage law, and of the ecclesiastic as well as the civil law, indissolubly bound up with the right of inheritance' (1956: 326). A Spanish translation of this work, *El sistema del anarquismo* (1973), informs Antonio Prado's analysis of the *La Novela Libre* and *La Novela Ideal* collections. See Chapter One for a discussion of Marxism and women's emancipation.

here that this was the most likely scenario given the publishing context, it is, nevertheless, significant that Graupera is conscious of this fact when writing, and could account for why *Los rebeldes* covers the protagonists' love stories and a commentary on social, economic and land reform in roughly equal measure; aiming for a narrative that would be well-received by all manners of left-wing readers. As touched on at the beginning of the chapter, other novellas that Graupera published through *La Novela Ideal* and *La Novela Libre* collections focus on the (generally female) protagonists' romantic lives and can be read, to use Antonio Prado's term, as examples of 'la novela rosa anarquista'. Prado, justifiably, associated these works with female authors and readers given their thematic focus on love, desire and happiness (2011: 188-9). Though *Los rebeldes* can be read as an ideologically-driven love story, it includes explicit comments on class and economic theories that these works lack. As well as illustrating the singularity of the novella within the author's oeuvre, and thus demonstrating one reason that it forms the basis of the present enquiry, the combination of formal political rhetoric and a family drama suggests a divide between 'male' politics (class and economic theory) and 'family politics'. To some degree, Graupera appears to reinforce, or at least adhere to, this distinction by trying to strike a balance between the two so that the novella, and her argument, would appeal to a female and male reader.

One benefit, from a feminist perspective, of channelling the reformist rhetoric through a male character is that it may encourage a progressive male reader to reflect on his own views on gender and sexual politics. The scene in which Pedro defends his decision to marry without a church service offers an interesting example to illustrate this point. Pedro outlines his objection to the allusions to a woman's sexuality or chastity that make up part of a traditional wedding: 'Yo no pasearé a la novia para que todos contemplen su pálida turbación antes de que la desfloren. Yo respeto más a la

mujer mía' (LR: 29). Though Pedro's contempt is admirable from a modern-day perspective, the foundations of his objections will likely invite a wry smile from the reader as, by this point in the novella, Micaela has already revealed that she is pregnant (LR: 15). More pertinently, his grievance makes his forward-looking views on women, marriage and love (and sex) clear. Again, the (male) character can be seen to voice the author's beliefs, as Graupera explicitly condemned married women's subordination to their husbands in a series of speeches she made as part of a three-part conference entitled 'La mujer y la ley' in 1926, directing her criticism at the polemical Civil Code (cited in *La Vanguardia*, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926: 9). Whether a reader interprets Pedro's revolutionary ideas as socialist, Marxist or anarchist, his vocal rejection of societal and religious conventions which oppress women is noteworthy as it alludes to a major flaw, from a feminist perspective at least, of all of these models for socio-political reform. As discussed in relation to Marxism and socialism in the previous chapter, the anarchist belief that women's rights would be a natural consequence of social reorder (Álvarez Junco, 1976: 302) meant that anarchism did not prioritise women-specific issues (Nash, 1995: 86), a critical detail which is evidenced by Martha Ackelsberg's examination of the attempts of the CNT to unionise women despite overlooking the issue of equal pay (1991: 55).<sup>109</sup> This common blind spot suggests that Graupera, like De la Torre, is using the narrative as a means of tapping into the disparity between the theorisation and reification of 'formal' political rhetoric.

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<sup>109</sup> Though Temma Kaplin does outline how anarchists in nineteenth-century Cádiz saw women's emancipation as a key objective (1977: 158; publication also in Spanish translation, 1977: 103), there is no evidence to suggest that this was the norm within anarchist movements at this time. A female-specific branch of the Spanish anarchist movement, *Mujeres Libres*, would be established in 1936 (Nash 1975: 12), while the press proved a useful medium for anarchist women debate their ideas. Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895-1970), Amparo Poch (1902-1968) and Mercedes Comaposada (1901-1994), the founding members of *Mujeres Libres*, published articles on women's emancipation in the anarchist publication *Tierra Libre* (Rodrigo, 2002: 88), while Sánchez Saornil would also correspond with the secretary of the CNT, Mariano Vázquez, about women's place in anarchism in a series of open letters (Ackelsberg, 1991: 97).

Graupera makes an oblique reference to the link between economic and patriarchal oppression in another of Tomás' sardonic critiques, as, arguing with his brother, he mocks those who believe, "[l]a tierra es de todos. Arrancadla de las garras del explotador capitalista. Hacedos sus dueños" (LR: 6). Though Tomás intends his jibe as a criticism of economic reform, his sardonic outburst has the opposite effect on the reader. Not only can his directive be understood literally, indeed, this is Graupera's intention, by being explicit about the views she identifies with the unlikeable character of Tomás, the author can be seen to present a more balanced argument, which makes her points all the more convincing and draws the reader's attention to the subtext of the dialogue. Roberta Johnson's discussion of the philosophical novel in early twentieth-century Spain offers an illuminating point of comparison. While Johnson notes that authors such as Miguel de Unamuno, Pío Baroja and Rosa Chacel<sup>110</sup> construct fictional dialogues in which neither position clearly prevails (1993: 7), Graupera invites the reader to pay attention to the dialogic structure in order to reinforce her own political agenda. Situating Tomás' critique within the context of Graupera's oeuvre more broadly suggests an allusive reference to gender, as the term 'garras' is used elsewhere in Graupera's fiction to convey the exploitation of women by men through marriage, such as *En las garras del hombre* (c.1929: 32) and *Alma de inquisidor* (1932: 30), and through imprisonment, as in *El batelero* (n.d.: 20). Through this intertextual repetition, the author can be seen to identify economic reform with the heterosexual marriage dynamic, drawing a conceptual parallel between two immanently gendered exploitative

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<sup>110</sup> Given that one objective of the present thesis is to examine non-canonical female authors, it is noteworthy that in the preface to Johnson's following book, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, she explains that one reason for its conception was her limited coverage of women writers in her discussion of the philosophical novel, with Chacel an exceptional case: 'When I finished writing *Crossfire: Philosophy and the Novel in Spain 1900-1934*, my sense of accomplishment was somewhat diminished by an acute awareness that the book paid little attention to women writers' (2003: vii).



systems that suggests a latent, yet ubiquitous, connection between the political (public) and the private (domestic).

Graupera's approach is of interest whether it is understood as intentionally self-referential or, as is also possible, unintentional on the author's part. In both cases, it suggests that, for the author, all forms of social, economic and patriarchal oppression are interrelated. Interpreting this as a loaded intertextual reference, one could argue that Graupera uses repetition as a means of inviting, and training, a perceptive, engaged reader. By encouraging reading as a means of promoting an ideological argument, the author taps into the consciousness-raising potential of fiction, a quality which is implied in the novella as Pedro frequently comments on his passion for reading (*LR*: 7; 8; 24). A double-edged comment on gender can be deduced from this self-reflexive reference to reading. While it alludes to the affinity between Graupera and Pedro in such a way as to connote the author's ideological authority by evoking the mentor/author disciple/reader dynamic, it also identifies reading with a male character in *Los rebeldes*, which could explain one reason that Pedro articulates the author's point of view: as he reads prolifically, Pedro is afforded more textual and ideological autonomy than the other characters.

Bearing this in mind, Pedro's emphatic rejection of patriarchal convention suggests that Graupera uses Pedro as a means of underlining how anarchist discourse is inflected by gynocentric issues. Though, to some degree, voicing this through a male character could be read as a means of ratifying and legitimising the female author's ideas, and therefore reinforcing men's ideological authority, Graupera's approach also means that it will resonate with a male reader. The benefit of this textual cross-dressing is that the author can identify a progressive take on women's (hetero-)sexual autonomy as a key objective for male revolutionaries. Grounding the work within its socio-

political and historical contexts, the author's emphasis on how revolutionary men perceive women would explain why the ideological debate is articulated by men in her narrative and, crucially, points to the tension between conflicting images of womanhood which were prevalent in anarchist discourse. As Prado argues, women were viewed as both individual, autonomous subjects and figures of love, family and motherhood, suggesting a paradoxical understanding of women's ideological autonomy that is encapsulated by the female role of '[la] musa de la anarquía' (2011: 189); an image that is inextricably linked to gender as it relies on a cultural construct of woman as inspiration and man as creator. When applied to electoral or governmental politics, the muse/creator dynamic has an added level of complexity as it implies an ambiguous, unstable level of creative agency when understood in relation to encouraging, stimulating and influencing ideological discourse. In other words, while beauty may inspire emotive poetry, it stands to reason that, to some degree, the potential to inspire political theory or doctrine rests on an implied subjectivity.

As has been argued thus far, Graupera problematises the link between governmental and gender politics by voicing her stance through a male character (Pedro) and reinforcing and destabilising the relationship between masculinity and conservatism. Though a clearer idea of how the author works the female experience into ideological discourse is beginning to emerge, her approach could be considered doubly androcentric as the ideas are voiced by men (the brothers' debates) and ostensibly identified with a 'male' economic system (capitalism). In both cases, the reader – either female or male – must work or reflect to make any connection with the female experience, which takes the form of the author's ideological and textual authority over her male characters, that she underscores by using both Tomás and Pedro as conduits for her own views, and Pedro's comment on marriage. Consequently, there is a

prevailing tension between class/economic theory and gender at both a practical level (the lack of female voice) and an abstract level (the private/domestic sphere is overshadowed by the public/political discourse). The analysis now aims to establish how the author uses her fiction as a means of experimenting with women's political subjectivity. To this end, the chapter examines the impact class, economic and political theory has on women's lives and concludes with a discussion of how Graupera proposes that women can, in turn, shape, inform and influence socio-political reform. In the next section, I begin with an examination of prostitution and abortion, arguing that the author uses these topics as a means of underlining how socio-economic theory impacts the most intimate aspects of women's lives.

### **Feminist Politics? Relating the Female Experience to Class and Economic Discourse**

Just as the question of perception is central to the brother's contrasting opinions about their social standing, Pedro and Tomás view the events which led to their sisters' departure from the family estate differently. The reader learns that Tomás insisted that the sisters, Marieta and Isabel, go to find work in the city and, to avoid becoming destitute, Isabel became a prostitute and later died. While Tomás believes his sister's foray into the competitive market was an efficient and profitable opportunity (for him), Pedro blames his brother for exploiting their sister: 'Todo se vende. Era imposible vender las muchachas en el pueblo y las vendiste a la ciudad, pues la que aun subiste no es otra cosa que *una esclava*, sujeta al trabajo y a los caprichos de sus señores' (LR: 7; original emphasis). Pedro's use of 'esclava', which Graupera emphasises through the use of italics, reconciles progressive politics in two senses, as the language pointedly

echoes Marxist rhetoric and anarchist philosophy,<sup>111</sup> as the author, once more, symbolically finds common ideological ground between these factors of the Spanish left, while the act of selling sex also functions as a useful metaphor for the exploitation of the worker as it is an extreme example of exchanging physical labour for pay that is inextricably linked to gender (in this instance). Reading a feminist subtext in Graupera's use of this word is supported by looking at a speech she gave at a three-part conference on 'La mujer y la ley', as she repeatedly uses the word 'esclava' to denounce Spanish women's inferiority before the law (cited in *La Vanguardia*, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926: 9). In *Los rebeldes*, Graupera can be seen to link leftist discourse and gender politics through the reference to slavery as a means of underlining how female workers are doubly-oppressed under the capitalist economic system.

The author makes use of this analogy in two other novellas, *El corazón del esfinge* (c.1928)<sup>112</sup> and *El despertar* (1931), as a means of paralleling gender and class inequality: in *El corazón del esfinge* prostitution attributed to 'las crueldades de nuestra sociedad' (1928: 28), while Petra, the unwed mother in *El despertar*, is described as an 'esclava de las concupiscencias sociales' (1931: 24), prostitution being deemed her 'esclavitud' (1931: 17) and 'cárcel' (1931: 21). This is illustrated most clearly in another of Graupera's novellas, *El batelero* (n.d.), as the female protagonist, Rosa, is condemned for 'vender [su] cuerpo en el mercado de la prostitución' (n.d.: 23).

Prostitution as a subject matter, therefore, exemplifies one instance wherein the author's leftist and feminist views become indistinguishable and interconnected, and, importantly, affords her a means of making women's issues both relevant and related to

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<sup>111</sup> As explained in the previous chapter, workers under the capitalist system are frequently compared to slaves in Marxist writings. In *La ideológica política del anarquismo*, José Álvarez Junco explains that anarchists believed that prostitution is symptomatic of both capitalist and patriarchal oppression (Álvarez Junco, 1976: 198; 200).

<sup>112</sup> An advertisement for the text appeared in 1928 in *La Revista Blanca* (1<sup>st</sup> August 1928: i), and a review of the work was published a fortnight later. It argued that the novel 'presenta cierta interesante y compleja figura de mujer' (*La Revista Blanca*, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1928: i).

economic and class political theory. While Graupera is at pains to demonstrate that selling sex is not immoral or sinful in all of these examples, what is interesting about the depiction in *Los rebeldes* is how the narrative channels Isabel's demise through the perception of her brothers. On the one hand, mediating the events through the brothers' heated exchanges underlines how her sorrowful state is, fundamentally, because she is a woman: she leaves on Tomás' orders, who, in the absence of a father, is the head of the household, and she dies whilst working as a prostitute. The emphasis on the brothers' lives and politics in the narrative, in this instance, reflects both how Isabel's fate was in the hands of her male relatives and symbolises how women's lives are overshadowed by male-dominated class/economic discourse. In other words, the female experience is occluded at a textual level (her experience is relayed through her brothers' conversation) and a conceptual level (Pedro frames his objection in relation to his anti-capitalist views rather than fronting a feminist argument).

From this, it could be argued that Graupera strategically frames gynocentric concerns in such a way as to present them as a fundamental yet overlooked component of debates, which are only given consideration through the progressive stance that is embodied and voiced by Pedro. In this sense, Isabel's subalternity is two-fold: just as she is exploited by her brother for economic gain and her clients for sexual pleasure, Graupera uses the character as a means of exemplifying her point. Read in context, this indicates that *Los rebeldes* was more inclined towards a male reader, while, read retrospectively, the feminist conscience that is tangible here is more likely to be perceptible to a female reader. The sex of the author's envisaged reader is particularly pertinent here for two reasons. The first is that it demonstrates the nuances to the didactic quality of the work: rather than simply reinforce the revolutionary politics of her male reader, Graupera also identifies potential failings. This indicates the

critical – understood here in relation to both significance and scholarship – currency of studies such as this as a reader introduced to Graupera through Prado’s analysis would be forgiven for assuming that her oeuvre is limited to (re-)productions of formulaic love stories for a female readership. What we have established here, however, is a concerted effort on Graupera’s part to attract and test a male reader. With this in mind, the brothers could be read as two competing political ideologies that *men* navigate between; oppositional, yet ‘related’. Through her tragic fate, Isabel becomes a political pawn, in all senses, in the diegesis ([ab]used by her brother and clients) and the extra-diegesis (a voiceless martyr for Graupera’s standpoint, who is dead before the narrative begins). The passive role that the character plays in determining her own fate and within the novella, therefore, could be understood as a pointed response to women’s subordination in androcentric ideological debates, as was argued in relation to María Zarja of *El banquete de Saturno* in the previous chapter.

On the other hand, however, the portrayal of Isabel is somewhat unsatisfactory as it implies a dual lack of political agency which is made clear in the narrative. Just as Matilde de la Torre’s approach reflected the climate in which her novel was written and published, a summary of key chronological events evinces that the same justification could be applied to Graupera’s novella: an advertisement in the press reveals that *Los rebeldes* was probably published in September; women’s suffrage would be approved in October and the elections in which women would vote for the first time were held in November of that year (see Chapter One). Given the first cohort of *diputadas* had been elected to office in 1931, however, and that debates about women’s suffrage reached their paroxysm immediately before the publication of *Los rebeldes*,<sup>113</sup> Graupera’s portrayal of women’s political subjectivity appears particularly pointed. Though

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<sup>113</sup> The pamphlet style and short length of the contributions to *La Novela Libre* and *La Novela Ideal* would suggest that works were published very quickly after composition.

Isabel's work as a prostitute implies an anti-capitalist and feminist argument, it is, nevertheless, subordinate to the desperation, submissiveness and defeat that Graupera associates with prostitution in her fiction. The passivity that the author associates with selling sex does, in retrospect at least, undermine her feminist stance to some degree, as sexual relations for pragmatic purposes do not have to be degrading or dehumanising. As will be discussed in the next chapter's examination of Maria O'Neill, for instance, sex, in literature and in life, can be used as a means of empowering women. Isabel's fate therefore suggests a tension between Graupera's left-wing and feminist loyalties which, to some degree, she aims to reconcile through her portrayal of prostitution. In this instance, however, women's issues are subordinate to her leftist economic stance, a priority that could be read in relation to the fact that economic arguments are identified with male characters in *Los rebeldes*. While linking class and economic political theory to men can be seen to reinforce men's ideological dominance, as has already been argued, the extent of the author's hypothesis appears to be limited by the hegemonic gender norms that she seeks to contest.

Though Graupera uses prostitution as an allegory for capitalism, paralleling socio-economic and patriarchal oppression in order to confront women's social and sexual subjectivity, what results is a complex relationship between class and gender politics that surfaces against authorial will. Graupera engages with this tension through her portrayal of abortion, a subject matter that she uses as a means of engaging with class politics in two of her works, *La moral de la gente bien* (c.1930)<sup>114</sup> and *Padre y verdugo* (1932). In both novellas, terminations are arranged without the consent of the female protagonist in order to prevent social mixing: a working-class woman in *La moral de la gente bien* is tricked into an abortion by her wealthy lover's mother, while a

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<sup>114</sup> An advertisement for the text can be found here: *La Revista Blanca*, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1930: xiii.

bourgeois woman is forced to terminate her working-class lover's child by her parents in *Padre y verdugo*. Abortion, in both cases, conveys the exploitation of the poor by the bourgeoisie and the author emphasises the brutality of the procedure through emotive language, describing how the foetus is 'arrancado criminalmente' in *La moral* (c.1930: 22) and detailing how the operation strips the female character of 'la última gota de sangre de las entrañas' in *Padre* (1932: 31). Graupera's staunch opposition to abortion is further evidenced by the fact that, in two of her works, *La pequeña hechicera* (c.1928)<sup>115</sup> and *La casita blanca* (1936), pregnancy as a result of rape is portrayed in positive terms.<sup>116</sup> The polemical nature of a topic that would only become central to feminist thought in the latter decades of the twentieth century was, of course, only heightened in a staunchly Catholic country. It is unlikely, however, that Graupera's point of view was shaped, even indirectly, by Catholicism, as she condemns the hypocrisy of the Church in two of her novellas, *Los viejos* (1931) and *La vocación* (1932), and critiques the Church's influence on women in *La pequeña hechicera* (c.1928) and teachings on sexuality in *Bajos los cerezos* (c.1929).

The author's decision to engage with this subject matter in such unflinching detail sets her apart from her contemporaries. Rebecca Bender's thorough, illuminating analysis of maternity in the works of Burgos, Montseny and Nelken (2003), for instance, includes no mention of abortion in the authors' fiction, and it would not be until the post-dictatorship years examples of termination are analysed in female-authored fiction in Spain (see, for example, Davies, 1994) and Portugal (see, for example, Owen, 2000), mirroring the ideological objectives of second-wave feminism

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<sup>115</sup> An advertisement for the text appears in *La Revista Blanca*, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1928: iv.

<sup>116</sup> As details of Graupera's personal life are – frustratingly – limited, it is therefore not known whether she ever had children. There is a suggestion that she did become a mother as a death notice published in 1950 names the mother-in-law of the deceased as Angela Graupera Clausell (without an accent) (*La Vanguardia*, 29 April 1950: 13). The dates make it possible that Graupera was the mother-in-law of the deceased as she would have been roughly twenty-three years older.



in Iberia.<sup>117</sup> Although the topic may seem revolutionary, the portrayal of abortion in Graupera's fiction could be considered conservative in two senses. Not only is pregnancy depicted as wholly positive, with no suggestion of women's right to, or even desire for, reproductive freedoms, which undermines a feminist argument, other leading women on the left did support access to abortion in early twentieth-century Spain. By comparing Graupera's position with the views of Federica Montseny and María Teresa León, women with whom Graupera shared much ideological common ground, we can see how, from both a present-day perspective and read within context, the author's stance appears to be incongruous with her leftist and feminist political agenda. As noted in the Introduction, Montseny would legalise abortion in 1936 during her brief stint as Minister of Health (1936-1937), a reform that Mary Nash considers typical of anarchist attitudes towards abortion (1999: 38-9),<sup>118</sup> while María Teresa León (a communist) reflected positively on the introduction of abortion legislation in Soviet Russia<sup>119</sup> in an interview conducted in 1935 (cited in Marrast, 1984: 68).

A consideration of how Graupera balances a class and feminist argument is helpful in establishing how the author portrays women's ideological agency. For Graupera, women's freedom and leftist politics are interrelated inasmuch as women's right (and assumed desire) to bear children is dependent on social equality. Gender can be seen to surpass class divides, evidenced by the fact that the bourgeois female

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<sup>117</sup> Mary Nash notes that the Fifth Conference of Young Lawyers of Catalonia and Baleares in May 1975 (Franco's death occurring in November of that year) advocated the legalisation of abortion (2018: 285). In Spain more broadly, various women's groups and feminist associations united to demand abortion rights after the arrest of eleven women who carried out illegal terminations in the Basque Country in September 1976, in a movement that began in Bilbao and then spread throughout the country (Ferreira, Bermúdez and Rodal, 2018: 303), while it has been noted that the struggle for legal abortion brought together several women's associations in Portugal as the topic was as much a symbolic affront to patriarchal convention as it was a fight for practical reforms that would benefit women (Tavares, 2011: 277; also see Ferreira, Bermúdez and Rodal, 2018: 309).

<sup>118</sup> Mary Nash attributes this reform to Félix Martí Ibáñez rather than Montseny (1999: 38-9), though critics generally consider that Montseny was responsible for passing the legislation (Cleminson, 1995b: 121; Davies, 1991: 204; Kaplan, 1971: 108; Threlfall, 2005: 18).

<sup>119</sup> Teresa León's public statements on the issue may have been in response to the Soviet government's growing opposition to abortion at this time due to concerns about the low birth rate. In 1936, just one year after Teresa León's interview, abortion was criminalised in the Soviet Union (Issoupova, 2000: 32-3).

protagonist in *Padre* is also forced to terminate a pregnancy, as the author eschews a distinction between the experience of her working- and middle-class female characters in order to demonstrate how a capitalist society damages women, regardless of their status or wealth. A broadly leftist ideology underpins this understanding, as women's subordination was framed as a symptom of capitalism by both Engels and Bakunin, as noted earlier. In one sense, then, the female characters' lack of subjectivity can be understood as a pointed reference to women's lack of voice under the capitalist system, a reading that seems to reflect the author's intended message. By focusing on pregnancy, Graupera emphasises the significance of biological sex by drawing on an experience that was exclusively demarcated for women at that period in time and, crucially, simultaneously reinforces and displaces a link between patriarchy and capitalism. Although the female characters' suffering is greater than that of their partners (who are also emotionally, though not physically, affected), this anti-capitalist critique reduces women to a biological function, doubly undermining their subjectivity.

On the other hand, relating women to ideological discourse through the maternal role is problematic as it negates women's reproductive autonomy, constructing an argument that emphasises women's relationship with the public/political space and negates their sexual subjectivity. Though the boundaries between the private female sphere and the male political domain become blurred, Graupera's female characters play a passive role in this reconstruction. Not only is the author's approach somewhat unsatisfactory from a contemporary perspective, it also appears conservative if we compare her position with Teresa León, who related restrictive abortion laws to a

capitalist economic model.<sup>120</sup> What is becoming clear is that, for Graupera, women's ideological autonomy relates to maternity. In the examples examined above, the female characters are denied their right to become mothers and, consequently, lack agency or authority in the text. Abortion is presented as the antithesis of motherhood as it negates the female characters' subjectivity both in practice and symbolically. As was argued in relation to prostitution, therefore, the representation of abortion in Graupera's fiction identifies the female experience with economic and class discourse without portraying women as *political* beings.

It is important to emphasise one important distinction: though the portrayal of prostitution underscores how women are sexually and financially exploited by men, the depiction of forced terminations does not lay blame solely on men. This is demonstrated most clearly by the fact that in both *La moral de la gente bien* (c.1930) and *Padre y verdugo* (1932), other female characters have a hand in organising the forced terminations. Rather the tragedy in both novellas relates to how the couples' relationships are dictated by social structures that are upheld by class and financial inequality. The aborted foetuses, in this sense, can be understood as symbolic manifestations of an unnatural, iniquitous fracture between the 'female' and the 'male' at two levels: the heterosexual couples, and the domestic domain (sexual relations, pregnancy and motherhood) and the public space (class and economic political theory). As the analysis goes on to argue, Graupera presents women as the driving force behind a harmonisation of these gendered spheres in *Los rebeldes*, relating the personal and the political in such a way as to underscore women's covert political agency.

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<sup>120</sup> Teresa León suggests that, prior to the Russian Revolution, capitalism was to blame for restrictive abortion laws: '[E]l aborto era tan perseguido y tan castigado en Rusia como lo sigue siendo en los países capitalistas' (cited in Marrast, 1984: 68). She goes on to commend the Penal Code and Public Health Commission which gave women access to free abortion services in hospitals: '[L]ibraron a la mujer de los charlatanes, pues es sabido que infinidad de éstos, en el mundo entero, *explotan la situación para enriquecerse*' (cited in Marrast, 1984: 68; emphasis added). Her focus on financial exploitation alludes to the way she frames reproductive freedoms in relation to an anti-capitalist economic stance.

### **Romantic and Political Allies: The Symbolic Significance of the Female Characters**

One benefit of presenting an argument for social reform through a work that centres on the characters' personal relationships – or 'family politics' – is that it is marketable to a wider readership and is more likely to identify the reader to identify with the characters, potentially making for a more influential or persuasive narrative. Within this historical and cultural context, delineating a revolutionary message through a novella that broadly reflects a love story is significant as it points to a mixed readership: while a female reader would likely be accustomed to stories centring on love and romance given the popularity of romantic fiction at this time – both in *La Revista Blanca* publications, as noted by Prado (2000), and more generally – the brothers' debates about economic politics mean the work cannot be considered a clichéd love story. The consciousness-raising potential of fiction, in this sense, can be capitalised on in such a way as to appeal to a female and male reader; a technique Graupera plays on through her portrayal of the brothers' marriage. In the previous sections, it was argued that Graupera presents class and economic political theories as doubly androcentric, voiced by men and identified with the 'male' public space, despite their insidious impact on women and domestic matters. Rather than present a wholly one-sided depiction that legitimises or reinforces this assumed authority, however, the author embeds allusive references to gender politics into economic discourse through textual cross-dressing, double-edged language and analogies that trace a link between female-specific experiences and social structures, and the ideologies which uphold them. In doing so, Graupera confronts the matter of how the boundaries between the private female sphere and the male political domain are unstable, mutable and porous. As has been argued, this approach draws attention to the biological sex of the characters and the gendered private/political binary, illustrating the significance of politics (understood in all senses) in women's lives and

the centrality of gender in political life. Though the influence of ‘male’ politics (both patriarchy and socio-economic politics) on women is made clear through the portrayal of prostitution and abortion, the suggestion that women could inform political discourse is only hinted at obliquely through the author’s decision to voice socio-economic theory through male characters. Building on this, the remainder of this analysis aims to establish how women and domestic issues can be seen to shape ideological debate and reform in *Los rebeldes*. This section illustrates how Graupera emphasises women’s indirect influence over political discourse through their symbolic function in the narrative, before moving on to a discussion of how the author constructs women’s ideological agency in the work which, as observed, relates to maternity.

Although the ideological divide in *Los rebeldes* is articulated through the brothers’ debates, the clearest contrast between Pedro’s progressive outlook and Tomás’ conservatism is demonstrated allegorically by the contrast between their wives and their marriages. Pedro’s wife Micaela is a local outcast who is shunned by the villagers as she was born out of wedlock (*LR*: 13; 17; 20; 21), and because of her dark complexion (*LR*: 23; 46). Like Pedro, she does not believe in attending mass (*LR*: 13) and is celebrated for her strong work ethic in the narrative, which is evidenced by her tireless efforts in the fields (*LR*: 12; 13; 15; 28; 32; 40; 46). As these commonalities imply, the two are presented as one another’s ideal partner, and this is reinforced in the novella through the eponymous reference to ‘los rebeldes’, which refers to Micaela and Pedro as individuals, as well as to their views and the two as a couple.<sup>121</sup> Just as the progressive, unorthodox couple share common traits, Inés is presented as Tomás’ female counterpart. Not only is Inés a tyrannical employer, which is demonstrated most

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<sup>121</sup> For example, the parish priest deems Micaela a ‘rebelde moza’ (*LR*: 15), while Pedro is described as a ‘rebelde mozo’ (*LR*: 25) and ‘el primero y el único rebelde del pueblo’ (*LR*: 29). The lifestyle led by the pair is shaped by ‘ideas rebeldes’ (*LR*: 28) and what Pedro calls ‘nuestras rebeldías’ (*LR*: 62), and the couple are identified as ‘los rebeldes’ (*LR*: 48) in the narrative.

clearly when she fires the family's long-serving maid in order to assert her own authority as the head of the house (*LR*: 40-1), she is also ostensibly, and ostentatiously, pious (*LR*: 10; 16; 43; 49; 51; 61), just like her husband. To some degree, the female characters' seemingly token, symbolic role in the political experiment in the novella undermines their own subjectivity as they form a vital part of the ideological dichotomy that the couples represent without actualising their own autonomy.

The author does, however, use the brothers' marriages as a means of bringing to life the values and socio-economic theories that the brothers debate. The narrative details how Tomás' conservative beliefs lead to an unfulfilling personal and professional life: 'Perdía energías y virilidad. Encorreando y lentamente se iba a las huertas, sin gusto en trabajar. Regresaba lo más tarde posible en evitación de batallas conyugales' (*LR*: 55). The irony of Tomás' symbolic emasculation as his unhappy marriage and failed business strips him of his virility, can be considered a pointed means of ridiculing the character as it echoes his earlier comments about masculinity, a point which is accentuated by the fact that the social paradigm he and Inés follow is in accordance with patriarchal hegemonic norms. Micaela and Pedro's relationship, on the other hand, follows the anarchist model of 'amor libre', a committed union of two equals that rejects the patriarchal elements of traditional, bourgeois marriage (see, for example, Álvarez Junco, 1976: 297; Cleminson, 1995b: 121; Davies, 1998: 144; Mintz, 1994: 3; Morales Muñoz, 2002: 30-1).<sup>122</sup> The manner in which the couples' marry reflects the nature of their relationship as well as their ideological differences: Inés and Tomás have a traditional Catholic ceremony that is orchestrated by the parish priest

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<sup>122</sup> Bakunin describes the 'free marriage union' as follows: 'We are convinced that in abolishing religious, civil, and juridical marriage, we restore life, reality, and morality to natural marriage based solely upon human respect and the freedom of two persons; a man and a woman who love each other' (1956: 326-7). As this description suggests, the direct English translation 'free love' has connotations that do not reflect the same level of monogamy and commitment.

(LR: 10),<sup>123</sup> whereas Micaela and Pedro exchange vows in a private, outdoor wedding.<sup>124</sup> As well as the obvious social commentary that is conveyed by the different types of marriage, there is an economic subtext to the contrast between the couples. While Inés and Tomás strive for financial prosperity, Micaela and Pedro's union can be read as a reaction against the capitalist economic system that anarchists associated with traditional, bourgeois marriage,<sup>125</sup> an example which leads to a happy and prosperous home and work life: '[L]a enamorada pareja empezó a saborear los goces de una existencia repartida entre el amor y el trabajo' (LR: 37).

By depicting how a contented home life is key to professional success, Graupera can be seen to elevate the 'female' role in two senses: not only is Micaela's input as important as Pedro's in maintaining their fecund orchards (in a practical sense), the domestic domain that is associated with women and traditional conceptualisations of 'femininity' is presented as working in tandem with professional pursuits. The union of Micaela and Pedro can therefore be understood as a metaphorical marriage between the public political sphere (Pedro) and the private political sphere (Micaela), as the joining of the two functions on a personal and symbolic level. Not only does the couple's thriving orchard imply that the progressive pair's lifestyle has the approval of the natural environment (and, indeed, the author), it also taps into a distinction between biological function and hegemonic gendered norms, as it could be interpreted as a critical response to the dominant cultural perception that women's role in the private

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<sup>123</sup> The comparison between the couples and the female characters is underlined further by the fact that Micaela refuses when the priest offers to find her a suitable partner (LR: 14), while Inés readily accepts (LR: 10).

<sup>124</sup> Civil marriage was legalised by the Second Republic in June 1932 (Casanova, 2010: 68). It is, therefore, possible that the two anarchist characters could have married without compromising their beliefs.

<sup>125</sup> Bakunin argues in *The System of Anarchism*, 'religious, civil and juridical marriage' upheld 'State power' and, consequently, 'natural marriage' ('amor libre') will result in 'a much closer union, a much more living unity, more real and powerful than that which was forced upon them by the crushing power of the State' (1956: 326-7; also see Cleminson, 1995b: 121).

space was ‘natural’,<sup>126</sup> as Graupera seems to displace the assumed ‘naturalness’ of women’s marginalisation from public life, which takes the form of work and physical labour in this instance, through Micaela’s collaboration with her partner. The fundamentally feminist agenda that underpins this argumentation, given its reliance on women entering the public domain of work, is outlined explicitly by the author in a speech she gave at the ‘La mujer y la ley’ conference, as she framed her defence of women’s social and legal emancipation by reasoning that women should complement men in public life as they do in domestic life (cited in *La Vanguardia*, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926: 9). The example portrayed by Micaela and Pedro is therefore a reification of an idea that Graupera theorised, as fiction afforded the author a means of reinforcing the feminist argument she put forth in her socio-political activism by combining dialogue and an exemplary model.

The author underlines how the dynamic of the couples’ relationships is related to and symbolic of their professional success, which again evokes anarchist thinking (Cleminson, 2005: 372; Cruz-Cámara, 2015: 19),<sup>127</sup> through summaries of the couples’ personal and financial wellbeing (*LR*: 37; 39; 48; 52-3; 55) that the author flags to the reader at the beginning of the narrative through Micaela’s self-reflexive musing: ‘Veremos a continuación quienes serán más felices’ (*LR*: 10). The feminist subtext is particularly acute if we envisage a male reader here, as the female character and author address him directly. By exemplifying the positive outcome of the ideological arguments that Pedro explicates in the novella by combining the dialogic structure of

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<sup>126</sup> Mary Nash outlines this as follows: ‘The naturalization of social thought meant that any challenge to gender roles implied defying nature. The force of the discourse of domesticity as a mechanism of social control resided precisely in its link with nature’ (1999: 30).

<sup>127</sup> As Cleminson and Cruz-Cámara outline, anarchists believed that economic, social, and sexual liberation were interconnected. It is perhaps important to clarify here that, although anarchists generally defended ‘sexual’ liberation, this did not extend to homosexual relationships. For some excellent resources on anarchism and homosexuality, see Ackelsberg (1991: 49-50), Cleminson (1995; 2000; 2008) and Heckert and Cleminson (2011).



the philosophical novel, as described by Johnson,<sup>128</sup> with a – simplistic – metaphor. Through this dual approach, the author is able to both discredit and mock the conservative, traditional values that Tomás and Inés advocate and symbolise: just as Tomás' economic ruin is ironic given the character's support for capitalism, for instance, Graupera satirises his and Inés' piety as their marriage is described as an 'espantoso infierno' (*LR*: 55). The precedent set by the unconventional couple is portrayed as an example to be followed, which is underscored by the narrator's observation that Micaela and Pedro are 'conscientes de su misión y de su responsabilidad' (*LR*: 38), as the text and imagery of the well-cultivated land in the narrative connote how their personal life can be understood as a sociological experiment, both at a diegetic level (for the villagers) and in a metafictional sense (for the reader).

Constructing a text that is insistently self-conscious about its ideological model, the author underlines how the couples' personal and professional lives relate to Pedro and Tomás' ideological rhetoric. While this does attribute a fundamentally powerless, and therefore passive, role to the female characters, this does not negate the fact that Micaela and Inés are fundamental to the reification of the author's, and the brothers', dialogue. The female characters, then, are as significant to the realisation of political theory as the male figures who articulate such views. The distinction between how Micaela and Inés' autonomy is depicted in the diegesis suggests that the subtext of the narrative counterbalances the male characters' authority. We now move on to examine how Graupera points the reader to the realisation that Micaela is responsible for the conceptualisation of Pedro's views, suggesting a greater degree of authority to the female character than is initially obvious in the narrative.

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<sup>128</sup> Johnson explains in her definition of the philosophical novel that 'ideas are evident to the reader in an immediate rather than a latent way' (1993: 5) as the works 'remain a minimal skeleton for discourse unrelated to character and plot' (1993: 6).

## **Sexual Subjectivity: Women's Implied Authority Over Men**

It has been outlined thus far that the two marriages represent an ideological dichotomy that exemplifies the brothers' conflicting points of view. While this contrast prioritises the female characters' symbolic function rather than their own subjectivity, as I have argued above, Graupera can be seen to undermine this to some degree by reassessing hegemonic gender norms. From this, the question arises as to how the author re-imagines women as autonomous, influential beings. The analysis will now examine two key points in the narrative that suggest that Micaela is responsible for Pedro's progressive ideas, denoting how the character has a conceptual as well as practical influence in establishing how Graupera affords the character a latent ideological autonomy. Other than an allusive reference to 'aquellos apóstoles modernos' (LR: 4), the source of Pedro's revolutionary ideals is not stated explicitly. The villagers believe that Micaela has influenced Pedro's beliefs and lifestyle and, though the couple are ostracised, the brunt of the locals' revulsion for 'los rebeldes' is aimed specifically at Micaela. Importantly, it is believed that Micaela is able to influence Pedro because she is a woman. Not only do the townspeople lament that the local 'slut' ('mujerzuela' [LR: 28; 45; 51]) has snared the handsome Pedro (LR: 32), they also infer that she has bewitched her lover and that, without her influence, he could be reformed: 'Seguramente *lo tenía hechizado* y el mozo no tardaría en darse cuenta de su fatal equivocación y enmendaría su vida; de no hacerlo así, sería un desgraciado maldecido por Dios y por los hombres' (LR: 32; emphasis added). While the locals assume that Micaela manipulates her partner through sex, the use of 'hechizar' also intimates witchcraft, a practice that has been historically associated with women, particularly those deemed to be living outside of patriarchal norms (Dennis and Reis, 2015: 66-8; Hodgkin, 2007; Rowlands, 2013: 450, 453).

As the author clearly supported the values and lifestyle that are associated with the character of Micaela, an ironic undertone can be gleaned from the neighbours' misogynistic criticism, as it could be understood as an indirect instruction to the reader, as was argued in relation to Tomás' defence of the capitalist economic model. In this instance, the insult aimed at Micaela alludes to sex as a means through which women can manipulate men, which might be read as a polemical directive to a female reader.<sup>129</sup> Whether this reading was intended by the author or not (which is unlikely considering her portrayal of prostitution), it is clear that Graupera draws a link between political ideology – in all senses – and intimate relations, as discussed earlier in relation to prostitution and abortion. The symbiotic relationship between the public and the private that this suggests is, for Graupera, only applicable to revolutionary or leftist ideology. While the depictions of prostitution and abortion and the insistently self-reflexive exemplary lifestyle led by Micaela and Pedro discredit and critique the capitalist economic model, the fact that the author only associates progress with this link is evidenced most clearly by comparing Micaela's influence over Pedro with Inés' impact on Tomás. Although it is clear that Inés shares, and at times emboldens, Tomás' reactionary views, the suggestion that Micaela informs Pedro's beliefs implies that a revolutionary female can shape the public space, symbolised by the male characters, while the extent of a conservative woman's influence is limited to a supporting role. This distinction evokes the contrast between the 'ángel del hogar' and 'la mujer nueva', underlining how, in *Los rebeldes*, there is an explicit link between the revolutionary directive put forth in the work and the representation of gender.

The second suggestion in the narrative that implies that Micaela is the driving force behind Pedro's views relates to the brothers' dialogue. A re-examination of

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<sup>129</sup> As will be seen in the next chapter, Maria O'Neill overtly points out how women can reassert their ideological autonomy by manipulating men through sex.

Pedro's justification for rejecting the traditional marriage rite hints that Micaela's ideas inform this position as Micaela's objection to a Catholic wedding ceremony, like Pedro's, relates to the sexual objectification of women: 'Misa, epístola, bendición, cortejo, comida y coplas; esas coplas indecentes que desnudan a la mujer' (LR: 10). Pedro's reference to the bride's virginity ('su pálida turbación antes de que la desfloren' [LR: 29]) therefore repeats the premise of Micaela's idea, while the overt references to sex are jarring, directing the reader to make the association between the two quotations. As anarchists believed that marriage reform would liberate citizens from the oppression of the State and the capitalist system, as noted above, Micaela's comment, which is evidently related to gender politics, has a class and economic political subtext. An important detail can be gleaned by comparing this to the oblique references to marriage that are inflected in the brothers' debates that reflects a crucial element of Graupera's understanding of gendered politics. Though the male-voiced discourse ostensibly focuses on class and economic political theories ('formal' politics) with echoes of social issues, Micaela's comment on marriage is invested with notions of governmental and economic models; an overlap that upholds the gendered political/domestic binary and draws attention to the oscillating, permeable boundary between the two spheres.

What is particularly noteworthy about Graupera's approach is how the female character's role in this political experiment is entirely dependent on her adhering to the hegemonic social expectation that women must marry. This becomes clear when we compare *Los rebeldes* with Federica Montseny's *Heroínas* (1935/36), in which a revolutionary female protagonist is only free to become one of the eponymous 'heroínas' after explicitly rejecting marriage.<sup>130</sup> Thus, while Montseny would describe

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<sup>130</sup> Although there are a couple of years between the estimated dates of publication of Graupera and Montseny's works, during which time the uprising in Asturias took place (the basis of Montseny's novella), it is unlikely that this is the cause of the authors' differing approaches as there was no tangible shift in debates surrounding women's political parity during this period.

how Graupera's fiction 'sitúa todas las soluciones sociales y amorosas bajo la égida del liberalismo' (*La Revista Blanca*, 1 January 1928: 457), I would suggest that the depiction of Micaela illustrates Graupera's emphasis on how progressive politics are dependent on love and social harmony; both of which are made possible in the narrative by Micaela. As it is the brothers in *Los rebeldes* who voice the key ideological distinction between revolutionary and conservative politics, as highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, the characters could be read as an allegorical representation of the socio-economic discourse they debate, a reading which would imply that Micaela has a latent influence over ideology at a conceptual, as well as a practical level. A parallel can thus be drawn between Micaela and the author as Pedro voices Graupera's views, as argued in the first section of the analysis, and, at a diegetic level, his opinions seem to be shaped by his partner. The author's affinity with both characters underscores the significance of the couple's union and reflects how Graupera channels the same ideas through the two in different ways in order to accentuate women's latent, but equally significant, subjectivity: though Pedro articulates the ideas, his rhetoric is only realised and proved thanks to Micaela.

Although there is a clear suggestion that Pedro's arguments are informed by Micaela, he does not acknowledge his partner's influence. Given Pedro's efforts to defend Micaela at other points in the narrative, as evidenced by his repeated arguments with Tomás and one scene in which he makes a point of being seen with her in front of the locals after they mock her (*LR*: 27), he unconsciously reiterates her position. In one sense, Micaela's ideas have a direct impact on the couple, as the significance of her input is not immediately obvious to the reader or the characters. By not explicitly referencing Micaela as the source of Pedro's point of view, furthermore, the author herself seems to recognise how a progressive take on gender politics could, for a male

reader, maintain an added level of authority when voiced by a male character. The limited degree of expression afforded to Micaela that this suggests could also be understood in relation to the linguistic ambiguity that arises in relation to the idealists that Pedro follows ('aquellos apóstoles modernos') as it is possible, though not clear, about whether this includes women.<sup>131</sup> Through the various textual clues that invite the reader to assess Micaela's influence over her partner, which I have outlined in this section, Graupera alludes to the unstable nature of women's political subjectivity. In the section that follows, I argue that the representation of Micaela forms part of a broader (re)consideration of women's political and textual autonomy in Graupera's fiction, which I will demonstrate by outlining how the character of Micaela influences the direction of the narrative, before comparing the author's approach in *Los rebeldes* with two other works she published in the same year: *Sacrificio* (1933) and *La pequeña rebelde* (1933).

### **Authoring Autonomy: (Re)Writing Women's Political and Textual Autonomy**

In addition to the oblique link between Micaela and Pedro's views on marriage, the structure of the novella also implies that Micaela is the driving force behind their unorthodox wedding. Not only does she state her objection to the traditional marriage rite before Pedro's discussion with Tomás in the narrative, suggesting an implicit subjectivity, Micaela also insists that she and Pedro marry in close proximity to Tomás and Inés in order to emphasise the comparison between the couples' lifestyles (*LR*: 10).

As the ideological dichotomy that the couples represent forms the basis of the revolutionary model that Graupera portrays in the novella, Micaela's directive is

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<sup>131</sup> The reader also learns that Pedro attends gatherings of like-minded revolutionaries (*LR*: 9), which could be a reference to the *ateneos* that promoted and facilitated the discussion of anarchist ideas. As women were welcome at these meetings (Cleminson, 1995b: 117-8), it is therefore possible that, in the narrative, the gatherings that Pedro attends include women. This detail reflects the same ambiguity as the use of the generic masculine discussed above.

followed at both a diegetic level (by Pedro) and in a metafictional sense (by the author). An implied influence over the events in the narrative can also be understood in relation to Inés as she is responsible for the brothers' estrangement (*LR*: 17) and refuses to accept Marieta into her home (*LR*: 44-5), leading Marieta to take shelter with 'los rebeldes' and, ultimately, to follow their revolutionary example. There is an important distinction between the way Micaela and Inés influence the diegesis, however, in that the consequences of Inés' decision are not intended by the character as she facilitates the progress she is seeking to sabotage. As well as subverting Inés' intentions, much in the same way Tomás' dialogue is not to be understood as the character intends (a comparison which identifies men with words and women with action), this contrast illustrates how Graupera parallels ideological and textual subjectivity.

As Micaela advocates the values that the author supports, the character is afforded more influence over the narrative than her conservative counterpart. Through this metafictional ploy, Graupera seems to afford the character of Micaela a level of subjectivity that, at first glance, she appears to lack in the narrative, constructing a hierarchical sequence from author (Graupera), to mentor (Micaela) to disciple (Pedro). The suggestion that the author is, in effect, following the character's directive blurs the distinction between Graupera and Micaela, which further emphasises the significance of gender and textual subjectivity. The gender shift from the female source of revolutionary ideals (both the author and Micaela) to the frontman (Pedro) demonstrates how Graupera capitalises on the medium of fiction to draw attention to women's unstable, and at times indirect, ideological influence which is tangible through the author's textual cross-dressing and the indirect references to Micaela's influential role.

Comparing *Los rebeldes* with two other novellas that Graupera published in the same year, *Sacrificio* and *La pequeña rebelde* illustrates how the author textually

transcribes women's ambiguous, precarious role in the public/political space in her fiction. As in *Los rebeldes*, Graupera portrays progressive female protagonists in these works who are deemed to be instrumental into socio-political reform but, crucially, the extent to which the female character is responsible for (potential) change alters in each of the novellas. While there are oblique references to Micaela's influence over Pedro's revolutionary ideas in *Los rebeldes*, *La pequeña rebelde* is a more overt depiction of a progressive female character who manages to convert a male sceptic. *Sacrificio* falls somewhere between the two as it tells of a 'near-miss', as a male revolutionary hampers the socio-political progression he is working to achieve by betraying his more influential female lover, ending their romantic and professional collaboration. The date of publication of the novellas, 1933, is crucial as it was the year that Spanish women voted for the first time and immediately preceded the year that Graupera dedicated her socio-political activism to facilitating and promoting women's recently legalised involvement in governmental politics. In January 1934, she would endorse two manifestos that defended Catalan women's formal political rights, the 'Manifest a les dones de Catalunya' (Real Mercadal, 2003: 1103) and 'Un manifest a les dones d'esquerra',<sup>132</sup> while the author herself was celebrated for her work, as she is listed as one of the leading Catalan women in the (formal) political sphere in a press article, particularly for her involvement with the Comitè Català contra la Guerra i el Feixisme (Canalias, 1934: 1).

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<sup>132</sup> Graupera signed 'Un manifest a les dones d'esquerra' as a member of the Unió Socialista de Catalunya. The objective of the manifesto reads as follows: 'És, doncs, precis que per tots els àmbits de la nostra terra la dona catalana pensi i senti de conformitat amb els ideals polítics d'igualtat, fraternitat i justícia i que cooperi amb els seus actes ciutadans a aquesta obra de regeneració social empresa per la República' (*La Humanitat*, 13 January 1934: 4; also see González i Vilalta, 2006: 121-2; Real Mercadal, 2003: 1103, 2006: 238). In support of 'la justícia social i a la llibertat de Catalunya', the piece seeks to acknowledge the political involvement of Catalan women in the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939); 'ha de veure's enfortida també per la decidida i entusiasta col·laboració de la dona catalana' (*La Humanitat*, 13 January 1934: 4).



Grounding the three novellas firmly within their historical context, then, it seems clear that Graupera was using her fiction during this period as a means of experimenting with various strategies in order to express her support for women's participation in politics in the most effective manner. Logically, this could also relate to the month that the works were written. As mentioned earlier in the analysis, *Los rebeldes* was published in September, women's suffrage was approved in the Cortes in October and the elections in which women would vote for the first time were held in November. While the quick succession of these events illustrates how women's political subjectivity was at the forefront of the collective feminist consciousness at this time, a motivation surely for Graupera's subject matter, it could also suggest that the author was using her fiction as a means of chronicling women's progress. Although it is not possible to extrapolate further because exact dates of publication are not available for *Sacrificio* (1933) and *La pequeña rebelde* (1933), this possibility does, nevertheless, further evidence how the works were inflected by the current political climate. On balance, Graupera's extensive output in the press would suggest that she used the three novellas as a means of engaging with rather than reporting on recent events, manipulating the same basic plot structure as a means of testing out various outcomes. By deliberately modifying her fiction in this way, the author can be seen to capitalise on the chance to denounce, hypothesise and instruct; a versatility which she arguably lacked through the more practical, direct forms of activism she would take the following year. Graupera's literary experimentation is an ideal example of fiction's potential to construct an alternative reality as the works were published in the midst of rapidly changing legislation, while the author would turn her attention to direct activism after the battle was (temporarily) won.

Interpreting the three novellas as an ongoing project accentuates how Micaela's influence over Pedro is only implied as the female protagonists in *La pequeña rebelde* and *Sacrificio*, in contrast, are portrayed as key to revolution in an overt, unmistakable manner. By hinting at how Micaela has shaped Pedro's revolutionary views in *Los rebeldes*, the author invites the reader to reassess women's relationship with the formal political domain in the novella and, by extension, their own social context. This subtext would undoubtedly be written with a male reader in mind. As well as demonstrating how the author capitalised on the consciousness-raising potential of literature in *Los rebeldes*, the emphasis on a collaborative approach between anti-capitalist economic theories, gendered spheres and women and men in the novella becomes clear if we compare the work with *La pequeña rebelde*. While the female protagonist in *La pequeña rebelde* is explicitly labelled as an anarchist (1933: 4; 12; 31), supporting my earlier argument that the uncertainty surrounding Pedro's political philosophy is strategic, the story also rests on a crude female/revolutionary male/reactionary binary. By avoiding this contrast in *Los rebeldes*, Graupera avoids alienating a male reader and, crucially, underscores how content, progressive female-male relationships and a harmonisation of private and public political discourse (both of which are represented by Micaela and Pedro) are crucial to her vision of reform. The foregrounding of a more collaborative approach in *Los rebeldes* is, indeed, reflected in the works' titles: *Los rebeldes* ['The Rebels'] and *La pequeña rebelde* ('The Little [Female] Rebel').

The coming together of women and men as a means of engendering social change that is central to each of these novellas (at least in theory) is illustrated most clearly by the fact that, in *Los rebeldes* and *La pequeña rebelde*, the relationships result in pregnancy. In *La pequeña rebelde*, the protagonist (Estrella) is abandoned by her lover (Carlos) when she reveals she is pregnant as he refuses to be a father to 'un futuro

anarquista' (1933: 4), before he eventually returns, contrite and receptive to her ideas. Carlos believes that Estrella's progressive outlook gave her the strength to live as a single mother and the couple reunite, a reconciliation that conveys both romantic and ideological unity, as Carlos acknowledges: 'Guarda tus ideas, pequeña y adorable anarquista, que puede llegar día en que seas mi maestra y mi iniciadora' (1933: 31).

Carlos' newfound receptiveness to Estrella's progressive views, which he openly despises at the beginning of the narrative, suggest that the birth of their son facilitates his conversion. Although it may seem logical that he would reconsider the relationship now the couple share a child, the fact that his change of heart extends to his broader outlook demonstrates how, in Graupera's fiction, personal relationships and ideological stances influence, inform and shape one another, as is evidenced by summarising an allegorical reading of *Los rebeldes*: leftist socio-economic theories engender social harmony and prosperity (Micaela and Pedro's contented existence) while the capitalist model leads to social and economic ruin (the failure of Inés and Tomás' marriage). Although this suggests an equilibrium with both women and men and the gendered spheres counterbalancing one another, Carlos' conversion in *La pequeña rebelde* appears to afford women the proverbial upper hand: Estrella is only able to proselytise her cynical lover once she has become a mother. The revolutionary potential of the maternal role that this suggests forms the basis of the final section of this analysis, in which I argue that it is through the depiction of maternity in *Los rebeldes* that Graupera suggests that women can, in fact, lead the charge and (re)claim their ideological subjectivity through the socially- and biologically-determined maternal role.

## **Revolutionising Maternity: Mobilising Women Through Motherhood**

Given motherhood is an experience demarcated for females, it is often used as a symbolic, practical and spiritual representation of women's unique, virtuous qualities. Not only was the image of the Virgin firmly imprinted on both Spanish and Portuguese collective psyches given the social influence of the Catholic Church, but the lack of effective contraception and social and legal opposition to non-hetero-sexual relationships, also due to the power of the Church, meant that, for most women in this context, motherhood would be almost inevitable. The portrayal of abortion in Graupera's fiction would imply that the author also considered motherhood a positive experience. As the conclusion to this analysis will demonstrate, however, a favourable depiction of maternity does not undermine her revolutionary values. It can, in fact, reinforce them. In the previous section, I argued that Graupera destabilises the arbitrary boundaries between the public/political and private/domestic spaces that are upheld by oppressive social structures (capitalism and patriarchy) in order to foreground the latent, yet potent, influence that women and the 'female' sphere can exercise over men and the 'male' domains of work, finances and socio-economic political discourse. The objective of the final section of this chapter is to illustrate how, through the portrayal of motherhood as an ideologically-charged social initiative, Graupera suggests an organic link between socio-political revolution and women's political autonomy in *Los rebeldes*. To this end, the analysis that follows first examines how Micaela's depiction as a wife and mother relates to Tomás' conversion, then explores how Graupera emphasises the social significance of Micaela's role on a broader, public scale, and ends with an examination of the self-reflexive conclusion of the narrative.

The most salient way that Graupera underlines a link between motherhood and revolution in *Los rebeldes* relates to Tomás' eventual conversion. Though he fails to be

persuaded by his brother's arguments, the example laid out for him through Micaela and Pedro's successful personal and professional life is too compelling to ignore. Rather than attribute the couple's successful home and work life to his brother's socio-economic theories, however, Tomás believes that Micaela's influence is key. Crucially, he frames his ideological shift in relation to which of the women he prefers: for example, he adamantly insists Inés is a better wife when he is a conservative (*LR*: 28), before later conceding that Micaela is 'la más amante de las esposas' (*LR*: 51) after changing his point of view. As well as serving as a reminder of the romantic/ideological parallel that underpins the narrative, Tomás' analogy (unbeknownst to Tomás) reflects the unstable depiction of women's ideological subjectivity in the narrative as he identifies each of the women as holding two distinct beliefs without assuming any agency on their part; he reduces the female characters to their domestic duties in order to express his own reassessment of the public/political domain. The nuanced portrayal of womanhood that this suggests is alluded to by Tomás' perception of Micaela, as he commends her for being an 'esposa amantísima' and 'madre tierna y abnegada' (*LR*: 60), a description that illustrates how Graupera's blurring of the boundary between the private and the political is applied to the conceptualisation of womanhood in the narrative.

As we mentioned in the discussion of the female characters' symbolic function in the narrative, the author manages to avoid polarising the models of female behaviour associated with the public sphere (the 'new woman') and the private domain (the 'angel of the hearth'). Accordingly in their maternal roles, Micaela, the progressive 'rebelde' is a selfless, nurturing mother, whereas Inés, the conservative traditionalist, is unloving, distant and indifferent to her children's wellbeing (*LR*: 49; 51; 55-7; 59-60). The fact that Micaela is associated with an unorthodox understanding of motherhood is further

evidenced by the fact that she conceives before her wedding (*LR*: 15) and she herself is born out of wedlock (*LR*: 14-5).<sup>133</sup> As this contrast illustrates, neither of the female characters fit comfortably within the ‘angel’/‘new woman’ paradigm, as the depiction of Micaela as a devoted wife and mother problematises the self-sufficiency associated with the ‘new woman’, while Inés’ hypocritical piety and neglect of her family constitutes a critical satirisation of the devote, morally-upstanding ‘angel’.

Rather than a prototypical ‘mujer nueva’, then, the depiction of Micaela constitutes a reification of the author’s vision for emancipated women. As she would outline in a speech, Graupera believed that feminist progress should not undermine or negate ‘legítimas aspiraciones femeninas’ (cited in *La Vanguardia*, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1926: 8). The author also states the importance of women maintaining ‘feminine’ traits in another address, in which she qualifies her defence of women’s social, legal and political equality with the amendment: ‘La verdadera misión de la mujer, es ser... mujer’ (cited in *La Vanguardia*, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1925: 11). In *Los rebeldes*, Graupera manifests her vision of an emancipated ‘feminine’ woman in the character of Micaela as a means of demonstrating to the reader how the conventional, biologically pre-determined maternal role harbours an explicitly social or political function, bridging the gap between progress and tradition. The author’s emphatic suturing of female autonomy and a traditional understanding of ‘femininity’ is also evidenced over a decade later, in her non-fiction first-person account of her experiences as a war correspondent, *El gran*

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<sup>133</sup> Micaela continues to work the land while pregnant, despite suffering from sickness and exhaustion (*LR*: 37; 53). This can be understood as a means of confronting the essentialist discourse expounded by the renowned medic and writer Dr Gregorio Marañón. In *Maternidad y feminismo: tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual*, first published in 1927, Marañón reinforces the link between maternity and domesticity by associating work with men and motherhood with women (1972: 274), emphasising how women should avoid manual labour: ‘¡Maternidad y trabajo físico son incompatibles!: no nos cansaremos de decirlo’ (1972: 306; original emphasis). Micaela’s stoicism and fortitude while pregnant can be read as a critique of Marañón’s essentialist rhetoric, further emphasising the break between conservatism and motherhood in Graupera’s fiction.

*crimen: lo que yo he visto en la guerra*, published in 1935.<sup>134</sup> Drawing on the anarchist principles of her publisher, which considered motherhood a vital, organic component of women's role in revolution,<sup>135</sup> Graupera can be seen to emphasise how motherhood affords women an important social task which surpasses the confines of the domestic sphere, as the narrative concludes with Micaela nurturing Inés and Tomás' children as well as her own. Her maternal skills, therefore, allow Micaela to pass on her views to the next generation, while the conservative, traditional values identified with Inés and the capitalist, patriarchal abuse associated with Marieta, whose pregnancy results in a miscarriage, will dissipate.

As well as emphasising the break between biological reproduction and socio-political duty, Graupera can be seen to project the maternal role onto the public space in *Los rebeldes*, which is denoted by the fact that Micaela cares for children who are not her own. This is accentuated by comparing the narrative with *La pequeña rebelde*, as Estrella only cares for her own son. The gender of the children is also significant as it demonstrates how Micaela's revolutionary model functions as a microcosm for society (as she cares for girls and boys), which points the reader to an allegorical reading of the narrative, typical of anarchist fiction: progressive social values and leftist socio-economic theory (Micaela and Pedro) are superior to traditionalism and the capitalist model (Inés and Tomás) and will engender a harmonious future for society (the children). Micaela's influence over Tomás, furthermore, illustrates the symbolic significance of motherhood in the narrative, as the mentor/disciple dynamic upon which

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<sup>134</sup> The author notes how she admires the strength and determination of women bidding farewell to their husbands and sons (1935: 48) and commends their domestic skills (1935: 48), adding that she too maintains her own 'sensibilidad de mujer' (1935: 44) and 'compasión de mujer' (1935: 31) despite the horrors she has witnessed.

<sup>135</sup> In *The System of Anarchism*, Bakunin underlines how by performing this social duty, mothers are fulfilling a biologically predetermined mission and acting on behalf of society, a role that is entrusted to mothers 'naturally and not by right' (1953: 327; also see Álvarez Junco, 1976: 296-7; Davies, 1991: 205; Davies, 1998: 144).

the maternal role is founded takes on an explicitly politicised quality that affords women a means of exercising authority over men. The extent to which Graupera's approach is revolutionary is demonstrated by comparing her depiction of maternity with those of Burgos, Montseny and Nelken, all contemporaries of Graupera who shared much ideological common ground with the author. As Rebecca Bender (2003) observes, these writers reformulate maternity as a means of engaging with women's own experiences, choices or rights. Graupera's portrayal of maternity, on the other hand, reconsiders women's role within a broader social project. As well as giving Micaela a practical means of passing on her revolutionary ideals, impacting both her own life and society as a whole, motherhood allows her to bridge the gulf between the private and public spaces and to cultivate, nurture and promote reform for both women and men. By presenting maternity in this way, Graupera frames a revolutionary model led by women as an appealing prospect to both a female and male reader, underlining the instructional quality of the text. While the author's evocation of maternity taps into the way 'the symbol of motherhood and women's identification with their maternal role' was used as a means of attracting women to political parties after suffrage was passed (Nash, 1995: 54-5), it also presents women's ideological autonomy without challenging traditional gender roles; making it a positive, rather than threatening, prospect for a male reader in particular.

Read in context, then, motherhood was an ideal metaphor for Graupera to counterbalance women's political parity with hegemonic understandings of femininity, as she sexes revolution as female through the practical and symbolic significance of maternity. The author can be seen to underline how the proliferation of progressive ideals is dependent on the maternal role through the imagery she employs in the brothers' first and last political debates in the narrative. While Pedro initially describes



his views in relation to ‘semillas caídas’ (LR: 5), an image that evokes masculinity, he reworks the metaphor when reflecting on his brother’s recent conversion so that it alludes to women’s reproductive potential, as he observes how Tomás has been persuaded by the ‘bella concepción de la vida’ (LR: 64). This analogy encapsulates the paradox surrounding women’s political subjectivity that the author seeks to highlight: though the imagery and narrative point to Micaela’s decisive influence, these musings, like all of the ideological discourse in the novella, are voiced by a man.

Micaela’s role in facilitating the conclusion to the narrative, by agreeing to nurse Tomás’ starving daughter, reasserts the character’s ideological and textual subjectivity through her ability to (re)construct the male characters’ beliefs. Just as the author’s identification with Micaela mirrors the way in which the character shapes Pedro’s views, Micaela’s critical role in the *desenlace* illustrates how she directs, or ‘writes’, Tomás’ conversion. The parallel between ideological enlightenment and literary production that this suggests is encapsulated by the insistently self-reflexive description of Tomás’ epiphany: ‘[Tomás] [c]erró el libro de su pasado y empezó la primera página del nuevo con un gesto heroico y humilde’ (LR: 60). The progressive ideals that are conceived, nurtured and proliferated by Micaela convince the male sceptic by working within hegemonic gender norms, since it is because of a revolutionary reworking of the maternal role that Tomás reconsiders his ideological position and reasserts his masculinity, as he notes in the final line of the novella: ‘[E]mpiezo a ser *un hombre*. Un hombre y... *un rebelde*’ (LR: 64; original emphasis). On reflection, therefore, Tomás’ fear that those who promote revolution ‘dejan de ser hombres’ (LR: 5) should be understood as a sardonic critique of women’s limited voice in the public/political domain, as the implication of the novella’s conclusion is that the liberal reformists are not necessarily men to begin with. By constructing a self-reflexive conversion narrative,

the author parallels women's ideological and textual subjectivity in order to invite a reflective, perceptive reader who may engender the female-led revolutionary model that she presents in *Los rebeldes*. Although the typical readership of Graupera's novella would need little convincing of the benefits of a revolutionary political model, Tomás' conversion represents both an ideological shift from conservative to revolutionary ideals – which the *La Revista Blanca* readers would expect – and the development of a feminist conscience that the author aims specifically at her male readership.

## Chapter Three

# Maria O’Neill: Romanticising Politics

‘Escritora notavel, poetiza de valor, é consideravel a bagagem literaria que legou á sua terra. Oradora distintissima, de uma espontansidade extraordinaria, eloquente, e erudtita, a sua voz arrebotava as massas.’  
(Anon. 1932: 2)  
Obituary Published in *Alma Feminina*

A committed feminist, republican and socialist, Maria O’Neill (1873-1932) dedicated her life to defending the social, legal and political emancipation of Portuguese women. She is listed as a member of the Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portuguesas (CNMP) from 1927, the longest running women’s group in Portuguese history, and was instrumental in the Primeiro Congresso Feminista e de Educação that took place in 1924 (Oliveira, 2005: 29). O’Neill’s greatest feminist legacy is undoubtedly her career as a writer and editor, most notably her tenure directing *Almanque das Senhoras* from 1911 to 1925. As the dates indicate, this important women’s periodical was edited by O’Neill throughout much of the First Republic. Under O’Neill’s direction, *Almanque* would develop a more overtly feminist agenda. Although the founder of the publication, Guiomar Torrezão (1844-1898) was of a more conservative sensibility, and expressly avoided any reference to ‘feminismo’ in her paper (see Esteves, 2018: 103-4), O’Neill took the opportunity to publicise progress and developments for the women’s movements on a domestic and international scale. Written output, as this suggests, was a crucial component of O’Neill’s feminist activism. During a writing career that would last over two decades, she published an eclectic array of writings, including novels, children’s stories, newspaper articles and poetry. Despite her impressive output, O’Neill has received little critical attention, other than brief outlines of her life and works in bio-

bibliographical resources<sup>136</sup> and a solitary article on her satirical cartoons (Lousada, 2013). The focus of this chapter is the clearest example of how a lack of critical literature on female writers distorts our understanding of national literary histories. An exceptionally talented figure in her own right, she is most frequently remembered in Portuguese literary criticism for being the paternal grandmother of Alexandre O'Neill (1924-1986), one of the greatest Portuguese poets of the twentieth century.

While the previous two chapters exemplified how there are often close links between leftist politics and literary production, O'Neill's own socialist and republican convictions are not evident in her literature. Other than brief, allusive references that point to a more generalised sense of egalitarianism and justice than an explicit socio-economic argument,<sup>137</sup> much of O'Neill's fiction centres on dramatic relationships between women and men, a subject matter which was almost certainly informed by her own turbulent personal life, that included a series of public, scandalous affairs. Turning to O'Neill's extra-literary output illustrates how, for the author, women's political parity and collaboration between women and men were fundamental to her understanding of feminism, notably three public lectures that exemplify her support for women's social and political emancipation: 'A acção da mulher no socialismo' (1919), 'A escravatura feminina' (1926)<sup>138</sup> and 'O voto às mulheres' (1928). O'Neill was a staunch advocate for women's suffrage and she would make her case for women's right to vote in 'O voto às mulheres', which was delivered at the II Congresso Feminista e de Educação in June 1928, an event which was organised by the CNMP. Lamenting how

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<sup>136</sup> There are entries on O'Neill in collections about Portuguese women writers (see, for example, Edfeldt, 2006; Lopes de Oliveira, 1983) and feminist activists (see, for example, Mariano, 2011; Nóvoa, 2003).

<sup>137</sup> One example that points to socialist values is a short story for children, 'Qual é mais rico?', published in *O animatografo* (1924: 23-9), which portrays a poor child as morally superior to a wealthy companion. Her republicanism is also tangible in her children's fiction. In *A fada loira*, for instance, the narrative details the persecution of the revolutionaries (1917: 31) and presents João Soares, a proud republican (1917: 98) who fled Portugal because of ideological oppression (1917: 8).

<sup>138</sup> The title of this speech evokes Stuart Mill's *The Subjugation of Women* (1869), a work that was publicised through the women's press in Portugal from the late nineteenth century, including *A Voz Feminina* and *O Progresso* (Esteves, 2018: 102-3; also see Sadlier, 1989: 115).

women are more influenced by religion than politics (1928: 14), O'Neill argues that women need to be aware of political events given their standing within the family (1928: 14) and as they make up the majority of the population (1928: 15), concluding, 'Não é justo que em igualdade de circunstâncias a mulher seja preferida nos seus interesses e coleções *únicamente porque é mulher*' (1928: 15; original emphasis). O'Neill's unwavering commitment to this cause is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that she gave this speech two years after the fall of the Republic; a public act of defiance against the patriarchal, ultra-conservative dictatorship.<sup>139</sup> In 'A escravatura feminina', delivered in the final year of the Republic, O'Neill argues, in line with a typically difference feminist viewpoint, that feminism constituted a collaborative effort between women and men, 'dois seres que se completam moral e fisicamente' (1926: 4), and that gender equality would be beneficial for women and men alike: 'Todo o trabalho colaborado por dois cerebros superiores de sexo diferente é, inegavelmente, mais perfeito do aquele que por si só produziria qualquer dêles' (1926: 4).

As the foregoing suggests, feminism, for O'Neill, was as much about women's relationship with men as it was broader issues of public and political engagement. My analysis centres on how this nexus is explored in her fiction, focusing on three of O'Neill's novels, *Drama de ciúme* (1913), *Ilusão desfeita* (1915)<sup>140</sup> and *A víbora* (1930), all of which broadly replicate the same themes and subject matter: adultery, romantic fiction and public scandal. The narratives all follow a similar pattern, namely a

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<sup>139</sup> Support for female suffrage is also implied by her other speech, 'A acção da mulher no socialismo', which was delivered at the fourth Congresso da Região do Sul do Partido Socialista in May 1919. Although the contents remain unknown as it was not possible to recover a copy through extensive archival research, it is likely that she reflected positively on socialist values as there are indirect references to socialism in 'O voto'. She argues, for instance, that those who want progress need to work as part of a collective (1928: 15) and that gender equality is essential for the moral and intellectual well-being 'dos povos' (1928: 16).

<sup>140</sup> The publication date 1915 refers to a second edition. For this reason, specific chronological precision is avoided in the analysis which, as will become evident, is not as significant for O'Neill's work as it was in the case of Matilde de la Torre. Though it has not been possible to acquire an earlier copy, one may infer that it was printed at some point from 1908 as this was when her first work was published.

doomed romance or scandalous affair that usually results in tragedy and/or death, and, as this analysis will demonstrate, juxtaposing an analysis of these works is a productive means of charting the author's developing literary strategies and mirrors shifts in the socio-political backdrop and, presumably, changes in O'Neill's own turbulent personal life. The subject matters of love, marriage and divorce which form the basis of O'Neill's novels encapsulate two critical junctures: the interfaces of sexual politics and governmental politics and the women's movement and female-centric literature. Drawing on feminist literary criticisms that focus on the active political function of the woman writer, principally the writings of Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1981) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (2000), I argue that O'Neill plays on the elasticity that these overlaps afford her as a means of reconciling women's social, political and creative autonomy; forming a link through the parallels she draws between creative output and personal, social and political autonomy.

Following an overview of the novels, the analysis first examines how O'Neill underlines the link between social and literary patriarchal conventions before moving on to examine how the author portrays literature as a (potentially) liberating experience for women, in relation to the female characters, her envisaged female reader and O'Neill herself. Although I draw on all of the novels throughout the analysis, as well as other examples of O'Neill's writings to clarify or elucidate my point as required, the beginning of the discussion draws mostly on *Drama de ciúme* while the latter half centres predominantly on *A vibora*, mirroring how the novels form part of an ongoing project with O'Neill's literary techniques and feminist objectives evolving from text to text. The chapter goes on to examine how the author projects (hetero-)sexual politics onto the public space and concludes with an examination of how the muse/creator

dynamic is subverted, exemplifying how the author displaces hierarchical binary oppositions in such a way as to underline how women can assert themselves in the public space through men, satirising patriarchal social and literary convention. Rather than simply capitalise on the intellectual freedom that literature affords her, as a writer and editor, O'Neill parallels women's exclusion from the Portuguese literary tradition with their lack of voice in the public/political space, emphasising a link between literature and personal and political autonomy.

**Outlines of *Drama de ciúme* (1913), *Ilusão desfeita* (1915) and *A víbora* (1930)**

*Drama de ciúme* (henceforth *Drama*) centres on the turbulent love lives of three married couples, Leopoldo Pereira da Cunha and Maria, Raymundo Corrêa and Cecilia, and Nuno Tavares and Rosa. As the title of the work suggests, the narrative is a dramatic tale of jealousy, adultery and flirtation. All of the married characters engage in infidelity at some level, from an intense attraction to someone other than their spouse to a physical affair. Maria is dissatisfied in her marriage to Leopoldo, a successful businessman much older than Maria who she marries in the hope he can offer personal and financial security. The excitement she craves arrives in the form of Nuno, a charismatic philanderer who enjoys a successful career as a writer and politician. Making use of his contacts, Nuno publishes a poem in the local press in an attempt to seduce Maria who, having initially been sceptical of the dashing figure, is overcome by his charm and attention. Part of Maria's hesitation stems from the fact that she is close friends with Nuno's long-suffering wife Rosa, who is frequently humiliated by her husband's very public indiscretions. When Rosa learns of the betrayal, she escapes to the countryside, bereft and distraught, where she writes a novel as a means of emotional catharsis. Unable (or perhaps unwilling) to divorce her misogynistic husband, Rosa is

trapped in her unhappy marriage and the novel concludes with her dutifully reading the political headlines to Nuno while pitifully musing as to how her life could have been different had she married a kind, simple man like Leopoldo.

*Ilusão desfeita* (henceforth *Ilusão*) tells of an unhappy marriage from the perspective of a male narrator, Manuel de Sousa, a misanthropic, isolated man who takes up a position managing an old estate. The majority of the narrative is made up of Manuel's diary entries, which detail his unrequited love for Ildegarda, an unmarried female doctor who lives on the neighbouring property, As Frondes, with Silvestre, a companion of her deceased grandfather who acts as her surrogate guardian. The estate has been in Ildegarda's family for generations and images of warriors and heroic battles adorn the house, reflecting her family's military past. Ildegarda is an intriguing, enigmatic figure who, for both Manuel and the reader, is an unorthodox female protagonist. She is fascinated by the military and much prefers the company of men (with no hint that this is salacious), determined that she will never compromise her independence by marrying. Though she develops a close friendship with Manuel, the two often meeting in the library to discuss their passion for reading, she gently rebuffs his clumsy advances, emphasising that she is determined to maintain her personal autonomy. Her views on marriage change, however, with the arrival of Bruno, a young liberal soldier who develops a close friendship with Silvestre given their shared military past. Fascinated by Bruno's anecdotes of war and conflict, Ildegarda bonds with Bruno and the two go on to marry and have six children. Manuel, meanwhile, must return to his unhappy existence with his wife and daughters, bitterly reflecting on the life he could have led with Ildegarda.

The final work that forms part of what could be considered O'Neill's 'anti-romance trilogy' is *A víbora* (henceforth *Víbora*). Published over sixteen years after



*Drama* the narrative is more complex and nuanced than the author's earlier fiction but, nevertheless, shares many key traits. *Víbora* tells of an adulterous love affair between Florência and Gilberto, cousins who conduct a secret liaison despite being married to other people: Florência is the wife of a wealthy, powerful baron, and Gilberto is married to Florência's friend, Benita. Florência gives birth to Gilberto's child, Pedro, who the baron raises as his own, in ignorance of his wife's indiscretion. While Gilberto pines for Florência and their child, it transpires that Florência's reason for the illicit affair is to seek revenge on her former friend Benita, who she believes essentially stole her lover as, years earlier, Florência and Gilberto briefly considered marriage. The vice Countess Lourença Cete, a confidant of Florência and the eponymous viper, offers to intervene. An imposing, intriguing figure, the vice Countess suggests that she will convince the baron to fall in love with her so that he will initiate a separation, leaving Florência free to continue her affair with Gilberto. The two women plot maliciously, meeting in secret to plan how they will destroy Benita and Gilberto's marriage. In a shocking twist, the vice Countess reveals she has double bluffed Florência, claiming it was always her intention to steal Florência's husband as she believes the baron would aid her ruthless social climbing. The vice Countess writes to Benita revealing the paternity of young Pedro, signing the letter with Florência's name, which causes Benita's marriage to implode. Florência is distraught by the betrayal and commits suicide by drowning and, on learning of the news, Gilberto shoots himself in a graveyard, standing on his family plot.

To varying degrees, all of these narratives evoke certain elements of the author's turbulent personal life. According to Alexandre O'Neill's biographer, Maria Antónia Oliveira, O'Neill enjoyed a series of affairs with powerful figures, famous writers, had a relationship with a cousin and bore a child out of wedlock (2005: 30; 34). While it is not

my intention to consider the works as fictionalised autobiographies, not least of all because there are more inconsistencies than parallels with O'Neill's life, it would be counterproductive to ignore these points of comparison as they serve as a useful reminder that, for O'Neill, her written output and personal experiences were interrelated. As I consider towards the end of the chapter, there appears to be a critical reference to a famous lover of O'Neill, suggesting that, like Matilde de la Torre (Chapter One), O'Neill used her fiction as a medium for publically settling old scores.<sup>141</sup> Rather than a tangential aside, the allusions to O'Neill's personal life underline how, like all of the authors in this study, O'Neill was acutely aware of the communicative potential of fiction. As this analysis will demonstrate, the author manipulates the romance plot, the most ideologically-charged literary paradigm identified with a female readership, in order to confront women's exclusion from the two major forms of public address that, for O'Neill, were interrelated: literature and politics. I begin my discussion by outlining how O'Neill's novels self-consciously deconstruct and undermine the romance paradigm so as to invite a female reader to approach such works critically.

### **Self-Imposed Slavery: Women's Dependency on Romantic Fiction**

Feminist appropriations of romantic fiction typically problematise the emphasis on marriage in the works, resisting a *desenlace* that is invested with patriarchal oppression. The act of liberating the female protagonist and, by extension, the reader, from literary and social convention not only constitutes a subversive literary technique but also functions as a consciousness-raising exercise for the reader and an empowered feminist initiative for the female writer. As scholarship on the romance genre notes, these works

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<sup>141</sup> I refer here to De la Torre's satirised depiction of Emilia Pardo Bazán, discussed in Chapter One, and, as I mention later in this analysis, there is a hint that a character in *Víbora* could relate to a public figure with whom O'Neill had an affair.

were typically aimed at and read by women (Modleski, 1990; Radway, 1991). One example of a romance novel with a feminist subtext in an early twentieth-century Portuguese context is Maria Lamas' *A ilha verde* (1938), in which the enigmatic Ilonka refuses to marry her lover, Duarte, preferring to continue on her travels as a single woman, determined to experience 'uma aventura – mais uma aventura' (1938: 235). In her seminal *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, frequently cited by scholarly analyses of reinventions of the romance genre (see, for example, Coiner, 1996; Olson Buck, 1994; Rodríguez-Jiménez, 2006), Rachel Blau DuPlessis would describe ideologically-charged reworkings of the genre as follows:

[R]omance plots of various kinds and the fate of female characters express attitudes at least toward family, sexuality and gender. The attempt to call into question political and legal forms related to women and gender, characteristic of women's emancipation in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is accompanied by this attempt by women writers to call narrative forms into question. (1985: x)

Lamas, in line with Blau DuPlessis' argument, can be seen to draw on and reject this paradigm as *A ilha verde* concludes with the bereft male protagonist penning an account of his failed romance and, in an almost resigned acknowledgement of a reader's expectations, the final pages of the work recount Duarte's marriage to his childhood sweetheart; a docile, submissive woman who is the antithesis of the adventurous, worldly Ilonka. As Lamas' narrative demonstrates, the romance plot, in all its forms, typically depends on a 'angel of the hearth'/'new woman' dualism, as social convention

pertaining to women's behaviour is central to these seemingly innocuous love stories. Carla Olson Buck, who examines the genre in twentieth-century Spain, argues that the romance novel requires a 'submissiveness on the part of the woman that helps to maintain the double standard of male-female behaviour' (1994: 30), while Andrés Amorós similarly posits that the description of love in examples of the genre '[i]mplica la desigualdad del hombre y la mujer' [implies inequality between the man and woman] (1968: 73).

O'Neill's novels centre on adultery, marriage breakdowns and scandal, and it should come as no surprise that, like Lamas, O'Neill rejects this literary paradigm. Rather than rewrite the conventional *desenlace*, what DuPlessis would call 'writing beyond the ending', however, O'Neill conveys her critique of romantic fiction by satirising female readers' dependency on social models. The aim of this section is to illustrate how O'Neill pointedly draws her female reader's attention to the harmful, insidious nature of the romance paradigm and, by self-consciously underlining the literary tropes and strategies that reinforce these models, invites the (female) reader to consider the ideological undertone of the romance plot and, by extension, the subtext of O'Neill's novels. Before embarking with the analysis, it is important to establish – insofar as is possible – what we can about O'Neill's actual readership. While the subject matter and generic conventions of the novels strongly implies a female reader, this examination highlights examples how the author consciously engages with the female-centric nature of the narratives. In terms of popularity, we can cautiously conclude that her fiction sold relatively well and attracted a wide readership, as both *Drama* and *Víbora* were published by Parceria António Maria Pereira Livraria, a Lisbon-based literary powerhouse that had a reputable reputation as the publisher of Camilo Castelo Branco, Eça de Queirós and Fernando Pessoa, most notably Pessoa's *Mensagem* in

1934, and *Ilusão* went to two editions. Thus, although details of print runs are unavailable, it is logical to assume that O'Neill amassed a sizeable female readership.

The analysis first outlines how the female characters model their understanding of romance on literature, then explores how O'Neill makes use of metafiction to play on fictionalised theorisations of love, and concludes by examining a figure who epitomises the nexus of literary and social patriarchy that she wishes to critique: Nuno, the philandering writer and politician in *Drama*. As this section will demonstrate, O'Neill's sharp wit only thinly veils the tension between the author's desire to safeguard her female reader from the pitfalls that she highlights and her derision towards women foolish enough to be taken in by the romance plot. The author's exasperation for romantic fiction is immediately evident given her novels read along the lines of telenovelas, with characters who are unwilling, or perhaps incapable, of sexual fidelity. In *Drama*, in particular, it is often difficult for a reader to keep track of the numerous secret liaisons, flirtations and longing glances. With sordid affairs and multiple marriages commonplace, an idealised notion of romantic love is absent in O'Neill's narratives.

The author can be seen to play on the notion that fiction and love are interrelated as literature functions as a means of facilitating her characters' romantic encounters. In *Ilusão*, for instance, Manuel's fascination for Ildegarda grows as the two bond over a mutual love of reading (*ID*: 28) and the pair meet frequently in the library, the place where he clumsily confesses his love (*ID*: 63-4), while the marriage and eventual separation of Gilberto and Benita in *Vibora* is charted through their relationship with literature: despite initial hesitations, Benita agrees to embark on a relationship with Gilberto as she enjoys their conversations about literature (*V*: 37) and, as their subsequent marriage begins to disintegrate, Gilberto laments their disagreements over

literary interpretations (V: 56). The author is keen, however, to discourage an assumed link between literature and love, which is evidenced by her female characters' views on the romance plot. Each of the novels includes a female character whose knowledge of romantic fiction influences their love lives: Maria in *Drama*, Ildegarda in *Ilusão* and Benita of *Víbora*. Reading the novels as a collection, it becomes clear that, from text to text, the author can be seen to modify her narrative strategies in order to communicate her ideas in different ways so as to make a clear impact on her readership. Maria of *Drama*, the first of the novels to be published, is an interesting example. A prolific reader, she acknowledges that she is well-versed in the 'theory' ('teoria') (DC: 18; 20) of romantic fiction and consciously rejects this model, preferring a quiet life with a faithful husband (DC: 18-22; 7); an ironic hope given the novel's title, *Drama de ciúme*. She decides to marry Leopoldo as he is older and unattractive (DC: 22) which, to her mind, makes him the antithesis of the young, handsome romantic hero who, Maria believes, is typically untrustworthy and unfaithful (DC: 18).

Rather than depict a positive portrayal of a figure who rejects the romance plot, O'Neill emphasises women's continued dependency on literary models of love in characteristically satirical style. In order to avoid the 'theory' of the romantic paradigm, Maria theorises her own, more pragmatic, approach to romance. She explains to her mother that she believes a well-formed plan will protect her from heartache, a hope Maria's mother wisely, and prophetically, dashes: '[A] teoria á pratica ha quasi tanta diferença como da noite ao dia' (DC: 20). Maria's model for a successful marriage fails to satisfy her, and she regrets marrying Leopoldo on the pretence of following a theoretical template of love (DC: 135), realising that her emotions cannot be controlled or suppressed. Maria's plan, of course, is an example of a literary model of love, although the character does not realise this herself. The author can be seen to underline

this point in the narrative through a metafictional reference to an unnamed work about a couple whose betrothal mirrors that of Maria and Leopoldo (*DC*: 43), as the use of *mise en abyme* prompts the reader to recognise how Maria's courtship is, like the romance novels she strives to avoid, a fictionalised depiction of romantic love.<sup>142</sup> By making Maria unwittingly fall victim to the very thing she aims to avoid, O'Neill seems to imply that women inevitably seek to rationalise and structure their relationships with men by mapping their real lives onto a literary paradigm. This point is verbalised by Maria, as the author makes a self-reflexive pun at the character's expense: 'A vida não é um romance' (*DC*: 18).

In an effort to encourage a reader who is more critical and perceptive than Maria, O'Neill emphasises how female readers misread romantic intention, in literature and in life, through an obtrusive narrator who, at points, seems indistinguishable from the author. When explaining the way Raymond looks at Maria, for instance, the narrator addresses an explicitly female reader in order to outline how women and men interpret their interactions differently: '[S]e um homem estiver pensando, ao olhar uma menina qualquer, "esta rapariguinha tem um dote que me convinha" o seu olhar estará de harmonia com o pensamento, e a pobre pequena tomará por amor' (*DC*: 8-9). Capitalising on the assumed omniscience, authority and objectivity of the narrator, O'Neill sardonically expounds the dynamics of sexual politics, as she sees it, in order to caution a female reader. Through this one-sided dialogue, the author invokes a mentor-pupil dynamic which illustrates how O'Neill's voice overrides that of the narrator; a comparison which is tangible by the shift between the interjections which are aimed at a mixed or explicitly female readership. In *Vibora*, for instance, the omniscient narrator

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<sup>142</sup> The unnamed novel in *Drama* could also be a reference to 'Não me diga que não', a short story O'Neill would later publish in *Eva* in 1929, in which a female character, also named Maria, is wary of marrying a kind, intelligent and wealthy older man fearing he may become controlling and possessive (1929: 19).

addresses ‘os leitores’ when describing Benita and Gilberto’s first meeting (V: 34) and explaining the meaning of true love (V: 49), suggesting that O’Neill expected her work to be read by women and men alike. It is particularly jarring, therefore, that the narrative voice engages directly with the female reader when Florência is musing over possible honeymoon destinations (V: 14) and when considering whether the vice Countess is genuinely in love with the baron (V: 210).

In both cases, the narrator is pre-emptively responding to a question, providing an answer to the queries that, it is assumed, ‘pergunta-me curiosa leitora’ (V: 14) and ‘perguntará a leitora’ (V: 210). The use of ‘perguntar’ implies a communicative dialogue which suggests a conversation between the author and her envisaged female readership. Although O’Neill allows her narrator to tell the story, she cannot help but intrude in exchanges which focus on their inner thoughts about love, romance and marriage. This distinction illustrates how O’Neill wrote with female readers’ expectations in mind, emphasising the link between fiction, romance and a female readership in such a way as to draw the reader’s attention to her own preconceived notions of fictional paradigms and romantic expectation.

The library in *Ilusão* encapsulates the intersection of romance, literature and a female readership. As the place where romantic trysts take place, the library becomes a symbolic space that is invested with literature and love; an interface which is emphatically gendered in the novel, as, during a meeting between Ildegarda and Bruno, the narrative voice addresses an explicitly female reader: ‘Naturalmente falavam de amor supporá a leitora’ (ID: 240). By romanticising the place of literature and books, O’Neill underscores how, for a female reader, the act of reading and courtship are not only comparable, but indistinguishable and, to some extent, symbiotic. By self-consciously inscribing these expectations into her narrative, the author makes strategic



use of the impact love stories can have on a female readership in order to criticise this dependency and, importantly, invite an engaged, perceptive and responsive female reader. The author's interruptions, nevertheless, are as equally critical of the reader as the paradigm itself. Her harsh, abrasive tone when admonishing the gullibility of female readers also arises when criticising her female characters' naiveté with men, as evidenced by the narrator's (or author's) scathing reflection that Nuno's seduction of Cecilia 'era facil devido á estúpida vaidade que geralmente acompanha a mulher' (DC: 79).

Somewhat ironically, then, O'Neill relies on didacticism and instruction to discourage her envisaged female reader from being overly dependent on literary models. While Maria's determination to 'test out' her alternative approach to love and romance draws on the *roman de thèse* paradigm,<sup>143</sup> the author also appears to take into account her female reader's expectations. Not only does an awareness of the reception of her work suggest that O'Neill was conscious of communicating her ideas in an effective, convincing way, but it was, furthermore, a necessity for women wishing to maintain a living as a writer. Ana Paula Ferreira notes, for example, that part of the reason that Alice Ogando (1900-1981) was able to enjoy an enormously successful writing career is that she reproduced formulaic romance novels (2002: 112; 126). Rather than reinforce an idealised vision of romantic love, however, O'Neill constructs her narrative in such a way as to guide the reader away from this model by using the same strategies and literary techniques a reader would expect in romantic fiction. Janice Radway's discussion of the productive and effective function of 'overzealous assertion' and 'simple language' of romance works (1991: 196) appears appropriate here. While Radway explains that the typical author/reader dynamic in romance plots constitutes a

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<sup>143</sup> Critics describe the *roman à thèse* model as an ideologically-charged didactic work (see, for example, Baldick, 1990: 191; Cazamian, 1973: 7; Moisés, 2004: 405; Ràfols, 1996: 469; Suleiman, 1980: 7), noting that that are often overt and heavy-handed (see Dendle, 1968: 117; Suleiman, 1980: 7).

‘form of interaction between two parties who are established as equals’ (1991: 198), O’Neill is clear to draw her reader’s attention to her own, ultimately doomed, expectations. O’Neill, that is to say, invites her female reader to join the dialogue but, nevertheless, is clear that, as the author, she is in a position of authority. Maria’s planning exemplifies the self-conscious, pronounced style which is characteristic of the author, while another, more poignant, example found in *Víbora* when Gilberto pitifully reflects on his failed marriage: ‘A teoria é linda; mas queria vêr-te no meu caso para saber se a punhas em prática’ (V: 178). The fact that a male character is also susceptible to this model serves to emphasise its inherent flaws, while Gilberto’s doubts, crucially, make the author’s direct addresses to her female readers all the more pointed; O’Neill evidently recognises the impact of these models on men but, in these narratives at least, drawing her female readers’ attention to this failing was her priority.

A formulaic, strategic approach to romantic liaisons is encapsulated by the behaviour and characterisation of Nuno, a figure that connotes a satirised caricature of the romantic hero. The philandering politician and writer is sleaze, charm and patriarchy personified. Extremely attractive, tall and well-built with broad shoulders, Nuno is loathsomely arrogant and egotistical. For Nuno, women are disposable (DC: 103) and he believes their only purpose is to serve, and service, men: ‘As mulheres são instrumentos de que nos servimos, nada mais...’ (DC: 136). He enjoys numerous sexual liaisons (DC: 38; 50; 137) and, according to the narrator, he is particularly adept at taking women’s virginity (DC: 79). Not only does Nuno personify the fickle, deceptive stories Maria strives to avoid, but he is also an accomplished and prolific writer of romantic fiction. Female readers do not read Nuno’s love stories because they are great works of literature, the narrator reveals, but as a means of forming a bond with the author (DC: 39; 204), as literature forms a communicative channel between the author

and his exclusively female readership. As such, he enjoys a reputation for possessing an excellent knowledge of the female heart (*DC*: 160) and is known as the ‘conhecedor do coração feminino’ (*DC*: 40; 116). Through the characterisation of Nuno as both a ‘womaniser’ and writer of romantic fiction, the author expounds a double-edged anti-exemplary model to the reader which underscores the insidious, manipulative and, ultimately harmful, nature of romance novels for a female reader. O’Neill accentuates the patriarchal element of such works by making Nuno male, bearing in mind that love stories are/were typically written by female authors, and by paralleling women’s romantic and interpretative naiveté.

The interplay of literary and romantic expectation is made manifest in the character of Nuno as he makes use of his knowledge of romantic fiction to charm Maria by engaging her in literary debate. He is unexpectedly taken aback by her knowledge and confidence (*DC*: 42) and plots (in both senses) to seduce her by being cordial and aloof (*DC*: 40). Nuno pens a short ode to Maria, ‘A ELLA!’, as a means of expressing his desire (*DC*: 94-5) and sends Maria the first copy of the work, knowing that she will infer that the poem is dedicated to her (*DC*: 142). As predicted, Maria falls in love with Nuno through reading the piece (*DC*: 160-1). The impact that the poem has on Maria is emphasised by the fact that she is previously critical of his poetry (*DC*: 158), as her sudden, complete change of opinion satirises the persuasive potential of romantic writing. Not only does his technique for ensnaring Maria reveal the methodological approach to seduction that he (re)creates in his romantic fiction, Nuno’s plan is indirectly touched on by the narrator later in *Drama*, who explains that confident women are less inclined to overt displays of affection (*DC*: 88). Nuno’s strategic approach to seduction, then, relates to fictional models at a diegetic level (Nuno’s fiction) and an extra-diegetic level, as the reader has to make the connection between

the narrator's advice and the events in the plot. In doing so, the reader effectively reconstructs the narrative in such a way as to highlight the link between Nuno's pursuit of Maria and literary formulae. The feminist conscience that underpins this warning to a female reader is depicted more as a patronising criticism than an attempt to construct an intratextual female solidarity between reader and author.

Though the narrator's interjection in *Drama* is more helpful than Nuno's insidious intentions, the contrast between the two emphasises how the character exploits the processes of writing, reading and publishing as a means of manipulating Maria. Nuno's ploy is a productive means of concluding this section as it encapsulates how O'Neill identifies romantic literature with patriarchal convention and, crucially, intermittently drops the façade of fiction to emphasise this point to her female reader. Romantic literature, for the author, is an oppressive force that not only colours women's romantic expectations but, at the same time, makes them susceptible to manipulation by men. Worse still, as Nuno's devoted fans demonstrate, women voluntarily surrender themselves to this fictional paradigm, even when, as in Maria's case, it is their expressed desire to avoid this model. Comparing O'Neill with her contemporaries is helpful here as it illustrates her singularity: while Lamas, in line with Blau DuPlessis' theory of 'writing beyond the ending', rewrites the expected *desenlace* of marriage, Ogando, as Debbie Maria Ávila observes, produced formulaic works that upheld conservative images of femininity, despite evidencing more feminist views elsewhere (2014). Not only does O'Neill confront the misogynistic undertones of romantic fiction, she does so in such a way as to draw the reader's attention to the communicative, consciousness-raising potential of literature. By constructing novels that undermine and ridicule an idealised image of romantic love, almost sardonically so given the prevalence of adultery in the works, O'Neill invites her female reader to question

expectations on female behaviour and, critically, to consider how literature plays an important part in reinforcing hegemonic gender norms. Paralleling social and literary patriarchal convention, the author hints that the two are interconnected and interdependent. To contest literary paradigms, this would suggest, could constitute a broader social (and indeed feminist) initiative; an implication that mirrors Blau DuPlessis' critique of appropriations of the romance paradigm. In the next section, the analysis builds on these observations by exploring how O'Neill thematises female authorship as an empowering act for her female characters.

### **Divorce from Literary Patriarchy? Literature as a Means of Self-Actualisation**

In 1929, the year before the publication of *Vibora*, Virginia Woolf changed the cultural and political landscape of feminist literary criticism with *A Room of One's Own*. In her seminal work, Woolf connects women's creative output with their social and financial independence, as she would explain in her now immortal words: '[A] woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' (1992: 4). The premise of Woolf's thesis is borne out in O'Neill's fiction, as her female characters try, often without success, to exercise their creative output as a means of resisting patriarchal authority. While O'Neill is clear that, to her mind, romantic fiction serves to oppress and misguide women, I argue in this section that literature as a creative medium is depicted as a tool of resistance for women. Rather than depict female characters who are able to successfully 'divorce' themselves from literary patriarchy, O'Neill uses her narratives as a means of underlining the contrast between her successful output as a female author and the failed attempts by her characters to achieve the same success. The conflict between the two, I propose, is a means of prompting her female reader to follow the author's lead. To illustrate these points, this section first considers (the

character) Maria's failed attempts to write, despite her knowledge of fiction, then examines the implications of the intertextual references in O'Neill's fiction and concludes by considering Rosa's semi-successful attempt to free herself from her husband's social and cultural dominance.

A parallel is immediately drawn between writing and power in O'Neill's fiction as the most prominent, active writers are men: Nuno in *Drama* and Manuel in *Ilusão*. Though the majority of the author's female characters read prolifically, incidences of them writing are rare. The infrequent references to female characters that do write, or when there is a suggestion of them doing so, are telling. Maria in *Drama* is an interesting case. Perhaps unsurprisingly given she shares the author's name, Maria is portrayed as different and special when compared with other female characters. Her singularity is exemplified by the fact that she refuses to wear perfume, a choice, the omniscient narrator explains, that stems from her reading habits (*DC*: 31-2). Nevertheless, she is unable (or unwilling) to write herself, which points to an illuminating contrast between the character and author. Nuno uses Maria's lack of creative experience as a means of humiliating her. When she flusters the arrogant writer by demonstrating a reasoned literary critique, he patronises her as a means of reasserting his authority: 'Depois, não me consta nunca que V. Ex.<sup>a</sup> tivesse publicado versos. Para bem julgar é preciso saber fazer' (*DC*: 42). Though Nuno presents his retort as a piece of advice, half-heartedly encouraging Maria to write, it is a transparent mockery of her lack of experience which serves to negate her subjectivity. Symbolically silenced by the sleazy romance writer, Maria's limited literary output needs to be seen in relation to what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar refer to as the woman writer's "anxiety of authorship" – a radical fear that she cannot create' (2000: 49), as her 'male precursors symbolize authority' (2000: 48). The characterisation of Nuno as a

prototypical ‘womaniser’ and writer of romantic fiction can be understood, in this exchange, as a personification of the male-dominated literary establishment which suppresses female creativity. In other words, as Nuno embodies and proliferates a patriarchal literary model and his treatment of women epitomises misogynistic behaviour, he encapsulates male chauvinism and men’s cultural dominance. As Nuno undermines Maria’s literary knowledge while trying to seduce her, O’Neill underlines his dual authority in such a way as to draw attention to the parallel between his manipulation of their flirtatious exchange and dominance within the cultural sphere. This is emphasised by the suggestions in the narrative that Nuno’s work is of poor quality, in spite of his success.

For O’Neill, it would therefore seem, women’s exclusion from the Portuguese literary tradition is, fundamentally, a result of its (his?) own inferiority complex. On the one hand, Maria’s exclusion from the literary world symbolically indexes O’Neill’s own perceived expulsion or rejection, a parallel which is made clear to the reader by the character’s name. The author’s own insecurities are hinted at by the direct references to her own career in her fiction. A child in *Ilusão*, for instance, is reading a book which the omniscient narrator supposes may be *Um pastor de Agarex* by ‘Maria O’Neill’ (*ID*: 33),<sup>144</sup> while, during a discussion about marriage in *Víbora*, it is suggested that the characters’ lives should be fictionalised, with ‘Maria O’Neill’ named as a suitable candidate to undertake the task (*V*: 127). These examples, of course, come in the later novels, suggesting that O’Neill recognises the difficulties she faced when writing *Drama* and sought to rectify it in *Ilusão* and *Víbora*. Presenting herself as a recognisable and popular writer in Portugal, O’Neill is clearly at pains to underline how her experience differs from that of her fictionalised namesake. The contrast suggests an

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<sup>144</sup> It was not possible to find a copy of this work, or a text with a similar title, during archival research in Portugal.

internalised tension between an apparent insecurity, which is manifest in the character, and the author's own desire to carve a successful career for herself. By self-evidencing women's creative autonomy, O'Neill exemplifies the thesis expounded in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, as she 'proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible' (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000: 49). Considering the novels as a collective project illustrates how O'Neill's confidence grows as a (female) writer: although Maria in *Drama*, the earliest work examined here, is unable to produce, 'Maria O'Neill' is a recognisable name in the novels that would follow. Read allegorically, the increased success of the 'Maria/author' figure demonstrates how, to O'Neill's mind, she has defeated the patriarchal literary convention personified by Nuno.<sup>145</sup> Not only would the author's prolific output justify such a view, but so too does the fact that her narratives become more nuanced (and, arguably, more engaging) through the years and, crucially, are less reliant on the romance plot. From this, we could tentatively infer that O'Neill's writings were well received by her envisaged female readership; a point that is supported if we remember that she was an accomplished director, editor and writer in the female press.

The author emphatically underlines her efforts to be accepted in the Portuguese literary canon by aligning herself with her predecessors through intertextual references to canonical works. In *Ilusão*, for example, Manuel reads Bernardim Ribeiro's *Menina e moça* (1554) (ID: 17), a novel about gender, love and longing considered to be one of the first Portuguese works of fiction, and there are also traces of Eça's works: in *Drama*, for example, the priest's romantic interest in Benita and her plan to escape to the countryside to avoid scandal echo *O crime do padre Amaro* (1880). As well as

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<sup>145</sup> Read retrospectively, the figure of 'Maria' in opposition to social and literary patriarchal convention evokes the most seismic contribution to feminist thought and literature in twentieth-century Portugal, *Novas cartas portuguesas* (1972), co-authored by the three female writers named Maria (Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa) who would become known as 'three Marias'.



drawing on her male forefathers, an act that confronts what Gilbert and Gubar refer to as the female writer's 'feelings of alienation from male predecessors' (2000: 50), O'Neill, more importantly, alludes to *Herança de lágrimas* (1871), a novel by Ana Plácido (1831-1895).<sup>146</sup> Plácido's work centres on a potential affair between the married Diana and the charming Nuno, a parallel which suggests that O'Neill has reworked Plácido's novel to include a less authoritative (possibly younger) version of herself in place of the female protagonist in the narrative. O'Neill's representation of (her) Nuno as the personification of romantic fiction reinforces this link as, in *Herança de lágrimas*, the emotionally-charged first encounter between Diana and Nuno reads as a prototypical romance novel: 'Fitei o homem que estava diante de nós com certo enleio. Era elle. Comprimentámo-nos em silencio' (1871: 28).<sup>147</sup>

By modelling the anti-hero of *Drama* on Plácido's seducer (a label worth pausing over briefly given it is much less common than its female equivalent), O'Neill appears, at least symbolically, to collude with her female predecessor, hinting at an intertextual, intergenerational feminist dialogue that, in this instance, serves to mock her male lothario. Not only do the echoes of Plácido's work connote an expressed engagement with a female literary heritage, but the act of incorporating references to canonical Portuguese texts evokes O'Neill's most famous and successful female contemporary, Florbela Espanca (1894-1930), whose writings, as described by Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos Alonso, are 'teeming with intertextual references' to figures such as António Nobre, Antero de Quental and Camões, which connote her 'yearning for artistic recognition and social acceptance' (2009: 170).

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<sup>146</sup> Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos Alonso deem *Herança de lágrimas* Plácido's 'masterpiece' (2009: 168)

<sup>147</sup> It is worth highlighting here that O'Neill's publisher, Antonio Maria Pereira, had republished another of Plácido's works, *Luz coada por ferros*, in 1904, further indicating that O'Neill would have been familiar with her oeuvre.

Writing as a potentially empowering act for women is also thematised in *Drama* in relation to Nuno's wife Rosa who publishes her book after her marriage breakdown. Her experience, however, underlines the prevailing influence of patriarchal authority on the woman writer which O'Neill seeks to confront and undermine. The act of writing, to some degree, is liberating for Rosa as she has the freedom to write as she chooses, a degree of creative and personal autonomy that is in stark contrast to the dynamic during their marriage: 'Não escreve nem lê sem que elle lhe diga se está bem, porque, afiança ella, já nada sabe' (*DC*: 9). Writing over a decade before Woolf, O'Neill entwines literary and social patriarchal authority in such a way as to imply that fictional output can not only allow for female self-expression but, at the same time, constitute an important feminist initiative. The fact that Rosa's writing affords her a public voice is emphasised by comparing her experiences with Manuel in *Ilusão*: though both characters write to mend a broken heart, with Manuel retreating to his writing to nurse his bruised ego following Ildegarda's rejection (*ID*: 66), his diary entries are, in the narrative at least, private, while Rosa's novel is published for public consumption. Literature, in this case, functions as a metaphor for patriarchal oppression and resistance; an analogy that O'Neill also touches on in relation to Maria who, in spite of (and to spite) her father's objections, chooses her own reading material (*DC*: 18).

By depicting reading as an act rather than a passive experience, O'Neill again points to a communicative channel between author and reader,<sup>148</sup> underlining how reading, like writing, can constitute a reaction against patriarchal authority. O'Neill, of course, exemplifies this point through her involvement with the feminist press. It is,

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<sup>148</sup> A broader knowledge of O'Neill's output illustrates her acute awareness of her readership. The author engages with the role of reader explicitly in another of her novels, *Lucta de sentimentos* (1912), in which the narrator describes a typical characterisation before immediately pointing to an example (1912: 17), while, in her children's fiction, she accentuates the importance of looking for subtext: in *Alegrias*, for instance, a distinction is drawn between 'sciência dos livros' and 'prática' (1916: 8), while, in *O animatografo*, children are guided through a literary text and taught how to understand symbolism (1924: 44).

therefore, perhaps not unexpected that gender is apposite to Rosa's novel.

Acknowledging the difficulties faced by women writers, she publishes under a male pseudonym (*DC*: 72; 155), signing personalised copies for her friends as an attempt to compromise for the depersonalising nature of this façade (*DC*: 180), and decides to aim her novel at an exclusively female audience (*DC*: 154), a choice that suggests that the work is about romance, or possibly heartbreak. Not only is Rosa's use of a male pseudonym indicative of O'Neill's reflections on women's conditions of authorship, but it also alludes back to Plácido who frequently published under various male names, including Gastão Vidal de Negreiros and Pedro de Sousa. O'Neill's frustration at the assumed link between love stories and a female readership is tangible through the pointed reference to 'o leitor' (*DC*: 180) when the narrator of *Drama* is explaining Rosa's work to the reader. As this suggests, there is often a discernible tension in the author's works between her desire to expound and reinforce a feminist message and a sense of exasperation towards the women (readers and authors) who do not meet her own high standards.

Comparing O'Neill's depiction of Rosa with how her contemporaries engage with the question of female authorship underlines the author's sardonic edge and illustrates how, for O'Neill, women must reclaim this liberty for themselves. Although the fictional thematisation of female authorship appears to be a relatively common trope in Portuguese women's writing, portrayals tend to focus on the obstacles and difficulties faced by women writers. In *Antigone's Daughters*, Owen and Pazos Alonso examine how women writers, including O'Neill's contemporaries Florbela Espanca and Irene Lisboa, respond to the absence of a female literary tradition (2011), as touched on earlier, while Ana Paula Ferreira describes Alice Ogando's *O meu sonho de papel* (1938) as a fictionalised account of the 'material, emotional, and moral difficulties

experienced by a young single woman in her attempts to become a professional writer' (2002: 126). Although O'Neill's overt determination to form part of the Portuguese literary canon mirrors the aims of her contemporaries, she appears to undermine her own objectives somewhat by depicting female characters who lack the confidence, ability or means to produce quality fiction. Rather than portray female characters who overcome these hardships to achieve literary success, O'Neill creates figures who fail in their efforts given the prevailing influence of the insidious impact of patriarchal literary models. Though the genre of Rosa's novel is not stated specifically, the criticism directed at the work suggests a replica of the formulaic romance paradigm that O'Neill is keen to critique in her works: 'Era uma cousa terra a terra que não podia entreter ninguém por muito tempo, tanto mais que, além de banal e insulso, tinha sido redigido n'um tom dogmatico e pretencioso que era summamente irritante' (*DC*: 180).

Despite her decision to write as a means of liberating herself from her husband, therefore, Rosa unconsciously replicates the cheap romantic fiction that he writes and, more significantly, personifies. Although Rosa's work could constitute a means of rejecting the social and literary restrictions that Nuno embodies, at a practical level (as her husband) and metaphorically (as the embodiment of the patriarchal literary canon) she is unable to free herself from his influence. The nature of the couple's separation indexes how the power struggle between women and men is manifested in representations of written output in O'Neill's fiction. Rosa retreats to the countryside with her parents, as per her husband's instruction (*DC*: 58; 64), Nuno looks forward to his life as a bachelor (*DC*: 58) and pens a false obituary for his wife; a ruse, he hopes, will protect his reputation and evoke sympathy (for him) (*DC*: 90-1). By publishing this article, Nuno reasserts his social and creative dominance and, making the most his reputation as a writer, takes advantage of the opportunities and contacts available to him

to 'kill' his wife. Rosa is so ashamed at the end of her marriage that she agrees to pretend she is dead (*DC*: 101) and, in an uncharacteristically poignant scene, reads her own death notice in *Século* and *Diário de Notícias* (*DC*: 121); both periodicals in which O'Neill published. As the union effectively ends as a result of Rosa's 'death', O'Neill can be seen to ironically appropriate the marriage rite, satirising the sacrament in such a way as to exploit a loophole in an ostensibly ironclad rule, a mockery that touches on the practical implications of dissolving a marriage, and, at the same time, ridicules the prototypical end of the 'fallen' woman in the nineteenth-century novel, with Eça's *O primo Basílio* a notable example.<sup>149</sup>

The gulf between O'Neill's representation of women writers and her own creative experience is demonstrated by re-reading Rosa's 'death' with Woolf in mind. Though O'Neill depicts her female characters' lack of creative autonomy, the act of 'killing' the self-less, docile character of Rosa exemplifies the observation made by Woolf in her 1931 speech 'Professions for Women' (1993b): 'Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer'. Casting a retrospective gaze on O'Neill's approach and the feminist literary criticism of her contemporary, the characterisation of Rosa serves a dual purpose as she encapsulates the literal and figurative silencing of women writers by the male-dominated literary tradition (embodied by Nuno) and, through her exile and 'death', is symbolically 'punished' by O'Neill for her passivity. The author, therefore, subverts the common trope of 'punishing' non-orthodox women in the patriarchal literary tradition, which, it could be argued, she self-reflexively underscores in the narrative as Rosa is 'killed' by Nuno's

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<sup>149</sup> Another interesting point of divergence with Eça arises by comparing O'Neill's narratives with Eça's comments in 'O problema do adultério' (1872) in which, as paraphrased by Ana Paula Ferreira, he criticises how bourgeois Portuguese women are 'educated since an early age to be senseless, dependent seductresses' (1996: 128). While both female and male characters commit adultery in O'Neill's works, the blame tends to be directed at the unfeasible nature of lifelong commitment or, typically, at lecherous men.

pen. Just as Rosa is unable to sever her creative dependency on her husband, she cannot, in her view, divorce him. In a letter to her husband, Rosa comments that she would consent to a legal separation ('separação judicial') at his initiative and, curiously, laments that divorce, her preferred option, is not legally possible: '[E]mquanto não houver o divorcio, unico remedio que, tarde ou cedo, não poderão fugir a dar áquelles que se têm enganado no triste contracto que a religião entende irrevogavel' (*DC*: 58). Here, O'Neill almost appears to be testing her female reader's knowledge of the law or, as is equally possible, poking fun at such ignorance. Not only was the novel published three years after divorce legislation was passed – the pinnacle of feminist progress during the First Republic<sup>150</sup> that was championed by the Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas – but, given adultery was cited as a just reason for divorce,<sup>151</sup> Rosa would certainly qualify.

Read within context, then, Rosa's lack of awareness suggests her own ignorance and dependency. Nuno's influence over his wife, despite the fact he has abandoned her, can be seen to encapsulate the patriarchal literary authority that, for Gilbert and Gubar, inhibits women writers; a double-edged struggle for female authors as they must combat literary and social subordination: 'In order to define herself as an author she must redefine the terms of her socialization' (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000: 49). What is interesting about O'Neill's approach is how Rosa's attempted revolt against her husband consciously reflects this overlap of societal and cultural obstacles. Marriage here takes on a symbolic meaning, as it depicts not only women's subordination on a

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<sup>150</sup> The law was revolutionary for its day, permitting no-fault divorce by mutual consent (Art. 3) and treating women and men as equally responsible in cases of abandonment (Art. 4.5) and adultery (Arts. 4.1, 4.2).

<sup>151</sup> Emília de Sousa Costa outlines the details of the divorce law in *Na sociedade e na família*: 'O pedido de divórcio funda-se nestas causas: infidelidade de qualquer dos esposos; injúrias e sevícias graves; abândono do lar conjugal por mais de três anos; a separação dos dois cônjuges livremente consentida por mais de dez anos consecutivos; condenação a pena grave; vício do jôgo, loucura incurável ou doença contagiosa' (1937: 147-8). Although there is over twenty years between O'Neill's novel and Sousa Costa's commentary, the divorce law of 1910 was not overturned until 1940.

pragmatic level, but also encapsulates women's literary inferiority, while divorce functions as a metaphor for emancipation in its broadest sense. The divorce analogy works on multiple levels. Not only does it neatly express O'Neill's emphasis on the need for women readers and writers to metaphorically 'divorce' themselves from romantic fiction, reinforcing how, for the author, women's social and literary subordination are interrelated, but it is also a productive means of linking the public and the private, a parallel that underlines how female-male interactions act as a microcosm for the broader political spectrum in O'Neill's fiction. Legislation pertaining to marriage and divorce, in other words, is one of the few instances where a private heterosexual (in this case) relationship is played out in the 'formal' political chamber. As the next section will demonstrate, O'Neill can be seen to play on the porous, unstable boundary between the public and the private as a means of defending women's ideological autonomy and, as Rosa's case would suggest, literature functions as a conduit between the two.

### **Sexual Textual Politics: (Hetero-)Sexual Politics Projected onto the Public Space**

Although adultery, domestic violence and divorce are common tropes in women's writing in early twentieth-century Portugal and Spain, the singularity of O'Neill's approach is how references to divorce serve an important symbolic purpose that far surpasses a straightforward critique of married women's social and legal subordination. Rather than centre her efforts on marital reform, the author strategically draws on a topic that, while relevant to both sexes, was a particularly pertinent issue for women as a means of addressing women's social, cultural and political emancipation on a broader scale. By drawing on this subject matter, O'Neill simultaneously reinforces the interdependence of the private/domestic/female and public/political/male domains and,

at the same time, places emphasis on the female experience. As a contemporary reference, the almost symbolic significance of divorce for women is noted by Castro Osório in her report on the law, *A mulher no casamento e no divórcio*, published immediately after the reform: ‘O divórcio é, principalmente, uma questão de interesse feminino’ (1911: 84).

The most intriguing – and unexpected – element of O’Neil’s fiction is how her narratives, which, on first glance, appear nothing more than unimaginative replicas of doomed romances, have a covert subtext that, I propose, engages explicitly with the question of women’s ideological agency and their role in public life. As indicated above, divorce as a subject matter can be seen to encapsulate the interface of the private and the public sphere, as (hetero-)sexual politics and state legislation became interrelated and, in a sense, interchangeable. In her fiction, O’Neill maps the female-male dynamic onto the ‘formal’ political arena in such a way as to underline not only how women are subordinate in both male-dominated worlds but, critically, insinuate that women can negotiate a degree of agency through their relationships with men. It has been argued thus far that the author underlines how romantic fiction is invested with patriarchal convention and, in her view, enslaves the female protagonist and, by extension, the female reader. O’Neill pointedly, and in her typically uncompromising style, draws the reader’s attention to the subtext and implication of the characters’ romantic exchanges and the prototypical tropes of the romance plot that she wishes to critique. Having emphasised how literature can be an oppressive, silencing tool, the author outlines how reading and writing can also be a means of liberation for women if, like her, they manage to break free from patriarchal convention.

While this invites a feminist reading, O’Neill’s female characters’ inability to fulfil the objective implied by the author and produce a piece of quality, innovative,



perhaps even feminist, literature is somewhat unsatisfying. The portrayal of romantic relationships (and illicit liaisons) is also somewhat lacking from a feminist perspective, as O’Neill’s narratives do not include a female protagonist who rejects marriage, like the example found in Lamas’ *A ilha verde*, mentioned at the beginning of the analysis, and are not as overtly critical of women’s social and legal subordination to their husbands as, for instance, Castro Osório’s fiction.<sup>152</sup> Rather than consider this a failure on the author’s part, however, it could be argued that the strength of O’Neill’s approach is how her quasi-love stories invite a more engaged, perceptive female reader; an interpretation that connotes O’Neill’s perceptive critical appraisal of the impact of romantic fiction on female readers – supported by contemporary scholarship of the genre – and reinforced by her career and activism. As a point of comparison, for instance, Castro Osório’s fiction sacrifices creativity and originality in order to push the author’s feminist message, resulting in overly formulaic, dogmatic texts that might benefit from a less clinical approach. Although O’Neill’s narratives do engage with the same issues of women’s social and legal subordination to their husbands as the works of Castro Osório and Lamas, I aim to illustrate in this section how her narratives also confront the question of women’s ideological autonomy and political subjectivity in a much broader, public sense.

Building on our discussion of women’s creative output in the previous section, the analysis now considers how O’Neill portrays her female characters’ exchanges with men as symbolic of their relationship with the public sphere. There is textual evidence

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<sup>152</sup> Castro Osório’s *Mundo novo* (19-- ) and *O direito da mãe: novela* (1925) exemplify the didactic nature of her fiction, works that reiterate almost verbatim the points she makes in *A mulher no casamento e no divórcio*. Characters in *Mundo novo* (19-- ) debate the impact of the law on society (19--: 92-8, 266-8), as well as the fact that the legislation was made possible by a Republican government (19--: 92-3, 222). In *O direito da mãe: novela*, a novel about the consequences which befall an unwed mother, the characters acknowledge the contemporary significance of divorce legislation and debate its social implications (1925: 39-41, 51-2, 53, 55, 64-70, 105-7). The discussion of divorce in relation to ‘reorganização social’ (1925: 51) closely echoes Castro Osório’s description of the divorce law in *A mulher no casamento*: ‘[É] uma das que mais profundamente revolvem a estrutura social, modificando a família’ (1911: 7).

throughout the author's 'romance' trilogy that, for O'Neill, love (or sex) and the 'formal' political domain are interrelated. The author can be seen to juxtapose comments about romance with ambiguous, obscure references to 'politics' ('a política') in such a way as to invite the reader to make this association. In *Drama*, for example, Cecilia is reciting poetry when Nuno randomly blurts out his desire to become a renowned politician (*DC*: 189), while, in *Víbora*, the characters make vague, nondescript references to politics whilst discussing literature (*V*: 124) and gossiping about relationships (*V*: 132; 193). While these examples are somewhat obscure, the narrator's superficially innocuous commentary on the characters' conversations in *Drama* is more revealing: 'A conversa versou sobre politica, interrompida por beijos e caricias' (*DC*: 113). As I aim to illustrate in this section, 'versou sobre politica, interrompida por beijos e caricias' as a description can apply to O'Neill's narratives, a point which is demonstrated by examining the love lives of the two most unorthodox female characters in her works: Ildegarda of *Ilusão* and the vice Countess of *Víbora*.

Ildegarda is one of numerous examples of O'Neill's female characters who subverts hegemonic gender norms. Having spent her formative years in *As Frondes*, her family's estate, Ildegarda grows up surrounded by male soldiers and mixes in circles usually off limits to women (*ID*: 46-7). Her father actively discourages her from 'carinhos feminis' (*ID*: 46) during her childhood and, as an adult,<sup>153</sup> she becomes an

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<sup>153</sup> I refer to Ildegarda as an 'adult' rather than a 'woman' bearing in mind another of O'Neill's female characters, Benita of *Víbora*, who, in an outburst that evokes Simone de Beauvoir, declares: 'Não quero ser mulher' (*V*: 16). De Beauvoir's now-iconic argument from *Le Deuxième Sexe*, first published in 1949, reads as follows: 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine' (trans by Parshley, 1997: 295). Benita is, in many ways, a replica of Ildegarda as both of the female characters prefer the company of men and male-dominated activities as Benita participates in sports and pastimes typically associated with men (*V*: 17). Bearing in mind the depiction of unorthodox women in O'Neill's *Vida real* (1915) suggests O'Neill wanted to present the figures positively: in *Vida*, two female characters who are described as 'homenzinhos' (1915: 81; original emphasis) and condemned for wanting to 'inverter o sexo' (1915: 111), are praised by the narrator who insists that they are '[d]uas heroínas', celebrating the fact that '[e]stas mulheres são homens para tudo' (1915: 83).

indominable, imposing figure. Her unusual name is of German origin and reflects her passion for the military as the word derives from the old German for ‘battle guard’: a combination of ‘hildiz’, meaning ‘battle’, and ‘gardaz’, signifying ‘refuge’ or ‘enclosure’.<sup>154</sup> While examples of female characters with an active interest in war and conflict frequently arise in O’Neill’s fiction,<sup>155</sup> the author appears to have a particular affection or respect for Ildegarda as she identifies the character with the Revolution of Maria da Fonte (1846) by juxtaposing the narrator’s description of Ildegarda with Silvestre absent-mindedly whistling the tune of *Maria da Fonte* (ID: 25). The author can be seen to emphasise Ildegarda’s military prowess as Silvestre, a seasoned war veteran, compares her favourably amongst her male counterparts: ‘Militar é ella como poucos’ (ID: 110). Like the male protagonist’s description of María in *Matilde de la Torre’s El banquete*, as discussed in Chapter One, the generic masculine is used in this instance to note a pointed feminist initiative, as it presents the character as impressive in a male-dominated – both symbolically masculine and androcentric – world, even when compared alongside male colleagues.

Given Ildegarda’s temperament, it is unsurprising that she opposes marriage. She repeatedly insists that she will never get married as it would compromise her independence (ID: 29; 60; 68; 129; 213) and, in her typically brusque manner, acknowledges the benefit of the divorce law but, nevertheless, still finds room for improvement: ‘A lei! A lei, faço-a eu!’ (ID: 69). Although the details of any amendments are not explained, Ildegarda, in this instance, is likely voicing the view of

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<sup>154</sup> The character’s name also echoes Lamas’ female protagonist in *A ilha verde*, Ilonka, suggesting that Lamas was familiar with this work, and alludes to Ildegarda’s passion for literature as the use of German reminds us of Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos (1851-1925), the German-born Portuguese literary critic.

<sup>155</sup> A salient example is found in the vignette ‘No club’ from *Vida real*, as two female characters discuss the recent developments which permitted women to join the military (1915: 80-2). O’Neill also addresses women’s role in the armed forces in her children’s fiction: detailing the benefits of women’s participation in the World War in *Alegrias* (1916: 63) and, in *Os contos da mama*, O’Neill portrays a girl who wishes she were male so that she could join the military (1918: 36) and refers to the role of a ‘senhora liberal’ in the Portuguese Civil War (1918: 38).

the author, implying that O'Neill, to some degree, identifies with the character; a point which is supported by the fact that O'Neill herself was from a military family.<sup>156</sup> Ildegarda's heroic self-defence when accosted by a potential suitor, Paulo, reinforces how, to the author's mind, the character is a formidable, independent figure. In a desperate attempt to coerce Ildegarda to marry him, Paulo stages a robbery hoping that, by making her feel vulnerable, she will seek male protection and agree to marry him (*ID*: 70-1; 90). Rather than fall for Paulo's ruse, however, Ildegarda fights off her assailant valiantly and arms herself to protect herself from further attacks (*ID*: 72; 86), a response that suggests that, to a certain degree, independence and marriage are incongruous.

The protagonist's views on marriage, however, change when she meets Bruno, a young liberal soldier. The pair bond over the connections between their military families (*ID*: 44) and Bruno's tales of war and conflict function as a catalyst for their romantic connection:

Todos o escutavam religiosamente, mas Ildegarda tinha no olhar o fogo do entusiasmo. Oh, a guerra! a guerra! *Para que nasceu a mulher? para que lhe negava a Providencia a Gloria de brander uma espada, o prazer de ordenar uma carha de cavallaria?* D. Bruno sentia que era ella alli, a excepção de Silvestre, quem melhor o comprehendia. (*ID*: 109; emphasis added)

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<sup>156</sup> O'Neill dedicates a poem in her collection *Cartas da guerra* to her grandfather, J. A. Pereira d'Eça (1916: 2). The narrator of *Vida real*, a semi-autobiographical collection of short stories, mentions her grandfather, general Eça, who was a commander of an Asylo de Invalidos Militares (1915: 5). The fact O'Neill had family in the armed forces is also mentioned by Bulhão Pato in the prologue for *Nimbos*, another of O'Neill's poetry collections (1908: ix).

The narrator's insight into the characters' private thoughts reveals how Bruno is attracted to Ildegarda *because* she is interested in the military, suggesting that unorthodox female behaviour is not necessarily off-putting to men, while Ildegarda, it would seem, is more interested in what Bruno represents than who he is as a person (or, indeed, as a man). In other words, Ildegarda's attraction to Bruno is not founded on an emotional bond or, even, sexual attraction, but rather she sees Bruno as a means through which she can access a world that is closed off to her because, in the narrator's words, 'nasceu mulher'. The significance of war for their union is underlined by the presence of the Minister of War at their wedding (*ID*: 291). Moreover, the two men who try and fail to seduce Ildegarda, Manuel and Paulo, both prove themselves to be ineffectual soldiers: Manuel harbours unrealised dreams of becoming a soldier (*ID*: 6) and is frightened by the war imagery in *As Frondes* (*ID*: 84), while Ildegarda defeats Paulo when he tries to attack her (*ID*: 72; 86). Ildegarda's decision to marry, then, is a means through which, to her mind, she can access her own freedom. Rather than view her drastic change of opinion as conformist or, worse still, anti-feminist, the emphasis on Bruno's standing within the military and, crucially, the fact he is attracted to Ildegarda because she shares in this interest would suggest that, for the author, the marriage is a convenient means through which Ildegarda can continue her involvement in military circles. This is emphasised by the parallels between Bruno and Ildegarda's surrogate grandfather, Silvestre: both men are liberal soldiers and the narrator prompts the reader to compare the two by referring to them as the elder (*ID*: 12; 24; 40; 50; 65; 253) and younger soldier (*ID*: 35; 37). While Silvestre is concerned about what will become of Ildegarda after his death, it seems that Bruno constitutes a convenient substitute for Ildegarda, allowing her to maintain access to the male-dominated military world.

There is, however, an unsatisfactory aftertaste to O'Neill's portrayal of Ildegarda. Although the romance plot is remodelled in such a way as to suggest a degree of autonomy for the female protagonist, the fact that such an independent, unorthodox female character still chooses to marry is somewhat underwhelming, retrospectively at least. This implies a tension between O'Neill's attempts to liberate her female characters from a literary paradigm invested with patriarchal convention and, at the same time, a desire to make her point in such a way that it broadly mirrors a female reader's expectations. Ildegarda's marriage exemplifies how, in O'Neill's narratives, love and romance functions as a medium or guise for women's efforts to access the public/male domain. By depicting a covert means of accessing a male-dominated arena in this way, the author uses (hetero-)sexual politics as a convenient metaphor to imply that women can compensate for their exclusion from these circles by 'marrying well'. The suggestion that Bruno is unfaithful (*ID*: 165-6; 173) only serves to emphasise this point as he is evidently far from an ideal spouse. O'Neill appears to recognise that presenting Ildegarda's involvement in a world traditionally demarcated for men through marriage is problematic, or at least, overly conciliatory, as she denotes a similar idea in a much more unorthodox manner in *Vibora* through the vice Countess Lourença Cete. Whereas Ildegarda's connection to the military is through her husband, the vice Countess' attempt to access the public sphere through men is more overtly calculated and salacious. She readily admits that she enjoys affairs with innumerable wealthy, powerful lovers as a means of engaging with the 'formal' political world, boasting how her discursive skills advance the men's careers: '[E]u, que em política tenho sempre as ideias deles e sou uma discursadora incorrigível, sustentei, com igual e funda convicção, teorias absolutistas, constitucionais e republicanas em menos de tres meses' (*V*: 164).

The Countess' revelation suggests that her sexual liaisons are a strategic ploy and demonstrates that although she appears to lack (or, at least, does not reveal) any particular conviction of her own, she is able to construct arguments from diametrically opposing ideologies. Although her ambiguity could be read as indifference, underlying the vice Countess' ruthless nature by suggesting that her desperate bid for power surpasses all else, grounding the work within its historical and literary context would suggest that this is strategic on the author's part. If we compare the vice Countess with examples of politically-engaged female characters in O'Neill's fiction, the character's relationship with 'formal' politics (and politicians) can be read as a critical commentary on women's involvement in electoral politics in early twentieth-century Portugal. In *Lucta de sentimentos*, for instance, a female character looks forward to an impending republic and classes herself as a liberal (1912: 119-20),<sup>157</sup> while *A marquezia de Valle Negro*, published in 1914, includes a female lead who is frustrated by the incompetence of male politicians and the speeches they make, writing to her local politician to offer her advice (1914: 73). Rather than portray a politically vocal feminist figure in *Víbora*, O'Neill uses the character of the vice Countess as a means of underlining the contradictions and inconsistencies surrounding women's role in public life. The vice Countess' task of writing speeches simultaneously implies and mitigates agency, as she functions as both a mediator who enables political debate and an unthinking scribe for her lovers who, presumably, profit from her input. The inherently self-contradictory nature of the vice Countess' intellectual and ideological autonomy is verbalised by

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<sup>157</sup> As the date of publication indicates, *Lucta de sentimentos* was published during the First Republic, making the character's musings about an impending republican government curious. Another example of this inconsistency is found in a children's story, *Os bonecos de Joaquina* (1922: 62-3), as O'Neill, again hypothesises about a Republic. On reflection, I am inclined to consider this as an oversight on the author's part rather than a calculated means of distancing herself from the current government. Not only was O'Neill, like many feminists, a staunch advocate of the Republic, but she would also continue to defend her revolutionary values during the dictatorship, as evidenced most clearly by her speech in favour of women's suffrage, 'O voto às mulheres', delivered in 1928, noted at the beginning of the chapter. The echoes of her personal life in her fiction, furthermore, would suggest that she was not attempting to pointedly separate her writings from real life.

another Countess from *Vida real*, who argues that, though women have always maintained an interest in politics, for the most part, they latch onto the opinions of their male relatives: ‘[S]eguindo e adoptando quasi sempre as ideias alheias e as que ouvem em casa, e nunca as propriamente suas, porque... as não tinham’ (1915: 43). Like the vice Countess in *Vibora*, however, she goes on to exemplify that she possesses the reasoning and knowledge required to engage with political debate, illustrated by the specific examples she gives in relation to republicanism, the monarchy and anarchism, despite the fact that she pointedly insists that she merely reflects the views of her interlocutor (1915: 45).<sup>158</sup>

For both Countesses, then, there is a contrast between the critical skills they demonstrate and how they present their respective roles in these exchanges as subordinate and mediatory. The characters’ apparent disinterest in governmental matters, which is particularly striking given they each reference diametrically opposing views without indicating any preference, can be interpreted as both a symbolic response to the debates surrounding women’s role in electoral politics and a reification of Virginia Woolf’s ‘looking glass’ metaphor. For Woolf, men view women as uncritical and obliging, reflecting back at them their own (male) opinions in magnified form, thereby doubly-reasserting male privilege: ‘Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size’ (1992: 45). O’Neill can be seen to satirise this passivity to

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<sup>158</sup> The Countess’ extensive commentary reads as follows: ‘Em partidos, como em cores, cada um tem as suas preferencias e não as trocas pelas dos outros. Assim, eu gabo sempre aquellas que o meu interlocutor distingue, mas com discrição, claro, para que, se sobrevier um segundo do partido contrario, eu posso fazer o mesmo sem desenganar o primeiro. Assim, com um monarchico, eu lamento com sinceridade a perda da Monarchia. E não admira: perdi com ella o titulo, o meu logar no paço, e até o meu confessor, que era um padre da Companhia. Com os miguelistas, de que sempre no intimo me ri, mas que por um bamburrio inesperado podem vir a subir, gabo-lhes a constancia, digo-lhes que quem porfia mata caça, e que a familia do snr. D. Miguel e a sua pessoa sempre me foram sympathicas. Aos republicanos affianço-lhes que o seu advento me casou magua (d’outra fôrma não me acreditariam) mas, já que estão, Deus os conservre para bem e prosperidade da Patria. Aos socialistas digo-lhes que as suas ideias são as unicas sensatas, e aos anarchistas que tudo isto está a pedir bombas no *Terreiro do Paço*’ (1915: 45).



some extent, as she depicts female characters who relish this role; subverting the dynamic from within by insisting that they do, in fact, hold the power as they knowingly and willingly forfeit agency. The suggestion that women may covertly hold the upper hand is illustrated more explicitly in two other examples of O'Neill's fiction, as she depicts female characters who influence the (governmental) political views of men: an aunt in *Lucta de sentimentos* who advises her nephew to participate in politics (1912: 246), and a female figure in *Almas femininas* who becomes the envy of notable (male) politicians for her critical take on the political climate (1917: 43). In all cases, the ideological views of the female characters are distorted or mitigated. In *Lucta* and *Almas*, the beliefs of the female characters are mediated through men, while the two Countesses say the most yet reveal the least, as women's exclusion from (governmental) political discourse is symbolised by their self-censorship.

What Ildegarda and the vice Countess have in common is an interest in a world closed off to them as women. Rather than accept their exclusion, however, both figures can be seen to manipulate men as a means of facilitating their access, both literal and symbolic, to the male-dominant domains. While it is unclear in the narrative whether Ildegarda's attraction to Bruno is as calculated as this suggests, although it is certainly incongruous with her character and apparent disinterest in potential suitors, the vice Countess' scheming is an overt, almost cynical, depiction of how women can wield power over men.<sup>159</sup> As noted in our discussion of Graupera, the effect of presenting romance and/or sex (certainly the latter in the vice Countess' case) as a means through which women can maintain their advantage is doubly-polemical given the implicit criticism of men and the hint that such a suggestion could be taken as an instruction for the female reader. For O'Neill, the lasting impression of her decision to collate sex and

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<sup>159</sup> O'Neill's depiction of the vice Countess, to my mind, evokes Oscar Wild's (in)famous view about sex and power: 'Everything in the world is about sex except sex. Sex is about power'.

politics is that it invites the female reader to collude in her obvious bemusement, and at points disdain, for the behaviour of men. Inferring the progress of her views based on the shift of focus in her narratives would suggest that the author became increasingly cynical: while the reader is, in Ildegarda's case, granted the façade of a happy home life, the vice Countess' escapades discard any illusion about the transactional, clinical nature of her exchanges. By using her distorted romance novels to encode criticism of women's exclusion from male-dominated fora, O'Neill presents her point in such a way that it broadly fits within a female reader's expectations and, crucially, it draws a parallel between fiction written by and for women and a pointed, insistently politicised message that functions as a consciousness-raising exercise for the female reader. Criticism on the genre and O'Neill's decision to continue to disseminate her ideas through this literary paradigm over a twenty year period would suggest that this method had the desired effect. The outrageous, polemical figure of the vice Countess encapsulates this parallel, which is illustrated most clearly through the double-edged meaning of her description as a 'progressista intransigente' (V: 168); ostensibly a reference to how she uses her lovers to facilitate her own social progression, the label also has an undertone of the progressive social politics practised by many of the men.

Returning to the narrator's provocative aside in *Drama*, '[a] conversa versou sobre politica, interrompida por beijos e caricias' (DC: 113), this section has outlined how O'Neill can be seen to establish a link between politics, in all senses, and love, romance or sex. While her approach in *Vibora* is more nuanced and, in line with her narratives more broadly, more overtly disassociated from any suggestion of romantic love, there are two important textual clues that suggest the direction that O'Neill's fiction would take in the earliest novel examined here, *Drama*, which relate to Rosa and Nuno. Somewhat unexpectedly given our previous discussion of the couple, there is a

suggestion that Rosa is in control of her husband's political career. In an ironic subversion of the gender power balance, the narrative refers to Nuno as 'o marido de Rosa' (*DC*: 108) when he is speaking in the Cortes, blurring the boundaries of sexual and governmental politics in such a way as to symbolically mitigate, undermine and, to some extent, ridicule his authority. This description is particularly jarring as, though men are typically referred to by name in O'Neill's fiction, married women are labelled as 'wife' ('mulher'); by the narrator in *Drama* (*DC*: 11) and *Víbora* (*V*: 90), while Manuel in *Ilusão* speaks of 'minha mulher' rather than addressing his wife, Anna, by name (*ID*: 14; 15; 140; 142). Through this loaded manner of address, the narrator seems to attribute Nuno's ideological agency to his wife, as he is described in relation to, and henceforth subordinate to, Rosa. The final scene of the novel is even more suggestive. While, somewhat pitifully, reflecting on how her life could have turned out differently had she married a more stable, respectful man, such as Leopoldo, she dutifully reads the political headlines to her husband: 'Ninguem foge ao seu destino. A obediencia constante ao primeiro impulse, sem analyse prévia dos factos, é que trazem os homens e as classes sociaes sempre em desharmonia...' (*DC*: 210).

The suggestion that the latest 'noticias politicas' are as equally applicable to the romantic dramas in the narrative emphasises how O'Neill emphatically underlines a link between the two, while the fact that Rosa is, seemingly, unaware of this fact emphasises how the author invites her reader to make the association between her 'romance' novels and a political commentary. Although there are examples of female characters who read as a means of developing their understanding of 'formal' politics in O'Neill's fiction,<sup>160</sup> Rosa's case is unusual in as much as, like the vice Countess, she wields power over a world from which she is excluded. While Rosa achieves this

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<sup>160</sup> In *Almas femininas*, for instance, a female character reveals that she has developed her extensive knowledge of governmental and electoral matters through reading (1917: 179).

through reading, the vice Countess makes her mark through writing, a distinction that mirrors how O'Neill's approach becomes increasingly empowering for her female reader: in the earliest novel *Drama*, there is a hint that reading can afford women access to 'formal' political debate while, in the final work, *Víbora*, the implication is that writing, a more public act, allows women a means of engaging with these debates. Written output, in both cases, is a surreptitious means of engaging with the non-descript 'political' world which, in O'Neill's narratives, can be read as a metaphor for the male-dominated public sphere. Literature functions as women's key to this 'male' domain in the narrative and, at a metafictional level, through the author's anti-romance novels.

### **The Creative Muse: Re-Asserting Women's Ideological Autonomy**

Of the insightful conclusions that Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos Alonso reach in *Antigone's Daughters*, their observation about how Portuguese women writers displace hierarchical binary oppositions is particularly interesting, as they argue that the authors 'put a question mark over the asymmetry of gendered constructions in Western culture, not least that of woman as muse and man as creative genius' (2011: 208). By overturning and subverting this dynamic, the power play for creative and ideological agency which is invested with gender and sexual politics is reworked in favour of women. As was argued in the previous chapter, the passivity typically associated with the muse is automatically problematised when ideological or political debate is concerned, as is the case for the vice Countess in O'Neill's *Víbora*, as the ability to inspire political discourse does, to some degree, imply a sense of agency or, at least, comprehension or involvement. Having charted how O'Neill's female characters become increasingly more empowered through literature, from Maria and Rosa's inability to escape patriarchal literary convention to the sexually liberated vice Countess

who facilitates her lovers' writings, the analysis concludes by exploring how the author displaces, problematises and scorns the gendered muse/creator binary.

By examining how O'Neill subverts the role of muse through her portrayal of the vice Countess, a figure who can be considered the final step in O'Neill's continued re-evaluation of women's relationship with public discourse, this final section aims to demonstrate how O'Neill's narrative self-consciously engages with the question of women's ideological agency. Reading *Víbora* as the final instalment in O'Neill's anti-romantic trilogy, I propose, denotes how the author uses her fiction as a means of chronicling, confronting and, importantly, compensating for, women's lack of voice in public debate. While the degree of the character's agency is not always clear, O'Neill is keen to underline that the vice Countess is more critically engaged than the men in her life, a point that is, perhaps, as much an insight into O'Neill's views on her own husbands and lovers as it is an empowered feminist commentary. Comparing the vice Countess with Nuno of *Drama* offers a productive means of beginning the discussion as it illustrates how O'Neill plays on the muse dynamic in order to subvert social and literary convention from within, hypothesising a space for female-led political discourse that is implied through its absence. In many ways, Nuno can be considered the vice Countess' male counterpart, as both characters are ruthless, selfish and aggressively ambitious. They both enjoy a series of lovers and have designs on achieving political power and literary greatness, a combination that reinforces how, for O'Neill, the two are interconnected and, often, interchangeable.

Reading the characterisation of the vice Countess as a female reworking of the misogynistic predator in *Drama* connotes how the characters can be seen to compete in an intertextual struggle for literary and political dominance; a contest that, despite his inadequacies, Nuno can be seen to win. While the vice Countess' competence is implied

through her prolific output and breadth of knowledge, Nuno's ability is questionable. Not only does Maria doubt his literary skill, as indicated earlier, she is also unimpressed by a speech he delivers at the 'Camara dos Deputados' (DC: 108-9). Though the vice Countess boasts about her discursive skills, she publically receives no credit, and despite revealing a comprehensive knowledge of electoral matters, she does not express her own opinion(s). Playing the roles of both expert and mimic, scribe and mediator, the vice Countess has a complex, unstable degree of literary autonomy and *political* agency; not only is the reader not certain as to how much input she has on the speeches she writes, remembering here that all of the details are told from the character's own perspective, but the nature of her affairs are also suspect. From the information available to the reader, it is as likely that the vice Countess is used for her body and skills by the powerful politicians she works with as it is that she strategically seduces men as a means of exercising her critical faculties. The characterisation of the vice Countess, in one sense, can be interpreted as a manifestation of the 'double-voiced' discourse of women writers, as her experience emblematises the problematic negotiation between dependency and denial within the male-dominated literary tradition. The duality of women's writing, Elaine Showalter explains, arises as 'no publication is fully independent from the economic and political pressure of the male-dominated society' and, as a consequence, women's writing 'always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant' (1981: 201). This tension is borne out in the characterisation of the vice Countess as she indexes and resists this male dominance. Women writer's tentative agency, therefore, is scrutinised at multiple textual levels through the figure of the vice Countess: the narrative (she is given no credit for her speech writing); at an extra-diegetic level (the reader is unclear

of the content of her output); and allegorically (she personifies how women writers relate to creativity in the male-dominated sphere).

Building on our discussion of how the female/male dynamic in O'Neill's fiction symbolises women's relationship with male-dominated public discourse, represented by the powerful male figures in the novels, most notably Nuno, the author can be seen to use the characters' sexual relationships as a means of underlining the significance of gender in this power play. A parallel is drawn between the way that Nuno and the vice Countess view potential conquests through language, as Nuno describes women as 'instrumentos de que nos servimos, nada mais...' (*DC*: 136), while the narrator in *Víbora* explains that, for people like the vice Countess, lovers 'são *instrumentos necessários* que se substituem sem pena á menor desafinação' (*V*: 210; original emphasis). Whether this is an intentional intertextual reference by the author or an inadvertent consequence of describing two characters with such similar traits, this echo is important as it demonstrates how both characters view their lovers in the same way. While the vice Countess exchanges sex with the sole intention of advancing her public output, however, Nuno, in the narrator's view, is better described as a 'senhor d'um harem' than a writer or politician (*DC*: 79). Not only does comparing Nuno with the leader of a harem emphasise how he dominates his numerous female lovers, it also hints at prostitution, a practice that, to the author's mind, exemplifies double standards based on gender. As she outlines in 'A escravatura femenina', O'Neill believed that prostitution demonstrates women's subjectivity and subordination (1926: 9; 10; 13) as, not only does the transactional exchange objectify the female body, prostitutes are condemned by society, in part, because they are women: 'Não haverá no sexo masculino criaturas tão depravadas e aviltadas como as prostitutas?' (1926: 13). The author can be seen to incorporate this logic into her fiction by portraying parallel

characters of different genders who, despite sharing key characteristics and interests, fulfil antithetical roles: Nuno, who enjoys various lovers for personal gratification (a prototypical ‘womanizer’), holds the power, while the vice Countess effectively prostitutes herself for limited professional gain.

Rather than merely reflect this imbalance, however critically, O’Neill plays on the gendered muse/creator power balance as a means of connoting the political potential of written output. Bearing in mind the figurative potential of writing that the author makes use of in her fiction, the vice Countess’ social climbing is described in relation to literature. While she proudly declares that she is the ‘autora’ (V: 163) of manipulating men through sex, Florência gushes that the vice Countess’s influence over her life is such that she is be the ‘editor responsavel’ (V: 164) of her actions. Through these self-reflexive references, Lourença is identified with literature in the active role of author and editor as she exercises control over the other characters’ behaviour. Metafiction, in this sense, affords Lourença the creative autonomy that she lacks in the narrative. This sardonic portrayal of a woman’s forced attempt to stake her place as a writer, of course, applies as much to O’Neill as it does to Lourença, as evidenced by the traces of canonical literary works in her fiction. The irony is not lost on O’Neill, as she plays on the ambiguous nature of female author’s agency, a point that becomes clear by highlighting the parallels between the events in the narrative and the work itself. In *Víbora*, Lourença persuades the baron to become a writer so that she may become ‘a musa do maior literato português’ (V: 230-1), that functions as a double-edged sardonic put down of her lover, while the title of the novel, *A víbora* (‘viper’), is an insult aimed at the vice Countess in the work (V: 216; 249). The character, therefore, functions as a muse for both O’Neill and the baron, who follows his new wife’s instruction and publishes an acclaimed novel (V: 249) and, through the *Mise en abyme*, effectively



motivates her own creation as she is identified with the inspirational muse and the completed final product.

This parallel is as subversive as it is self-indulgent. Although interpreting Lourença as O'Neill's muse implies that O'Neill is the 'maior literato português' – understood here literally – a (somewhat arrogant) form of self-promotion which is in line with the complementary intertextual references to her own fiction in her work, it is also a pointed comment on gender. This is only emphasised by the fact that Lourença's role as muse in the narrative reflects the traditional creative paradigm that negates female agency: man as creator and woman as inspiration. The author can be seen to recognise how this asymmetrical power balance is immanently related to patriarchal convention as Nuno, the vice Countess' male counterpart, draws on this unequal power dynamic in its traditional format to emphasise his creative autonomy by insisting that his well-received poetry was inspired by Maria (*DC*: 166). Rather than reinforce this model, O'Neill redresses the power balance at an extra-textual level by re-asserting her creative autonomy as a (female) author.

While a reader may be tempted to identify the author with her fictionalised muses, Maria and the vice Countess, given the similarities between O'Neill and her characters, the author emphatically places herself in the creative role. This is evidenced to some degree by the critical portrayal of Lourença, as her ruthless, manipulative behaviour results in two suicides. A point of comparison with Matilde de la Torre arises here, as both authors construct protagonists who work through the authors' ideological and professional frustrations, but, critically, do so in an exaggerated fashion so as to dissuade the reader from overstating the parallels between author and character. The most salient way that O'Neill can be seen to underline her authority is by constructing figures who are overtly fictional (re-)creations. Just as Nuno is a satirised reification of

the romantic hero, the vice Countess is a tongue-in-cheek replica of the ruthlessly ambitious female seductresses of the French realist novel: while the vice Countess' title suggests a direct intertextual reference to Balzac's Vicomtesse de Beauséant from *Le Père Goriot* (1834/35), Lourença most closely resembles Guy de Maupassant's Madeleine Forestier from *Bel Ami* (1885); a talented journalist who, fascinated by the political world, is the only one of Georges Duroy's innumerable (female) lovers who manages to manipulate the womanizing protagonist (Hamilton, 1982: 327; 339).<sup>161</sup>

Although O'Neill does not reverse the male/creator female/muse dynamic in the narrative (by depicting a female author who is inspired by her male lover), the author herself can be seen to use her male counterparts as sources of inspiration. The reworked depiction of a male-authored female figure could, indeed, be considered a feminist reclaiming of a negative fictionalisation of womanhood: not only does the author present the vice Countess' treatment of her lovers in such a way as to invite a female reader to collude with the author and character in ridiculing the men, but she refracts the character(isation) so that, in O'Neill's fiction, the female seductress takes centre stage and, crucially, displaces the muse and creator binary by fulfilling the role of both, suggesting that the two roles are interconnected. Rather than work within the traditional power balance, then, O'Neill depicts the boundary as porous and unstable. Any distinction between fiction and reality is also difficult to ascertain as the vice Countess bears a striking resemblance to the author. The character's impressive speech writing and array of powerful partners evokes O'Neill's own intriguing personal life, suggesting that the figure is a humorously self-deprecating depiction of the author, while the character's musings about Henrique de Castro (V: 164), one of her conquests, could be considered a type of 'kiss and tell' as the character shares the name of a member of the

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<sup>161</sup> Scholars agree that Georges Duroy's ruthless rise to power is aided by his seduction and manipulation of numerous female lovers (see, for example, Donaldson-Evans, 1987: 616).

Partido Progressista in *fin-de-siècle* Portugal. This point is emphasised by the fact that Henrique is the only one of the vice Countess' lovers that she names.

The parallels between the author and the vice Countess denote how O'Neill plays on the creator/muse construct in such a way as to doubly-reinforce her own ideological autonomy as the author appears to function as her own muse,<sup>162</sup> a suggestion that is as equally self-sufficient (and arguably ego-centric) as it is an important feminist initiative. The author, to her mind at least, seems to have succeeded in her efforts to establish herself in the Portuguese literary canon as, while her earlier works are peppered with intertextual references to canonical authors, the main point of literary reference in *Víbora* is the work itself. Building on our previous discussion about the links to Ana Plácido and Florbela Espanca in O'Neill's fiction, Florência's death in *Víbora* evokes Espanca's image in cultural memory. While a link between the character and Espanca is hinted at through the similarity between the women's names, O'Neill's Florência is portrayed as a sacrificial muse rather than a creative being in her own right. This is exemplified in the novel's conclusion, as she commits suicide by drowning while reciting a poem about death and the sea written for her by Gilberto during their affair (V: 217). Her death implies a didacticism to her lover's poetry and, significantly, symbolically attributes a veracity to his creative output, with Florência in the role of both muse and disciple. The notion of self-sacrifice in the name of her (male) companion's poetry reminds us of Espanca who, as Owen and Pazos Alonso note, was acutely aware that she was a source of inspiration to her male contemporaries (2011: 37).<sup>163</sup> O'Neill's depiction of Florência could be read as an acknowledgement of the

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<sup>162</sup> I am reminded here of Frida Khalo's famous line: 'Soy mi propia musa'; a response that has become a common retort for female (and feminist) artists and creators.

<sup>163</sup> Florência's death also tragically echoes Espanca's own suicide, which occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1930, the same year the novel was published. It has not been possible to determine a specific date of publication for *Víbora*. Given the practical difficulties of publishing a work in such short notice, not to mention the unpalatable nature of fictionalising a suicide, I am inclined to consider this parallel as a coincidence.

parasitic nature of this exchange, while the reference to Plácido, who is best remembered as the wife of Camilo Castelo Branco and, consequently, as Owen and Pazos Alonso argue elsewhere, ‘literary history continues to privilege her role as a muse [...] and neglect her as a gifted writer in her own right’ (2009: 168), could be considered an attempt on O’Neill’s part to draw attention to Plácido’s work.

Although O’Neill could not have predicted how she or her contemporaries would be remembered by literary critics, what is clear is that she recognised how the immanently gendered muse/creator dynamic undermined women’s creative output and, consequently, their political voice and, as this analysis demonstrates, sought to rectify this through her writings. The allusive references to ‘politica’ which function as a metaphor for male-dominated debate encapsulate how the novels would resonate with all female readers: a revolutionary feminist, familiar with O’Neill’s press writings, would possibly discern the political subtext, while a conservative female reader would be able to identify with the female-centric concerns that form the basis of the plots. Female readers of all persuasions would share in their revulsion for the misogynistic writings and behaviour of Nuno; symbolically uniting in a critique of patriarchal dominance. O’Neill’s efforts to disseminate her feminist principles through public lectures and the press, which became increasingly revolutionary under the dictatorship, as evidenced by her 1928 lecture defending female suffrage, ‘O voto às mulheres’, and her decision to join the CNMP in 1927, demonstrates a conscious effort to publicise feminist issues to a wide audience. The salient benefits of the novels that form the basis of this analysis is that they would have held popular appeal for women with little or no interest in feminist concerns.

While the author’s role as the director of *Almanach das Senhoras* (1911-1925), which, as indicated at the beginning of the chapter, became more engaged with feminist

concerns under her tenure (Esteves, 2018: 104), evidences her commitment to underlining how written output can afford women a means of engaging with debates otherwise closed off to them, her efforts to destabilise the creator/muse power balance in favour of female artists suggests an attempt to construct a sense of solidarity between her female contemporaries. The author's empowered reworking of the muse would, indeed, be more meaningful than O'Neill herself could have ever predicted, as her most tangible impact on the Portuguese literary canon is, arguably, the traces of her ironic wit and satire in the work of her grandson Alexandre.<sup>164</sup> Read retrospectively, O'Neill's fiction can be seen to link the nineteenth-century realism that the author inscribes into her narratives and the surrealist work of her grandson that she inspired. Just as the author self-consciously proves by example that a break from literary patriarchy is possible, her anti-romance trilogy illustrate how women's writing is central to the Portuguese literary tradition that aims to silence women. By embedding this tension into a female-centric literary model, O'Neill implies that, to some degree, the means of asserting women's ideological autonomy was always within their reach.

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<sup>164</sup> Alexandre's biographer, Maria Antónia Oliveira, touches on O'Neill's influence, as she outlines how the author would read her children's stories to her grandchildren (Oliveira, 2005: 29) and, interestingly, notes how O'Neill's death would later be hugely significant for her grandson (2005: 34).



## Chapter Four

# Female Networking: Emília de Sousa Costa

‘Emília de Sousa Costa [es autora de] libros bellisimos e inspirados’ (Burgos, 1921: 79)  
*Virgínia Quaresma, in conversation with Carmen de Burgos*

Activist, journalist, translator and writer, Emília de Sousa Costa (1877-1959) was a vocal advocate of women’s right to education in early twentieth-century Portugal. Amongst her contemporaries, she was an authoritative voice on matters of education and women’s rights, and she spoke at conferences throughout Portugal, Spain and Brazil throughout the early decades of the twentieth century (Tavares da Silva, 2005: 306; also see Sousa Costa, 1932: 15). The most remarkable aspect of Sousa Costa’s career is her unyielding commitment to improving women’s access to education over three decades which saw seismic changes to the social and political fibre of Portugal. She authored numerous non-fiction works on the topic, including *Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho* (1934) in homage to one of the first advocates for women’s education in Portugal and *A mulher educadora* (1945), as well as producing a Portuguese translation of *Aos professores e às professoras* (1914) from French and publishing a textbook for children, *Moral prática elementar*, aimed at developing children’s literary and numeracy skills and promoting and facilitating women’s involvement in education.<sup>165</sup> A staunch commitment to improving women’s access to education is also evidenced in Sousa Costa’s other professional endeavours, as she worked as a teacher at the Tutoria

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<sup>165</sup> This objective is implied by the reviews included in an appendix to the textbook (whether the reviews were genuine or created for promotional purposes), which include a government worker commenting that his wife reads the work with their daughter (1925: 60) and a female teacher who thanks Sousa Costa for making a valued contribution to pedagogical materials (1925: 61). The popularity of the work is demonstrated by the fact that it was adopted in schools during the First Republic (1925: 4), while the impact it made in feminist circles is exemplified by Adelaide Cabete’s reaction, as she was so impressed by the piece that she distributed copies around the Instituto Feminino de Educação e Trabalho (1925: 60).

Central de Lisboa, an institution which focused on disadvantaged children (Samara, 2007: 159), and would found a philanthropic initiative to support underprivileged or impoverished female students.<sup>166</sup>

The pedagogical focus of Sousa Costa's life and works is reflected in four key texts she produced aimed at women: *A mulher no lar* (1916; henceforth *A mulher*); *Ideias antigas de mulher moderna* (1923; henceforth *Ideias antigas*); *Olha a maldade das mulheres* (1932); and *Na sociedade e na família* (1937).<sup>167</sup> These non-fiction works centre on women's emancipation, particularly in relation to education, and it is for this reason that the works can be considered personalised feminist manifestos;<sup>168</sup> a description that may invite criticism given Sousa Costa's – not unjustified – reputation as a conservative feminist, given her ideas undoubtedly complement, and at times reinforce, a traditional image of womanhood in line with the angel of the hearth. For Sousa Costa, feminism meant that women should receive the same respect and status as men without compromising their femininity. Feminism, in her view, was essentially a celebration of womanhood and a manner of nurturing women's positive qualities, helping Portuguese women to overcome disadvantages imposed on them by society. Such views pervade the author's non-fictional writings, and are summarised in the following quotation from *Ideias antigas*:

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<sup>166</sup> The name of the organisation is given as Caixa de Auxílio a Raparigas Estudantes Pobres by Maria Alice Samara (2007: 157) and Nilza Rodrigues (n.d. [online]), Caixa de Auxílio a Estudantes Pobres do Sexo Feminino by João Esteves (1998: 189), and Caixa de Auxílio a Raparigas Estudantes Pobres by Carlos Nogueira (2013: 162).

<sup>167</sup> Her prominence during her lifetime is evidenced by the fact that the first text to be published, *A mulher no lar* and the last, *Na sociedade e na família*, both went to four editions. For a comprehensive overview of Sousa Costa's life and works, see Vera Maria Abalroado Dias' unpublished Master's dissertation (2008).

<sup>168</sup> While the genre may appear inherently conservative, conduct manuals with a feminist agenda were not uncommon in early twentieth-century Iberia: Carmen de Burgos, for instance, wrote similar works, and both Burgos and Sousa Costa also published cookbooks. Examples of Burgos' works include *La mujer en el hogar* (1909), *Arte de la elegancia* (1918) and *El arte de ser amada* (1918). The titles of Burgos's *La mujer en el hogar* and Sousa Costa's *A mulher no lar* (uncritically and not ironically) refer back to the 'angel of the hearth' ideology, one indicator of the overlap between conservative and progressive values which shaped first-wave feminism in Portugal and Spain.



O feminismo, que não é, não pode, nem deve ser mais que a nobilitação da mulher, a sua reabilitação de criatura humana, *como um factor social equivalente ao homem, pela sua inteligência*, para a maior parte das pessoas, mesmo das mais cultas do nosso país, é a pretensão criminosa da mulher a igualar o sexo masculino em defeitos e em vícios, o esquecimento da tarefa que a *natureza* lhe impõe no lar e na família. (1923: 121; emphasis added)

The use of ‘natureza’ encapsulates the double-edged quality of Sousa Costa’s own brand of feminism, as she does not conceive a revolutionary reformulation of hegemonic gendered norms. Maria Regina Tavares da Silva observes how, like many of her contemporaries,<sup>169</sup> Sousa Costa underlines that feminism should not be understood as a means of dominating men but equality between the sexes; a distinction that Tavares da Silva describes as ‘verdadeiro feminismo’, ‘um propósito de justiça e de equidade’ (1983: 879), and ‘falso feminismo’, which signified ‘mera imitação do homem pela mulher, da sua maneira de vestir ou agir, e, por outro, o domínio do próprio homem, a conquista em exclusivo para a mulher das suas posições e dos seus direitos’ (1983: 879). A concerted effort by many Portuguese feminists to emphasise that feminism meant the eradication, rather than reversal, of patriarchal norms and practices, examples of which I highlight in the Introduction, was a means of both promoting feminist dialogue and contributing *their* interpretations to the multitude of feminist voices. For

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<sup>169</sup> Tavares da Silva includes quotations from both reactionary and conservative figures to illustrate this point, including Ana de Castro Osório, Adelaide Cabete and Elina Guimarães, in addition to Sousa Costa. In a similar vein, I outline how Portuguese feminists were preoccupied with a need to articulate their own understanding of feminism at this time, in response to criticism that it signified a subversion of patriarchy or misandry (2018b). This study should be understood as an extension of this research, as an appreciation for the fact that fiction can provide more depth or nuance, conceivably, means that it allows us to develop our understanding of how feminist ideals were conceptualised in this context.

Sousa Costa, 'verdadeiro feminismo', a term she uses in *Olha a maldade das mulheres* (1932: 15), meant affording women the same respect and recognition as men.

While the author's belief that women's education would make them 'um factor social equivalente ao homem' implies a sense of autonomy in the public domain, Sousa Costa's views on women's suffrage would suggest otherwise. Writing in *Eva*, she indicates her objection to women's involvement in party and electoral politics (*Eva*, 24 November 1928: 2; *Eva*, 3 October 1931: 4), explaining that her disinterest stems from the fact that politics were designed and run by men seeking their own (male) interests (23 May 1931: 4). As the year of publication suggests, the author's comments were in response to the proclamation of the Spanish Second Republic. Though Sousa Costa criticises the reform in Spain and explicitly argues against similar reform in Portugal (3 October 1931: 4),<sup>170</sup> her position was not clear-cut, as she defended Brazilian women's right to vote in her non-fictional account of her travels, *Como eu vi o Brasil* (1925: 94; also see Mogarro and Dias, 2008: 13-4). Not only does Sousa Costa's apparent inconsistency illustrate that, to her mind at least, the geographical proximity between Portugal and Spain made feminist progress and socio-political change interrelated in both countries, but it also demonstrates an awareness of the contemporary socio-political climate. As her approval of women's suffrage in Brazil published during the First Republic and her criticism of the reforms in Spain was publicised under a dictatorship, her views appear to shift in line with the climate of the time.

Sousa Costa, therefore, can be seen to exhibit a paradox that has arisen in all of the previous chapters, as she demonstrates an understanding of governmental politics

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<sup>170</sup> Sousa Costa's criticism of Spanish women being afforded the vote in 1931, when this was not the case in practice, as outlined in Chapters One and Two, demonstrates the complex nature of Spanish women's relationship with electoral and governmental politics at this period in history. The fact that, to Sousa Costa's mind, women could vote at this point denotes how the proclamation of the Republic and the election of the first *diputadas* made an impact on public perception and understanding before women's suffrage was enacted into law.

whilst underlining women's exclusion from the (formal) political domain. The author can be seen to internalise this tension as she contradicts herself elsewhere. In *A mulher. Educação infantil*, for instance, she criticises women's participation in electoral politics (1923: 48,) yet in a speech entitled *O poeta do amor*, published just one year later, she makes a series of reflections on the current government (1924: 28). In this case, a change of geographical or historical context does not account for her inconsistency. Rather Sousa Costa's apparent hypocrisy evidences the conflict that inevitably arises when publically-active women do not (or perhaps cannot) identify with governmental politics.

As the foregrounding suggests, this final chapter marks a departure from the fictionalised hypotheses of how women can enter the formal political arena by working with men, as examined in the works of De la Torre, Graupera and O'Neill, and explores how Sousa Costa focuses on alternative means of actualising female autonomy. Mirroring the evolution of first-wave feminism in early twentieth-century Iberia, this chapter aims to bridge the gap between the forward-looking discourse and fiction of the early decades of the century and the strategic attempts by women to maintain their autonomy under ultra-conservative, misogynistic regimes; a shift that is tangible in Sousa Costa's views and writings and reflects the seismic social and political changes that occurred after the fall of the First Republic in 1926. The analysis centres on 'Quem tiver filhas no mundo', a short story published in a collection of the same name (1933), that centres on the personal, intellectual and spiritual development of the female protagonist. I argue that the author constructs a matrilineal support network between her female characters that mirrors Sousa Costa's envisaged relationship with her (female) readership, embedding a pro-education message into a female *Bildungsroman* in order

to reinforce and self-evidence how literacy, fiction and education can be liberating for women and afford them an empowered public role.

While critics tend to categorise Sousa Costa as a moderate feminist (Mogarro and Dias, 2008: 1, 2; Nogueira, 2013: 163-4; Tavares da Silva, 1983: 880), as noted earlier, I argue that Sousa Costa negotiates a series of conflicting discourses about female behaviour,<sup>171</sup> perceptively and strategically presenting a way for women to actualise their own autonomy within the parameters of the dictatorship's gendered social policies and legislation. In doing so, the author evidences the same awareness of women's relationship with the 'formal' political domain that was examined in previous chapters and, as this analysis will demonstrate, uses fiction as a means of self-consciously confronting, reflecting on and dialoguing with contemporary political discourse(s). Thus, as outlined in the Introduction, my aim here is not to suggest that all of the selected writers were *revolutionary* figures in their day. I do, however, aim to demonstrate how fiction, for all of these women, afforded them a productive means of conceiving and disseminating their own approach to feminism and, consequently, how the work of these 'forgotten' women writers manifests female-voiced socio-political debates, building on scholarship that examines the relationship between feminism and fiction.

Through her vision for a united female collective, I suggest, Sousa Costa proposes a collaborative network akin to political network(s) at government level, promoting a version of solidarity between Portuguese women that is as equally concerned with women's role in the public/political forum as De la Torre's reworking of socialist theory, Graupera's revolutionary take on motherhood and O'Neill's self-

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<sup>171</sup> As a point of clarification, I avoid referring to the government as the Estado Novo when commenting on specific details in the narrative as it is not clear whether the work was written before the Estado Novo was officially declared, as the Constitution and the short story that forms the basis of the present analysis were both published in 1933. I do, however, make reference to the 1933 Constitution at points as it reflects the values of the regime that ruled Portugal from the fall of the First Republic in 1926.

consciously allusive political commentary. Depicting a moderate, female-led (re-)conceptualisation of female behaviour and the future of the women's movement, Sousa Costa evidences an astute awareness of the socio-political climate that is, undoubtedly, part of the reason that she was able to maintain her prolific writing career under the dictatorship. Indeed, of all the female figures in this thesis, she is the only one who managed to avoid censorship (retrospectively and during her lifetime) and persecution during the conservative regime(s). The chapter first provides an outline of 'Quem tiver filhas no mundo', before exploring how Sousa Costa constructs a narrative that self-consciously manifests the feminist dialogue that it seeks to promote in order to underscore the *political* potential of literacy for Portuguese women that the author herself exemplifies through her insistently feminist fiction.

#### **Outline of 'Quem tiver filhas no mundo'**

'Quem tiver filhas no mundo' (henceforth 'Quem tiver') depicts the childhood and adolescence of the female protagonist, Leonor, recounting her moral, spiritual and educational development as she enters adulthood. The instruction she receives during her formative years from a French tutor, Jeanne, causes her to become hostile, objectionable and vain, which leads to a rift with her devoted mother, Olga, and her father, Fernando. After various suggested solutions fail to modify the protagonist's behaviour, including a potential marriage and religious training, the advice of her mother's friend Helena assuages Leonor's frustration and hostility. The short story concludes with the protagonist having outgrown her rebellious past thanks to Helena's ideas about a moderate model of female behaviour that eschews the 'angel'/'new woman' binary. As this overview illustrates, the narrative reads as a *Bildungsroman*, as it charts the growth and development of the protagonist in order to convey an

educational experience, or *Bildung*, to the character and reader. The genre's emphasis on behaviour links it intrinsically to gender. Although the paradigm is often associated with male protagonists,<sup>172</sup> feminist literary critics have identified examples of the genre with a female protagonist, referring to such works as the 'female' *Bildungsroman* or *Bildungsromane* (see, in particular, Abel, Hirsch and Langland, 1983). In the examination that follows, I aim to demonstrate that the protagonist can be read as a personification of the women's movement at this juncture in Portuguese history, as the character's behaviour and reform mirrors Sousa Costa's directive to Portuguese women and the female collective. The first section of the analysis begins by exploring how patriarchal convention impedes the female protagonist's personal development and her relationship with her mother, arguing that the tense mother/daughter relationship symbolises a conflict between Portuguese women of the past and the present that disrupts the development of feminist thought.

### **Fracturing the Female Bond: Patriarchal Pedagogy Impeding Female**

#### **Development**

The fictional thematisation of female development in female-authored fiction functions as a self-conscious strategy of underlining the arbitrary nature of socially-imposed constructs on women's behaviour that are invested with paternalistic models of 'femininity'. The aim of this section is to illustrate how Sousa Costa parallels the female characters' educational experiences with their conduct, critiquing how the practical and conceptual influence of patriarchal convention hinders female development and, by extension, the continuation and evolution of feminist thought. To

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<sup>172</sup> This point is exemplified by John H. Smith's polemical, misogynistic assertion that 'women's novels of development' (1987: 220) do not fit the *Bildungsroman* model as 'the strict gender codification at the basis of *Bildung*, taken in its historical context, makes female *Bildung* a contradiction in terms' (1987: 220).

this end, the analysis first explores how instructional models enforced by patriarchal authority have a negative impact on the female characters, then examines how such practices can be seen to fracture the bond between women, and ends by exploring the negative impact this has on the development of feminist discourse.

The insidious nature of patriarchal expectation and convention on female development is criticised by Sousa Costa in ‘Quem tiver’ through the detrimental effect that it has on the female characters. The author pointedly underscores how socially-constructed paradigms condition female behaviour by linking the female characters’ behaviour to the education that they receive in the narrative. The protagonist’s mother Olga, for instance, is portrayed as overly timid, docile and sensitive, qualities which are attributed to her experience of ‘disciplina do colegio austero’ (QTF: 6-7) in her youth. Leonor, on the other hand, becomes hostile, rebellious and objectionable under the influence of her French tutor Jeanne. Although Leonor develops a range of intellectual and practical skills, Jeanne also encourages her bad behaviour, taking pleasure in her position to mould the protagonist’s character: ‘*Mademoiselle* Jeanne cultivou, a seu belo prazer, a vaidade de Leonor’ (QTF: 7; original emphasis). Consequently, Leonor’s education causes conflict in the narrative, a common trait of the *Bildungsroman* (Labovitz, 1986: 3-4, 96-7; Owen, 2000: 82), as it fosters attitudes and behaviours that need to be reworked and remodelled. The insistently self-reflexive quality of the narrative is exemplified by the use of ‘cultivou’, as it underlines how behaviour is conditioned by educational practices and models which, of course, includes the *Bildungsroman* paradigm. By drawing the reader’s attention to the contrived nature of modelling (female) conduct, Sousa Costa emphasises how instruction shapes the characters’ behaviours and implicitly alludes to the didactic quality of her novel of female development.

Before examining this line of enquiry any further, it is necessary to consider Sousa Costa's readership. Based on her extensive output over several decades, we can infer that she enjoyed a successful publishing career that attracted a large readership. The sex, class and politics of the reader are also significant. Sousa Costa's readership was almost undoubtedly aiming her work at women; an assumption we can infer from the subject matter and immanently female-centric nature of her works that is borne out in her fiction. Carlos Nogueira reaches the same conclusion, and makes some insightful observations about probable readership based on a close reading of Sousa Costa's works:

A autora tinha em vista a leitora que iria ver nestas narrativas uma confirmação dos seu comportamento moderno; mas, como é óbvio, não desprezava as leitoras antifeministas nem as feministas radicais. Num tempo em que o analfabetismo era elevadíssimo, sobretudo entre as mulheres, é fácil concluir a que classes sociais pertenceriam estas leitoras. (2013: 166-7)

The educational experiences of the protagonist in 'Quem tiver' support Nogueira's suggestion that Sousa Costa envisaged readership were wealthy women and girls, as Leonor's homeschooling was an upper-class privilege in this context. At the time of the novella's publication, furthermore, the educational reforms that had been introduced by



the First Republic,<sup>173</sup> which benefitted women and the working classes in particular, had been curtailed by the dictatorship, meaning efforts to counter the extreme rates of female illiteracy (see Belo, 1989: 164; Flunser Pimental 2001: 81; 2011: 120) were dismantled. This context is important for this analysis as it demonstrates two crucial points. Firstly, Sousa Costa's middle- or upper-class female readers would be able to identify with both the author and the protagonist. It is, therefore, more likely for the narrative to resonate with the reader. The second point is that, although Sousa Costa's target audience is limited by sex and class, the author presents her feminist politics in such a way as to avoid alienating revolutionary or reactionary women. The sense of universality that this suggests points to a feminist solidarity that is facilitated by education at two levels: the female reader's ability to read 'Quem tiver' and the female characters experiences in the narrative.

The link between instruction and conduct is immanently gendered in the novella as it relates to the type of *women* that the female characters become and, for both Olga and Leonor, their inadequate education can be traced to patriarchal authority. The characterisation of Olga can be read as a satirised take on the 'angel' model as her sensitivity and obedience mean she is unable to protect her daughter from the malicious French tutor, a point which is highlighted by the narrator who notes how Jeanne takes advantage of 'a complacencia sentimental da mãe' (QTF: 7). Not only does Olga's excessive compassion and leniency make her an ineffectual mother, it is also a source of tension in her marriage. She laments, for instance, how her self-sacrificing, obedient

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<sup>173</sup> The Republican Party was committed to improving education (Blockeel, 2001: 39), particularly for Portuguese women (Marques Alves, 2012: 66; Tavares da Silva, 1983: 875), and the 'Constituição Portuguesa de 1911' introduced compulsory primary education for girls and boys (Art. 3.11; also see Evaristo, [n.d.]: 348; Esteves, 1998: 333; Silva, 2011: 175). The legislation reforms also led to the introduction of mobile libraries which have been credited with making one hundred thousand children literate (Evaristo, [n.d.]: 348). The anti-feminist education practices of the dictatorship are clearly illustrated by the focus on biological difference. Coeducation, for which feminists had battled relentlessly, was banned in 1927, girls and boys were taught different curricula that was informed by Catholic doctrine (see Esteves and Johnson, 2018; Sadlier, 1989: 120).

nature leads to her husband's mistreatment of her and to numerous indiscretions (QTF: 5-6). Her family life, nevertheless, is tense, unhappy and unsatisfying, despite the fact that she adheres to the misogynistic legislation of the state, such as the 1932 'Family Laws' ['Leis de família'] that stated that a woman's role was 'o governo doméstico e uma assistência moral tendente a fortalecer e aperfeiçoar a unidade familiar' (2011: 229, Art. 39) and the 1933 Constitution that (in)famously stated all were people equal except, 'quanto à mulher, as diferenças resultantes da sua natureza e do bem da família' (Art. 5).<sup>174</sup>

Ironically, then, Olga fails as a wife and mother precisely because she subscribes to the conservative image of womanhood promoted by the dictatorship. Leonor, on the other hand, is disobedient, arrogant and vain, all qualities that Sousa Costa criticised in her writings.<sup>175</sup> By confronting and rejecting the 'angel' model and eschewing a positive depiction of the 'new woman', the author textually inscribes the interface of competing discourses about female conduct in such a way as to underline the need for a new approach to womanhood. Rather than reinforce the 'angel'/'new woman' binary, both Olga and Leonor are anti-exemplary models of female behaviour. In both cases, their failings relate to educational experiences invested with patriarchal practice and convention. As well as hampering her own personal development, Olga's schooling is also the reason that Fernando entrusts his daughter's education to the French tutor, believing that her rudimentary training means she is unprepared to teach their daughter (QTF: 6). Patriarchal authority, then, has a negative impact on Leonor's development in

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<sup>174</sup> In reference to this legislation, Salazar commented in 1933: 'O trabalho da mulher fora do lar desagrega [a família]' (1961: 203).

<sup>175</sup> In *Ideias antigas*, for instance, ostentatiousness is criticised (1923: 31-3), while in the children's story 'Joãozinho tagarela' it is suggested that women's emancipation and vanity are incompatible: 'As mulheres proclamam em todos os tons os seus direitos à liberdade e são escravas voluntárias de tudo, até dos trapos' (1937: 115-6). (The extract from *Ideias antigas* is also published in *Eva* [30 May 1925: 11].)

a practical sense (her father dictates her education) and a metaphorical sense (Olga is deemed unsuitable because of her own conservative training).

Not only does Fernando's intervention have a negative impact on Leonor's behaviour and personal development, but it also results in a tense, fractured relationship with her mother. The maternal role is apposite from a literary and socio-political perspective. In a literary context, the broken bond between the female protagonist and her mother is a common theme in female *Bildungsroman* narratives (Gómez Viu, 2009: 112, 114; Ordóñez, 1991: 104-5, 136). Sousa Costa, as the foregrounding demonstrates, makes use of this trait to convey how educational practices invested with patriarchal convention damage bonds between women. From a socio-political perspective, motherhood was commonplace in governmental rhetoric and feminist thought. While the maternal role was co-opted by the political left and right in Spain, as discussed in Chapter Two, motherhood was strategically appropriated by both the Republic and the dictatorship in twentieth-century Portugal as a means of stoking nationalist sentiment. For many feminists, including Sousa Costa, the maternal role was a productive means of promoting women's access to education. Figures such as Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, Ana de Castro Osório and Maria O'Neill argued that it was a woman's right and duty to educate her children,<sup>176</sup> while Sousa Costa believed that women should dedicate themselves to 'à sua elevada missão de mãe, de esposa, de filha, de irmã e sobretudo de educadora' (1923: 178).

Bearing this context in mind, the intergenerational conflict that the fractured mother-daughter relationship suggests in 'Quem tiver' points to a tension between women of the past and women of the present, as the insidious patriarchal influence that

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<sup>176</sup> Vaz de Carvalho defends the desperate need for educational reform in *As nossas filhas: cartas às mães* (1904: 255), while Castro Osório argues in *Às mulheres portuguesas* that educated women would raise enlightened children and describes women as 'as verdadeiras educadoras de seus filhos' (1905: 81). O'Neill appears to draw on Castro Osório in *A escravatura feminina*: 'É a mulher a educadora do filho' (1926: 4).

is literally and symbolically represented by Leonor's father can be read as an allegory for a break between different generations of feminist thought. Although the mother-daughter analogy implies an organic, instinctual element to this transgenerational link, patriarchal authority sabotages the 'natural' bond between women, hindering the protagonist's personal growth and, by extension, the evolution of feminist discourse. While the evident impact of Castro Osório's works on Sousa Costa's output is discussed in detail below, the author was also greatly influenced by Vaz de Carvalho,<sup>177</sup> one of the first women to publically advocate women's access to education, despite her otherwise conservative views,<sup>178</sup> and also collaborated with O'Neill, her more revolutionary contemporary.<sup>179</sup> The characterisation of Leonor not only manifests the negative impact of misogynistic practices on female development in a broader, conceptual sense, but also personifies a feminist movement that is oppressed, corrupted and undermined by patriarchal convention, suggesting the need for a reassessment of what the future holds for women and the women's movement in Portugal. The protagonist's fractured relationship with her mother, therefore, connotes how patriarchal authority impedes the development of feminist thought, a point that Sousa Costa uses the narrative to confront, undermine and contest.

Juxtaposing Castro Osório's defence of 'uma educação fundamentalmente portuguesa' in *As mulheres portuguesas* (1905: 78) with the description of Leonor's education in 'Quem tiver' demonstrates how Sousa Costa uses a patriotic conception of

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<sup>177</sup> Maria Alice Samara writes that a young Sousa Costa became interested in Vaz de Carvalho's texts as soon as she was able to read (2007: 155), and Sousa Costa describes Vaz de Carvalho as 'a escritora genial, a comentadora insigne dos homens e dos factos do seu tempo' in an article in *Eva* (11 July 1925: 3). One of Sousa Costa's articles for *Eva* about pioneering female figures is also dedicated to Vaz de Carvalho (10 October 1925: 2). Like Sousa Costa, Vaz de Carvalho also wrote an education manual (co-authored with her husband). This would be approved by the Conselho Superior de Instrução Pública (Flores, Duarte and Moreira, 2009: 190), which was a likely source of inspiration for Sousa Costa's *Moral práctica elemental*.

<sup>178</sup> Maria Regina Tavares da Silva describes Vaz de Carvalho as 'uma não feminista profundamente preocupada com a educação das mulheres' (1983: 876).

<sup>179</sup> Sousa Costa mentions O'Neill's socio-political activism in *Ideias antigas* (1923: 17-9) and O'Neill dedicates a poem from her collection *Cartas de guerra: viva a França!* to Sousa Costa (1916: 26).

motherhood to engage with the development of feminist discourse. Castro Osório underlines the importance of reading Portuguese literature, learning about Portuguese art and speaking the language ‘antes de nenhuma outra’ (1905: 77), whereas Sousa Costa’s protagonist reads foreign works, appreciates French art and begins to favour the French language.<sup>180</sup> For both Castro Osório and Sousa Costa, improving women’s access to education was critical for the development of the nation. Castro Osório makes this point in *Às mulheres portuguesas*, arguing that, as mothers and educators, women can nurture the Portuguese generation of the future,<sup>181</sup> while Sousa Costa posits in *A mulher* that ‘[d]a educação da mulher depende o futuro da Pátria e da Humanidade’ (1916: 77).<sup>182</sup> The synthesis of these feminist discourse(s) is inflected in ‘Quem tiver’, evoking a sense of unity and solidarity between Portuguese feminists which, paradoxically, is not evidenced through the depiction of the matrilineal link in the narrative. The collaborative mission that this suggests between women at a micro level (mothers and daughters) and a macro level (solidarity amongst feminists) is mirrored by the author’s emphasis on maternity, as improvements to women’s education was framed as an extension of the maternal role by female activists with more moderate aims, such as Vaz de Carvalho, and more progressive figures, such as Castro Osório and O’Neill, as noted above.

Although Sousa Costa’s views draw on contemporary feminist rhetoric, particularly Castro Osório’s seminal manifesto, she portrays a perverse alternative in ‘Quem tiver’, which is evidenced by juxtaposing the description of Olga’s ‘mãos patricias’ (*QTF*: 10) with the tutor’s ‘mãos mercenárias’ (*QTF*: 6), which, the narrator

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<sup>180</sup> The reference to art is particularly noteworthy as the description that Olga’s hands are so beautiful that ‘mereciam ser pintadas por Watteau’ (*QTF*: 10) suggests a metafictional, almost sardonic, example of the ubiquity of French culture in Portuguese works.

<sup>181</sup> The quote from *Às mulheres portuguesas* reads as follows: ‘Vós, maes e educadoras, que tendes vosso cargo pequenas almas em embrião a despertar para a luz, ensinai-lhes primeiro do que tudo, e antes de tudo, – a serem portuguesas’ (1905: 6).

<sup>182</sup> Sousa Costa also makes this point in *Ideias antigas* (1923: 55, 59, 80, 117, 125).

notes, are ‘incapazes da boa modelação das almas portuguesas’ (*QTF*: 6). Sousa Costa, this would imply, is simultaneously looking backwards and forwards to the ideas that informed the present (Castro Osório) and the contemporary socio-political climate that will shape the future (the dictatorship). While Ana Paula Ferreira criticises Castro Osório’s depiction of nationalist motherhood, arguing that her ideas would ‘lay the groundwork for Salazar’s subsequent appropriation of women’s demands’ (1996: 138)<sup>183</sup> and, in another article, explains that ‘theoretical models of nationalist womanhood’ sought to ‘demonize feminist ideals’ (2002: 107), Sousa Costa can be seen to frame motherhood and nationhood as analogous and, crucially, in conflict with the state.<sup>184</sup>

As this suggests, the conflict between feminist thought and conservative governmental rhetoric is played out in the narrative in order to confront and undermine the misogynistic, anti-feminist discourse that hinders female and feminist development, growth and unity. Reading the family dynamic as a microcosm for contemporary Portugal, with Fernando representing the government and Olga symbolising the nation, Sousa Costa appears to distinguish between the two as a means of underlining how the regime’s sexist practices are damaging to the development of the Portuguese nation. By employing a French tutor to educate his daughter, Fernando effectively places the future of the nation into foreign hands, quite literally given the reference to Jeanne’s ‘mãos

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<sup>183</sup> Carolyn Kendrick also observes how socio-political policy under the dictatorship ‘idealized the maternal figure as part of [Salazar’s] visionary plan for the reconstruction of the Portuguese nation’ (2003: 43).

<sup>184</sup> There are, furthermore, examples of Sousa Costa’s fiction in which she retells Portuguese history in such a way as to emphasise (or hypothesise about) the role of women, published both during the Republic and the dictatorship. One key example is ‘A filha do alcaide de Sintra’ published in *Coração o ditador* (1942: 61-9) in which Sousa Costa recounts the details of Afonso Henriques regaining control of Santarém and Lisbon from the Muslim occupiers, noting that the victory is indebted to the tactical intervention of a woman (1942: 65; 67). There are also other positive examples of patriotic Portuguese women in Sousa Costa’s works, including a children’s book published during the Republic (*Primeiras lições*, 1914: 102) and her *Lendas de Portugal*, published during the Estado Novo (1934: 49-50, 135). The notion of a woman interfering in a strategic sense, of course, was not in consonance with the mindless nurturing promoted by the dictatorship.

mercenárias' (*QTF*: 6). Not only does Fernando's identification with the state connote how the sexist policies of the dictatorship are detrimental to female development (the protagonist) and female solidarity (represented by Leonor and her mother), but the sense of unity between women in a broader sense that is implied by the broken intergenerational link between mother and daughter can also be understood in relation to the broader feminist movement, as Fernando's intervention sabotages a shared feminist initiative. The echoes of Castro Osório's revolutionary *Às mulheres portuguesas*, then, evoke an intertextual feminist dialogue juxtaposed with the rhetoric of the dictatorship. By charting the interface of these two opposing dialogues through the female protagonist's *Bildung*, Sousa Costa conveys the importance of an evolving (re-)conceptualisation of female conduct and the direction of the women's movement at this pivotal moment. As the analysis thus far would suggest, the author's argumentation pointedly rejects any form of patriarchal influence when outlining Leonor's reform, suggesting that an educational process divorced from any and all male influence is required for the next generation (represented in the narrative by Leonor).

'Quem tiver', with this in mind, can be read as a narrative of feminist, as well as female, development. The sense of a pivotal moment for the protagonist and the next generation of Portuguese women and the women's movement is illustrated by comparing the work with another of the author's collections, *Coração o ditador* (1942). Not only does the title of this collection allude to the interface of gender and governmental politics that arises in 'Quem tiver' (remembering here that prior to the establishment of the Estado Novo, the regime was known as 'A Ditadura Militar'), but the work also tackles similar subject matter. In 'É de sogra' and 'Alma de criança', Sousa Costa hypothesises two distinct educational experiences for her female characters: in 'É de sogra', a male character vehemently defends his forward-looking

(female) partner to his rigid, traditional mother who is wary of her future daughter-in-law's academic capabilities (1942: 71-88), while, in 'Alma de criança', the narrative depicts the negative consequences of an overly rigid schooling for the protagonist (1942: 123-47). Although the author promotes the importance of intellectual, practical and moral training in these narratives, as in 'Quem tiver', what is particular to the short story being examined here is the emphasis on the various routes that are laid out for the protagonist. While the distinction between women of the past and women of the present/future is indexed through generational divides in all of the stories, 'Quem tiver' reads as both a critique and a directive for the female collective that charts the process of considering and discounting various routes through Leonor's stops and starts. In the next section, the examination explores how the author confronts and dismisses the vision of womanhood promoted by the state by rejecting marriage and religious life as possible avenues for the protagonist's reform, providing a fictionalised counter-argument to the ultra-conservative, anti-feminist rhetoric of the dictatorship.

### **Reflecting Feminism Forward: Resisting Indoctrination under the Dictatorship**

The fall of the Republic in 1926 was a major blow to first-wave feminism in Portugal. Following a series of republican governments that enacted legal reforms that would liberate women from social and legal slavery, the newly formed dictatorship would reverse these hard fought for rights. As noted, 'Quem tiver' was published in the same year that the Ditadura Militar (1926-1933) would formally become the Estado Novo (1933-1974). The conservative, patriarchal character of the regime meant that any form of feminist conviction was suppressed, criminalised and suffocated. In the previous section, it was argued that Leonor's self-destructive behaviour and her fractured relationship with her mother alludes to the insidious influence of patriarchal practices



and paradigms that damage female-centric bonds and, by extension, the development of the women's movement. The generational divide that is suggested by the portrayal of a broken mother-daughter relationship underlines how, for Sousa Costa, the mutable conceptualisations of womanhood and feminism that evolve over time are intrinsically linked, as the protagonist's personal turmoil can be traced to the various ways in which patriarchal authority has impacted her life and, crucially, her education.

Having outlined how these tensions are inflected in the characterisation of the protagonist, the analysis now examines how Sousa Costa proposes possible solutions to Leonor's turmoil, arguing that the author can be seen to confront and reject paths that uphold the patriarchal values of the state as a means of eschewing the models of 'femininity' and perversions of feminism promoted by the dictatorship. By considering and rejecting these paths in the narrative, I argue, the author uses the work as a means of engaging with contemporary debates in such a way as to draw the reader's attention to the process of critiquing societal convention and the various social paradigms that impose patriarchal norms on women. To this end, the analysis that follows first examines a possible marriage that fails to come to pass and then explores how the orthodox religious training proposed by Olga's friend Lucrecia is rejected, as the author constructs a narrative that self-consciously confronts manners of social indoctrination that serve to oppress women with the protagonist's *Bildung* functioning as a counter-narrative to the regime's paternalistic rhetoric.

One of the most intriguing elements of examining Sousa Costa's writings is trying to determine the extent to which the author has internalised the tension between her feminist values and her evidently moderate (and at points conservative) ideas about the role of women. The most salient examples where this conflict arises are in relation to marriage and religion. Although Sousa Costa encouraged women to be skilled and

competent wives and mothers in her conduct manuals, as outlined at the beginning of the chapter, marriage is typically portrayed negatively in her fiction.<sup>185</sup> Her detailed reflections on the divorce law in *Na sociedade*, furthermore, suggest at least a tacit endorsement of the legislation, as she clearly outlines circumstances in which divorce can be granted:

O pedido de divórcio funda-se nestas causas: infidelidade de qualquer dos esposos; injúrias e sevícias graves; abândono do lar conjugal por mais de três anos; a separação dos dois cônjuges livremente consentida por mais de dez anos consecutivos; condenação a pena grave; vício do jôgo, loucura incurável ou doença contagiosa. (1937: 147-8)

The allusions to Fernando's infidelity now appear all the more significant as, according to Sousa Costa's own understanding of the law, such behaviour was grounds for divorce. Bearing in mind that the dictatorship had been in power for over a decade when *Na sociedade* was published, Sousa Costa's decision to print – and therefore publicise – the law is a bold one, perhaps more reminiscent of revolutionary feminists such as Castro Osório and Burgos than a figure often considered overly conservative by feminist critics. As *Na sociedade* went to four editions, we can conclude that these writings reached a large female readership and would, therefore, make an impact on the collective female and feminist consciousness under an authoritarian, patriarchal dictatorship.

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<sup>185</sup> There are repeated references to domestic violence in both her children's fiction (*O último enforcado*, 19--: 36; *Trinta mil por uma linha*, 1932: 47; *Triste vida a da raposa*, 1943: 42) and work published for adults (note Fernando's violence in 'Quem tiver', and 'Renúncia', 1942: 97-122). There is no evidence to suggest that Sousa Costa's own marriage was troubled (her husband also published on the 'woman question' [Tavares da Silva, 2005: 305]), and so it is more likely that Sousa Costa was using her writings as a means of highlighting what she deemed to be a problem in Portuguese society, rather than as a means of personal catharsis.

‘Quem tiver’ brings together a combination of the stark reality of women’s social and legal subordination that the author confronts in her literature, and her firmly held belief that women should aspire to a contented family life; a view presumably shaped by her own positive experiences, as she frequently gushes about the achievements of her children and grandchildren in her writings and public lectures in a manner typical of a proud, protective matriarch. Sousa Costa can be seen, once again, to engage with Castro Osório’s writings, in this instance *Mundo novo* (19--), which constitutes a series of (fictional) letters between the female protagonist Leonor and Regina, who debate women’s social and legal standing, feminism and marriage reform, formulating their ideas for a ‘mundo novo’ (19--: 9; 15; 28). Although the authors’ personal and political ideals are inflected in their narratives – Castro Osório’s Leonor is more revolutionary than the protagonist in ‘Quem tiver’ – the negative depictions of marriage in both works invite comparison and, critically, imply that Sousa Costa wanted to publically identify with the figurehead of first-wave feminism in Portugal.

A positive alternative to marriage is also presented in ‘Quem tiver’, as the dynamic between Olga’s friend, Helena, and her husband suggests that a more equal power balance is possible. There are two allusive textual clues that imply that Helena is the dominant partner in her marriage. The first relates to a short episode in which she (politely) refuses to discuss personal matters when in public, telling her husband she will explain when they are at home (*QTF*: 38), as the public/private binary is evoked in such a way as to reinforce women’s dominance in the private domain and, at the same time, hints at a more equal power balance in the public space. Helena, in other words, asserts her authority whilst in the public space by refusing to answer and insists on waiting until she is in the domestic domain before sharing secrets with her husband, relocating the conversation to the area where *she* maintains authority. This notion of

shifting public matters to the private space effectively encapsulates Sousa Costa's position, and illustrates how, for the author, there is a symbolic link between the two that is personified here by Helena's marriage. The narrator's description of Helena's husband when in the company of his wife further implies that he is subordinate to his wife, as he remains nameless: 'Helena de Valadares, o marido, Lucrecia de Azamor' (*QTF*: 36). The decision to refer to a male character simply as 'marido', remembering here Sousa Costa is aiming her work at a female reader, subverts the hegemonic heterosexual dynamic by using language to suggest that the husband is an extension of his wife, as was argued in relation to O'Neill's Nuno in the previous chapter, since the label implies Helena's authority over her husband.

Although Helena's example suggests that an alternative to Olga's miserable existence as a wife is possible, both the protagonist and the author can be seen to reject marriage in order to accentuate the importance of female and feminist development in the narrative. The work is insistently self-conscious about re-writing the expected model as a possible romance with a family friend, Adriano, is set in motion. Despite Leonor's initial refusal to marry (*QTF*: 23), she comes around to the idea because of the close bond she shares with Adriano and the strong mutual attraction between the pair. Their burgeoning relationship, however, is cut short when malicious (untrue) gossip leads to a misunderstanding between the couple and, before a reconciliation is possible, Adriano tragically dies. Marriage as a possible solution to the protagonist's rebellious outbursts, therefore, is rejected by both the protagonist and, when she begins to entertain the possibility, the author intervenes to 'kill off' Leonor's love interest. In doing so, Sousa Costa breaks with both social and literary convention: not only were marriage and family life key to the dictatorship's anti-feminist social policies, but, as critics note, the female *Bildungsroman* typically concludes with the female protagonist's marriage (see,

for example, Fraiman, 1993: 16-7; Hoffman Baruch, 1981: 335; Labovitz, 1986: 246; Lutes, 2000: 7). The empowering subtext to ‘Quem tiver’ is emphasised if we compare the narrative with Jo Labanyi’s analysis of the romance genre in the early decades of the Franco dictatorship, as she notes that the works of Concha Linares-Becerra and Luisa-María Linares – both writers with ‘evident Nationalist sympathies’ (2007: 76) – ‘ritually end with the heroine’s capitulation to the hero’s embrace, resulting in the loss of her previous independence’ (2007: 66).

Liberating the protagonist from an expected and convenient means of actualising her *Bildung*, then, Sousa Costa allows the character to stand her proverbial ground and resist the metaphorical ‘handcuffs’ that she so detests (‘*repugnam-lhe algemas*’ [*QTF*: 23; original emphasis]). The emotive language that Leonor uses to underline the oppressive nature of marriage, equating marriage with ‘handcuffs’, can be read as a pointed counter-argument to the rhetoric of the state. The notion that women should dedicate themselves to family life was legislated by the state, as noted in the previous section, and two women’s groups would be introduced by the Estado Novo, *Obra das Mães pela Educação Nacional* (OMEN) in 1936 and *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina* (MPF) in 1937, used ‘education’ as a smokescreen for training women for a lifetime of domestic duty and subservience.<sup>186</sup> Oppressive, misogynistic social policy that was designed to manipulate female conduct on a mass scale can be seen to mirror Elaine Hoffman Baruch’s criticism of the female *Bildungsroman*, as the emphasis on marriage leads her to the conclusion that the ‘authentic female *bildungsroman* is still to be written

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<sup>186</sup> OMEN prepared women and girls for their roles as wives and mothers, and centred its training programme on domesticity rather than intellectual instruction, as the eponymous reference to education referred to conservative dogma rather than improving literacy rates or providing academic training for women and girls. The MPF, of which membership was obligatory, delivered a message of morality and chastity and organised gatherings at girls’ schools throughout Portugal, a setting which symbolises how academic training was replaced by indoctrination and propaganda. For further details, see Flunser Pimentel, 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2011.

[as the] heroine's development remained inextricably linked to marriage, [and therefore] these works were less *bildungsromans* than *bildungsromans manqués*' (1981: 357).

In 'Quem tiver', with this in mind, the fact that marriage and domestic life is not the source of the female protagonist's reform illustrates how the narrative confronts, considers and rejects popular convention. The omnipresence of societal, religious and governmental pressure that encouraged women to marry is implied by the lack of subject in the narrative: the reader simply learns that the topic of marriage is raised, without clarifying by whom, which suggests that such conventions have become so deeply embedded in society that they cannot be traced to a single source. The rejection of marriage is as much a counter-argument as it is a resistance to established social and literary models, as Sousa Costa pointedly presents an alternative route for the protagonist and her envisaged reader who, as noted earlier, is undoubtedly female. The sense of identification between female protagonist and female reader, in this instance, means marriage functions as a metonym for conformity, making the rejection of this path by the protagonist (initially) and the author a pointed feminist initiative.

As argued in relation to Graupera and O'Neill, furthermore, refusing to regurgitate popular romantic fiction was a means through which the female author could actualise her own creative agency. By avoiding a means of changing her behaviour that is inherently dependent on men and patriarchal customs, as (heterosexual) marriage is, the protagonist is able to re-fashion her narrative(s) of female development in such a way as to grow, mature and progress without any male influence. As well as reworking the pattern at an individual, micro level, dismissing marriage also allows for a more revolutionary approach to female development in a broader sense as it alludes to the (re-)evaluation of social and literary paradigms that dictate women's lives. Rejecting marriage as an effective *desenlace* for Leonor, that is to say, can be read in relation to

the evolution of feminist discourse, understood as both debates and objectives and the female-centric fiction that manifests these ideas, as the protagonist's journey personifies the need to re-(consider) of how the future of the women's movement should look inward as a means of moving forward.

The female *Bildungsroman* paradigm affords the author a productive means of inviting her readership to self-reflect on a personal level (the individual female reader) and in a collective sense (women as a united group) and, at the same time, textually transcribe her own internal monologue as she re-works and tests out ideas. As Olga Bezhanova argues in relation to the genre in early twentieth-century Spain, the narrative of female development filled a void, affording women a means of achieving 'deeper self-awareness' and allowing them to 'engage in the process of self-development' at a time when other educational models did not allow for this degree of self-expression (2013: 23). The empowering potential of the genre is underlined by comparing it with the romance plot which, as Tania Modleski (1990) and Janice Radway (1991) have convincingly argued, functioned as a means of escapism for female readers, without offering a productive solution to their restrictive, unfulfilling lives. In contrast, the female *Bildungsroman* – even in its most conservative form – does invite a female reader to aspire to personal fulfilment within, to cite Bezhanova, an 'inhospitable world' (2013).

The suggestion that Leonor's rebellious behaviour includes sexual liaisons, which is hinted at in the narrative (QTF: 8-9; 21),<sup>187</sup> illustrates how the narrative

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<sup>187</sup> When the French tutor resigns from her post, she claims that she wants to leave as Leonor and her riding instructor, Roger, are having an affair (QTF: 8-9) and, later in the narrative, the protagonist is described as increasingly sexualised as she loses her 'graça etérea da pulchritude' (QTF: 21) and develops 'a atracção provocadora da voluptuosidade' (QTF: 21). Although it is not stated explicitly, there is a suggestion that the tutor may be telling the truth as Helena later comes across Leonor with an unnamed Englishman (QTF: 37), which could be a reference to the instructor given his English name. There is also a suggestion that Leonor works as a prostitute: when found in the company of strange men by Helena, Leonor uses the false name 'Dulce', echoing Gonçalves Crespo's poem *Dulce* about a sex worker. We can infer that Sousa Costa was familiar with the work given Crespo was Vaz de Carvalho's husband.

paradigm encapsulates a continued (re-)conceptualisation of social and literary convention. The allusive, non-committal reference to sexual relationships exemplifies not only the author's moderate social commentary (Leonor is not 'punished' in the narrative through death, which is typical for female protagonists who transgress sexual social convention),<sup>188</sup> but also suggests that, from a historical-literary perspective, 'Quem tiver' may be considered a transitional work. Drawing on Olga Bezhanova's study of the genre in Spain provides some useful context to illustrate this point, as she observes how examples of the genre would not begin to explore the female protagonist's sexual development until the 1940s (Bezhanova, 2013: 106). 'Quem tiver', therefore, could be seen to manifest the evolution of the female *Bildungsroman* in Iberia through its unequivocal depiction of sexuality. Not only does the protagonist's ambiguous sexual past encapsulate a proverbial cross-roads for women in a social or cultural sense, it also taps into the development of a literary genre concerned with progress and change. In doing so, Sousa Costa's narrative forms part of an intergenerational intertextual network of feminist fiction that, when analysed diachronically, can be seen to chart the evolution of feminist discourse(s), as the narrative exemplifies the contribution socio-political debate it aims to facilitate and promote.

The notion of re-writing literary convention denotes how Sousa Costa was acutely aware of the (potential) impact of her contribution to women's writing. While O'Neill used her fiction consciously to impose herself on the Portuguese literary circuit, clearly wanting to be considered a Portuguese writer, rather than a *woman* writer, as discussed in the previous chapter, Sousa Costa appears to capitalise on the opportunity to underline the link between feminist discourse and female-authored fiction aimed at

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<sup>188</sup> Perhaps the most well-known female protagonists 'punished' for their sexual transgressions in a Portuguese literary context are Queirós' Amélia from *O crime do padre Amaro* (1875), who is banished to the countryside (as mentioned in the previous chapter), and Luisa of *O primo Basílio* (1878), who dies.



women as a means of engaging with contemporary issues. By confronting and dismissing the possibility of marriage, the author reinforces the need to suture the broken link between women of the past and present, symbolised by the fractured mother/daughter bond in 'Quem tiver', and, in doing so, allows for a narrative of female development that, returning to Hoffman Baruch's critique, constitutes a *bildungsroman réalisé* rather than a *bildungsroman manqué*. The sense of development and progress, then, that is central to the *Bildungsroman* paradigm is applied to models of female behaviour in such a way as to suggest a break with the models of the past (as demonstrated by Olga) and imply a sense of progress or evolution for conceptions of female development and the future of the women's movement that the protagonist represents. This is emphasised by the fact that the female protagonist usually repeats her mother's life choices in prototypical examples of this literary model (Ferguson, 1983: 228). Sousa Costa, on the other hand, affords her protagonist a different path to the one taken by her mother's generation and a means of exercising her own self-expression that is divorced from male influence.

The process of (re-)evaluating expectations of female behaviour in 'Quem tiver', as this suggests, is presented as a wholly female-centric mission. While Sousa Costa's Spanish contemporaries, according to Bezhanova, produced works that also offered alternatives to marriage for the female protagonist, including works by authors deemed to be conservative, such as Concha Espina (2013: 21-2), 'Quem tiver' self-consciously draws the reader's attention to the fact that this model is confronted, considered and rejected. The fact that Adriano seems a suitable, compatible husband only serves to emphasise this point. Whether this commonality could be taken as evidence to suggest that Sousa Costa was familiar with the female *Bildungsroman* produced by her Spanish

contemporaries<sup>189</sup> or is simply further evidence of the truism that similar literary trends were borne out of comparable socio-political contexts, this overlap illustrates how, when read in retrospect, ‘Quem tiver’ manifests the sense of collectivity amongst women (writers) that it seeks to promote. As well as rejecting a social and literary paradigm that is dependent on male influence, Sousa Costa also confronts and dismisses female-centric initiatives that are invested with patriarchal convention.

Just as Olga is identified with patriarchal educational practices (somewhat paradoxically given she is the protagonist’s mother), so too is her friend Lucrecia, whom Olga asks for assistance when she is unable to control her daughter’s increasingly wayward behaviour. A self-described ‘zeladora’ (QTF: 12), Lucrecia is the director of the Liga das Madalenas Arrependidas, a religious organisation dedicated to reforming objectionable, unorthodox or otherwise ‘sinful’ young women. She is considered a source of moral guidance by the community (QTF: 27; 37) and blames Leonor’s hostility on ‘muita falta de temor de Deus’ (QTF: 12). Though a reader may expect a positive depiction of an honourable Catholic woman given Sousa Costa advocated Church-led education in *Ideias antigas* (1923: 46)<sup>190</sup> and presents Catholicism positively in much of her fiction,<sup>191</sup> the character of Lucrecia constitutes an anti-exemplary model, as she is malicious, manipulative and anti-Semitic; exemplified

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<sup>189</sup> It is possible that Sousa Costa was familiar with the Spanish works which form the basis of Bezhanova’s analysis. Not only did she publish an article in recognition of Concha Espina’s literary and social contribution in *Eva* (6 April 1929: 6, 11), there are traces of Spanish(-language) writings in her works. *O cinema da avozinha*, for instance, includes reviews of Miguel de Cervantes and *Don Quijote* (1941: 42), while the vignette ‘A laguna assombrada’ (1945: 163-9) from *Coração o ditador* is based on the Uruguayan tale ‘Los dos hermanos’. *Cartas a uma brasileira* (1927), furthermore, is a collection of fictional letters from Portugal, France and Spain (all written in Portuguese).

<sup>190</sup> In the work, Sousa Costa argues as follows: ‘Religião e ciência dão-se as mãos, neste caso, para nos advertirem ou aconselharem. Comquanto haja pontos de divergência na orientação a seguir ambas nos dizem, uma pelas suas cerimónias simbólicas, outra pela bôca ou pela pênna dos seus cultores, que a educação dos filhos constitue a mais impreterível dos nossos deveres morais. Daí a necessidade inadiável e absoluta de se fazer com critério e segurança a parte mais importante de educação – a feminina’ (1923: 46).

<sup>191</sup> Sousa Costa wrote *História do menino Jesus* (1928), for instance, and dedicates *O rouxinol e o grilo* to Jesus Christ (1910: 5). Religious teachings are also referenced positively and advocated in the following examples of Sousa Costa’s fiction for children: *História da Feialinda* (1942: 38); *Memórias da Lili* (1922: 28); *Mestre burro em calças pardas* (1938: 35-40); and *Os contos do Joãozinho* (1927: 26).

by her ironic surname, Azamor ('unlucky in love'). This is evidenced in the narrative as she blames Leonor's behaviour on the fact that her parents allow her to associate with Jewish girls (*QTF*: 12), a completely unfounded accusation, and is responsible for breaking up the budding romance between Leonor and Adriano as she falsely claims that he is an untrustworthy philanderer because he is of Jewish heritage: 'O Adriano não póde negar o sangue judeu que lhe corrompe as veias...' (*QTF*: 27).

Grounding Lucrecia's comments within the work's historical context suggests that Sousa Costa takes the opportunity to publically condemn the persecution of the Jews by aligning anti-Semitism with a hypocritical, cruel character. Similarly, Lucrecia's claim that Olga's association with divorced women ('Na tua casa entram divorciadas...') (*QTF*: 14) has somehow corrupted Leonor is presented as an anti-exemplary norm to be denounced by the reader. As the extent of the character's hypocrisy and malice only comes to light as the narrative progresses, Lucrecia's criticism of Jewish people and divorced women can be understood as part of the woman reader's *Bildung* as, conceivably at this point in history, some readers may identify with Leonor's prejudices. The didactic quality of the work that this denotes is emphasised by the contemporaneous nature of marriage legislation, as discussed in the previous chapter, and anti-Semitism in early twentieth-century Europe.<sup>192</sup> While critics of the female novel of development note how the genre affords the woman writer and reader a space to jointly reflect on society (Bannet, 1991: 195; 196; 226-8; Bezhanova, 2013: 1),<sup>193</sup> what is interesting here is how, in this instance, the reader is not identified with Leonor, who recognises Lucrecia's hypocrisy and malice from the beginning. Rather Sousa Costa incorporates a distinct *Bildung* for the reader that runs parallel to that of the

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<sup>192</sup> Retrospectively, this criticism is particularly pertinent as the work was published in the same year that Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany (on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1933).

<sup>193</sup> As Eve Tavor Bannet explicates in her study of the genre in eighteenth-century English literature: '[I]t was designed to effect the *Bildung* of its readers and thus to effect changes in the manners and morals of the times' (1991: 196; also see 226-7).

protagonist, as the (female) reader is prompted to reassess both their ability to reflect critically on their surroundings and their perception of the character of Leonor.

Drawing on a typical characteristic of the novel of development, then, Sousa Costa encourages a reader to recognise how they form part of a collective project that, for the author, is gynocentric. The negative depiction of Lucrecia is noteworthy as it underlines how this sense of female collectivity only functions amongst women who want to make a positive impact on the next generation; a qualification that does not apply to Lucrecia. The author can be seen to play on gender in such a way as to imply that socio-political concerns that apply to both sexes, nevertheless, manifest in unique ways when communicated by or amongst women. In doing so, Sousa Costa underscores how contemporary issues are pertinent to women's lives and, crucially, how women and men require different media to debate or reflect on such issues. In other words, the author seems to suggest that fiction is a route for women (both author and reader) to engage with current political debates, including specific feminist concerns (divorce) and broader human rights issues (anti-Semitism), as she channels such issues through the fictionalised character (or caricature) of Lucrecia. As well as providing a medium through which the author can disassociate the protagonist's reform from ultra-conservative indoctrination, the character's gender makes an important point about patriarchal influence on female development and behaviour(s), which is evidenced by comparing Lucrecia with Fernando. Although both characters exhibit a similar degree of immorality and hypocrisy, juxtaposing the two allows us to see patriarchal norms impact women and men differently as the characters respectively embody the main tools the dictatorship used to control and oppress society: oppression and indoctrination. While Fernando's focus on punishment and insults (QTF: 22) reflects the strength, force and oppression of the state that he practically and symbolically represents through his

double-identification with patriarchy, Lucrecia's role as president of the Liga das Magdalenas Arrependidas is invested with the Catholic-based indoctrination that would characterise women's access to 'education' during the Estado Novo. Comparing the two characters demonstrates how Sousa Costa avoids a simplistic female/good male/bad binary, which she has been accused of by Carlos Nogueira (2013: 165-6),<sup>194</sup> in order to implore the reader to recognise and, more importantly, reject models and teachings that, to the author's mind, are detrimental to female development and the advancement of the women's movement.

Delineating this concern through a female character evokes how educational programmes were central to women's relationship with the public domain, as schooling and instruction were used as a means of imposing ideologically-driven models of womanhood onto the Portuguese female population, as noted earlier in this section. What is interesting about Sousa Costa's depiction of Lucrecia is how she identifies the character with religious indoctrination as a means of highlighting the hypocrisy and immorality of this method; a commentary that taps into the paradox of a female-focused public initiative that is underpinned by patriarchal values. The author can be seen to underline how this is ultimately harmful as her mother and Lucrecia are not suitable role models as, like Leonor's father, they are identified with reactionary, hypocritical and paradoxical dogma. Thus, through the portrayal of marriage and religious training Sousa Costa can be seen to distance the protagonist's reform and rehabilitation from any suggestion of male influence on multiple levels. Just as Fernando is unable to bully his daughter into altering her behaviour, the author discounts the possibility of marriage, even a potentially happy union, by 'killing off' Adriano. The work is insistently self-

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<sup>194</sup> Nogueira explains Sousa Costa's fiction bears parallels with 'novelas-folhetim' (or 'folhetines' in Spanish) of the nineteenth century and paraliterature as it includes 'as dicotomias masculino/feminino, bem/mal, verdade/mentira, fidelidade/traição, etc.' (2013: 165-6). It is worth clarifying that the manner Nogueira articulates his point ('masculino/feminino, bem/mal') is not intended as a means of suggesting a male/good and female/bad contrast.

conscious about its own role in offering an alternative approach as the form of the (female) Bildungsroman encompasses the two propagandistic models that Sousa Costa confronts: literature and education. As a narrative of female development, that is, 'Quem tiver' encapsulates the interface of two media of public engagement that Sousa Costa sexes female.

It has been argued thus far that Sousa Costa eschews any suggestion of a positive male input by not portraying a happy marriage as key to the protagonist's reform and undermines patriarchal influence at a more indirect, conceptual level by depicting the failings of Olga and Lucrecia. Both of these female characters are invested with conservative educational practices that Sousa Costa can be seen to denounce as they do not make a positive impact on the protagonist. By underlining how Leonor's reform, and consequently her *Bildung*, are entirely divorced from patriarchal constructs or practices, Sousa Costa implies the need for an expressly female influence and avoids regurgitating the oppressive social paradigms of the dictatorship. Thus, although Sousa Costa's fiction is the least experimental and her ideas are the least progressive of the authors studied in this thesis, examining her nuanced characterisations in retrospect demonstrates how she was able to articulate her opposition to the models of womanhood promoted by the dictatorship in such a way as to avoid censorship, arguably making her fiction more impactful and effective. Having internalised the tension(s) between competing ideological discourses about womanhood and 'feminism', in all its variations, the author constructs a novel of development that, as has been demonstrated, confronts how patriarchy hinders female and feminist growth and constitutes a counter-narrative to the rhetoric of the state. As the sustained critique of patriarchal models of instruction in 'Quem tiver' suggests, Leonor's eventual reform is facilitated by a female role model, Helena, who offers an alternative to the ideas and

practices put forth by and associated with Fernando, Olga and Lucrecia. In the next section, the analysis examines the impact of Helena, arguing that the character's advice for Leonor can be read as a self-conscious (re-)conceptualisation of female behaviour and a directive for the women's movement.

### **Moderating Modernity: Female-led (Re-)Workings of Female and Feminist**

#### **Conduct**

Despite the dictatorship's well-orchestrated social policies and retrogressive legal reforms, the patriarchal, authoritarian regime was unable to silence women's voices and suppress feminist thought. Women's groups and projects related to feminist initiatives, however, were under constant threat, as were women writers whose works, like that of their male colleagues, was heavily censored. The forced closure of the CNMP in 1947 following an exhibition of female-authored writings is a clear example of how, for the regime, feminist writings were considered an influential, powerful medium for resistance. Against this backdrop, Sousa Costa enjoyed a successful literary career, seemingly impervious to the state's censors. This is somewhat surprising given our examination of 'Quem tiver' as it has been argued that Sousa Costa presents a sustained critique of patriarchal educational policies and practices in the short story, highlighting their failings through the detrimental or ineffectual impact that they have on the protagonist and the other female characters. Through the protagonist's unrealised marriage and her resistance to Lucrecia's attempts to indoctrinate her into religious life, Sousa Costa can be seen to metaphorically reject the propagandistic educational programmes of the dictatorship and societal convention that reinforces patriarchal ideology. By self-consciously confronting and rejecting the 'angel' model and eschewing a positive depiction of the 'new woman', the author textually inscribes the

interface of competing discourses about female conduct in such a way as to underline the need for a new approach to womanhood and the women's movement that the protagonist personifies. The question therefore arises as to how Sousa Costa crafts this contemporary model of womanhood in the narrative and what this suggests about her vision for the future of the women's movement at this juncture in Portuguese history. Building on our discussion of how the protagonist and author resist, avoid and undermine oppressive, paternalistic practices and structures, the analysis now considers how the female characters in 'Quem tiver' rework patriarchal models, examining how the author constructs her narrative as a means of promoting and facilitating women's ideological agency, which applies to the female character(s), reader and author.

In the remainder of the chapter, I argue that the protagonist's *Bildung* can be read as a self-conscious reformulation of sexist or antifeminist models of female behaviour and a rallying call for female solidarity in the face of patriarchal oppression. The emphasis on dialogue in the work, I suggest, allows Sousa Costa to form a communicative channel between author and reader and to underline her own contribution to feminist thought in such a way as to foster a sense of collaboration between women and promote the continued evolution of feminist discourse. The remainder of the analysis, therefore, is split into two sections: the first examines how Helena's advice to the protagonist can be understood as a self-conscious re-conceptualisation of female conduct and the feminist movement that Leonor represents; and the final section examines how the female network in the narrative functions as a microcosm for female, and feminist, solidarity more broadly. It is perhaps worth underlining here that it is not my intention to present Sousa Costa's ideas as revolutionary, rather to illustrate how she conceptualises and disseminates her understanding of feminism in such a way as to invite the reader to engage with both the



process and her viewpoint at a time when all degrees of female empowerment were restricted by the state. In this section, I argue that Helena's advice to Leonor can be read as a model of womanhood and a directive for the women's movement, as the character's influence over the protagonist illustrates how, for Sousa Costa, the (re-)formulating of female and feminist conduct should be a distinctly female-led initiative. To this end, the analysis first outlines how Helena's reflections on Leonor's conduct can be read as a model for female behaviour, then considers how this can be applied to the women's movement in a broader sense, and ends by examining how the author affords women a sense of ideological agency by identifying Helena with the maternal role.

As Leonor's behaviour becomes an increasing cause for concern for her parents, particularly her mother, Helena offers some suggestions as to how to curb her increasingly hostile nature. The main reason for the protagonist's difficulties, in Helena's view, is that Leonor was educated to be a woman of the future, rather than the present, and, as such, she has developed qualities and traits that make her unsuited for the society in which she lives. An overly modern education, Helena explains, does not reflect contemporary needs or expectations: 'Cria mulheres masculinizadas nos vícios, nas ousadias, nos desfeites e só excepcionalmente capazes de serem as educadoras necessárias *do amanhã* – que não será o que é *o hoje*, nem o que foi *o ontem*' (*QTF*: 11; original emphasis). By referring to models of behaviour in relation to time, Helena draws the reader's attention to the allegorical significance of the generational divide between women that underpins the narrative and, through her emphasis on the present, implies the need for a transitional model between women (and womanhood) of the past and the future. The advice that Helena offers suggests a moderate level of autonomy, in line with Sousa Costa's feminist stance more broadly, as she encourages a combination of personal, spiritual and intellectual growth that appears restrictive and conservative

when compared with more revolutionary feminist aims, but, nevertheless, can be seen to rework the ultra-conservative model of femininity promoted by the dictatorship.

Helena's suggestions are played out in the narrative when she advises the family to take a trip together, where Leonor has time to reflect, bonds with her parents and reads prolifically thanks to a 'biblioteca bem provida' (*QTF*: 24). Although the reference to prayer and penance connotes a traditionalism more befitting of the dictatorship than the secular Republican government, the pointed description of a readily-accessible library exemplifies how Leonor's personal growth is facilitated through reading, a particularly significant detail given the stark decline in the number of girls attending school as the 1930s progressed (Flunser Pimentel, 2001: 81, 2011: 121). The circumstances of Adriano's untimely, tragic death in an aeroplane crash<sup>195</sup> further demonstrate the author's unequivocally moderate stance, as the association between airtravel and modernity could be read as a critique – or at least trepidation – of a fast-paced, overly progressive modernity.

The combination of intellectual, religious and emotional growth demonstrates how the author can be seen to navigate between the two extremes in order to present women's intellectual capabilities so that they complement more traditional models of female conduct. Having problematised, and at points satirised, the 'angel' through the characterisation of Olga (and, to some degree, Lucrecia) and questioned what it means to be a woman of the next generation through the protagonist, Sousa Costa constructs the protagonist's *Bildung* in such a way as to negotiate a form of womanhood that encapsulates the interface of competing discourses about female conduct that is embodied by the 'angel'/'new woman' binary. With this in mind, Sousa Costa's reputation as a conservative figure seems somewhat unjustified, and Tavares da Silva's

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<sup>195</sup> The death is likely a literary homage to Florbela Espanca's brother Apeles, who died in a similar accident, and to whom Espanca dedicated *As Máscaras do Destino* in 1931.

assessment of the author's position as 'profundamente realista' may appear more apt (1983: 880).

Building on the reading that Leonor's inner conflict mirrors a lack of direction for the women's movement, Helena's critique that the protagonist's education was overly progressive, and therefore incongruous with contemporary society, supports an allegorical interpretation: as Leonor is sixteen years old at the beginning of the narrative, on the cusp of adulthood just as the Estado Novo comes into being, her formative years take place during the Republic. The protagonist, then, like the women's movement, is prepared for a society that does not materialise. The moderate model of behaviour that Helena suggests for the protagonist can be understood as a means through which feminist thought can survive under the dictatorship. Projecting the combination of intellectual, moral and spiritual growth onto the women's movement as a whole, Sousa Costa implies the need for a women's movement that negotiates the conflicting discourses that are inflected in the narrative. A sense of conflict between oppositional discourses is indexed in the narrative by the ambiguous portrayal of the protagonist's liberty. While the narrator reveals that Leonor is not privy to 'certas liberdades modernistas' (*QTF*: 7), her father berates her for not having appreciated the 'as liberdades' that he afforded her (*QTF*: 18). This depiction of autonomy could also be applied to the women's movement, as it alludes to the unrealised objectives of revolutionary feminists under the Republic and the paternalistic anti-feminist rhetoric of the dictatorship. The author rejects both of these extremes in her non-fiction writings, a point which is illustrated by juxtaposing the arguments she puts forth in *A mulher*, published during the Republic (1916) and (the ironically-titled) *Olha a maldade das mulheres* from 1932: in *A mulher*, she is openly critical of 'exaggerated' feminism that

can result in ‘*masculinismo*’ (1916: 82; original emphasis),<sup>196</sup> while, in *Olha a maldade*, published under the dictatorship, Sousa Costa laments how ‘as almas que habitam corpos femininos são condenadas, por homens que se julgam doutos, ao cativoiro perpétuo da servidão e da clausura domésticas’ (1932: 10). It is significant that the author can be seen to repackage or rework her feminist principles in this way as it demonstrates how she reacts *against* the current socio-political climate, using her writings as a direct response to current discourse and sentiment. In these examples, Sousa Costa makes it clear where she differs from what she considers to be the main threats to her understanding of feminism at any given time, reframing her arguments so that they constitute a counter-narrative to current policies and practices.

While the anti-exemplary models in ‘Quem tiver’ have already been noted in the previous sections, it is important to underline here how Helena’s ideas about the protagonist’s conduct develop, rather than simply critique, contemporary social and cultural constructs. Capitalising on the instructional, educational quality of the narrative of development paradigm, Sousa Costa constructs the narrative in such a way that it reads as a directive to the protagonist and the reader, which is typical of the female novel of development (Bannet, 1991: 195, 196, 226-7; Bezhanova, 2013: 1). The effect of distilling her ideas through this medium allows the reader to follow the author’s thought process, as Sousa Costa uses the narrative as a means of self-consciously underlining the act of confronting, reworking and responding to contemporary debates. As Helena’s comments about how educational practices ‘[c]ria’ (meaning both ‘create’ and ‘nurture’) women suggest, the narrative is insistently conscious about its reworking of female behaviour that is indexed through the protagonist’s *Bildung*. Echoing the

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<sup>196</sup> The complete quote reads as follows: ‘Da confusão lamentavel que ainda perdura entre o que com propriedade se deveria chamar *feminismo* e o exagero das pretensas reivindicações feministas, de meia duzia de mulheres irreflectidas ou doesntiamente arrebatadas, e que poderá alconhar-se de *masculinismo*, tem nascido, em grande parte, o atraso moral e intelectual da mulher portuguesa’ (1916: 82; original emphasis).

description of how the French tutor ‘cultivou’ Leonor’s behaviour (QTF: 7), Sousa Costa draws a parallel between the tutor’s role in the protagonist’s development and Helena’s subsequent (informal) input as a means of accentuating the impact of various instructional paradigms on female behaviour. An important distinction between these two forms of influence over the protagonist should be highlighted: although both examples (ostensibly) constitute female-led directives, the tutor’s leverage over Leonor, as argued in the first section, is invested with patriarchal, foreign influence. Accordingly, this model leads to the protagonist’s rebellious, unproductive behaviour, which, by extension, calls to mind the need for the Portuguese, female-centric model that is suggested by Helena. It is thanks to Helena’s advice that the protagonist is able to cultivate the qualities that Sousa Costa identifies with Portuguese women in her article ‘Mulheres portuguesas’ in *Eva* in 1925, such as tenderness, affection and intellect (11 July 1925: 6), as it is only when a Portuguese woman (Helena in this case) takes the lead that models of Portuguese womanhood can develop.

Having established how the advice Helena offers the protagonist can be read as an exemplary (re-)definition of womanhood and a directive for the women’s movement, which constitutes the need for a moderate approach that negotiates competing discourses pertaining to the rights and roles of women, the question arises as to how much ideological agency Sousa Costa affords women in her (re-)conceptualisation of appropriate female and feminist conduct. The most salient way that the author presents the act of re-modelling female behaviour and the direction of the women’s movement as a female-centric initiative is by associating Helena with motherhood. Not only is Helena compared with Olga in the narrative (QTF: 11; 14), Leonor’s biological mother, but it is stated explicitly that she treats the protagonist in a way that is ‘quási materno’ (QTF: 37). The transgenerational link that is suggested by a symbolic mother/daughter bond

alludes to Helena's reflections about behaviours of women of the past, present and future, with Helena facilitating this transition by allowing for a hopeful, productive future for the protagonist and, by extension, the women's movement that she represents. The maternal role functions as a productive means of connoting the organic nature of this female-centric bond and, as Helena's musing suggests, emphasising the need for advice to be passed from the previous generation to the next: 'És uma criança e eu quási uma velha. Tenho visto muita coisa...' (QTF: 15). Although the ideological agency afforded to Helena is unmistakable given the mentor/disciple dynamic, what is particularly interesting is how her model also affords Leonor a sense of autonomy.

Drawing on Sousa Costa's speech *Olha a maldade*, which was presented just a year before the publication of 'Quem tiver', evidences this point. 'Feminism', by the author's own definition, was the act of facilitating women's spiritual, moral and intellectual development: '*Feminismo* – parece-me, nada mais é, nem póde ser, do que cultivar a feminilidade, elevá-la, não para competir ou rivalisar com a varonilidade, mas para cooperar com esta, no campo espiritual, no moral, no intelectual, como sempre cooperou no material' (1932: 15-6; original emphasis). Helena's model can be understood as a doubly-feminist initiative, at least in the author's view, as her advice to the protagonist actualises Sousa Costa's objective to develop 'a inteligência e o espírito da mulher' (1932: 11) and, by co-opting the maternal role, severs any link between male influence and the (re-)formulation of womanhood and the women's movement. Having confronted and self-consciously disregarded patriarchal constructs of womanhood, the author presents a *matriarchal* instructional model that allows for the *Bildung* of this narrative of female and feminist development. The fact that Helena is identified as a mother-figure without actually being the protagonist's mother only serves to accentuate this point as it underlines how the maternal role can afford all women a social (feminist)

function and, in a pragmatic sense, further disassociates the role from male involvement. To become a biological mother, that is to say, evidently requires male participation in a way that a surrogate role does not.

By depicting the act of guiding the next generation as a gynocentric initiative, Sousa Costa taps into the notion that the maternal/teacher role that is fulfilled by Helena can be projected onto a broader, national scale. The author makes this point in *A mulher*, as she outlines how (Portuguese) mothers, and mother-figures, can make an impact on public life by educating the next generation: ‘A educação feminina é a base, por excelencia, de toda a remodelação social, de todo o progresso, de toda a perfeição’ (1916: 98). The sense of agency that the maternal role affords women is reinforced in ‘Quem tiver’ through its association with nationalism which, as outlined in the first section of the analysis, was apposite in this cultural context. Lois West’s *Feminist Nationalism* helps illustrate this point. West draws on Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas* (1938), where she argues that women are ‘outsiders and victims of states’ (1997: xiii)<sup>197</sup> and argues that, in present-day society, ‘women in every region are viewing women as *definers* of nationalism and feminism’ (1997: xiii; emphasis added). Reading Helena’s input as a self-conscious reworking of female behaviour and the feminist movement, then, is in line with West’s hypothesis. The suggestion that Helena’s influence over the protagonist could be read in relation to nationalism, furthermore, is alluded to in the conclusion to the narrative when Helena finds Leonor after she runs away following her failed romance with Adriano. Helena informs Leonor that her mother is dead and that her father is on his death bed and implores her to make peace with him before he passes.

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<sup>197</sup> In the work, Woolf considers how, when confronted with patriotism, women will be inclined to ask, “‘What does ‘our country’ mean to me as an outsider?’”, given ‘the amount of land, wealth and property in the possession of her own sex and class in the present – how much of “England” in fact belongs to her’ (1992: 311). The tension between national identity and gender is also evidenced in a Portuguese context, as Castro Osório dedicates a section of *Às mulheres portuguesas* to the question of what it means ‘Ser português’ given women’s exclusion from other aspects of society (1905: 67-82).

Pretending not to recognise Helena, Leonor responds in French while Helena gently persists, referring to the protagonist as ‘minha filha’ (QTF: 37). The contrast between Leonor’s use of French and Helena’s choice term of endearment reinforces the link between maternity and patriotism in the narrative in such a way as to suggest that Helena’s influence is as much a patriotic act as it is a feminist initiative.

Recalling Sousa Costa’s article ‘Mulheres portuguesas’, in which she celebrates qualities of Portuguese women that, as noted above, Helena instils in Leonor, further evidences this point (*Eva*, 11 July 1925: 6). Helena could, in this sense, be seen to make a valued contribution to a nationalist project, to paraphrase West, as Sousa Costa makes use of the vision of women as guardians of the nation to give women an active public role that is not necessarily dependent on biological function. Through the mother/daughter analogy, Sousa Costa can be seen to afford women a sense of ideological autonomy and subjectivity that sexes the mentor/disciple dynamic female. At a conceptual level, maternity is a particularly convenient metaphor as it encapsulates the ideological compromise(s) and moderate views voiced by Helena and, as noted earlier, was capitalised on by both the Republic and the dictatorship, as well as progressive and conservative feminists. Comparing Sousa Costa’s focus on a female-led (re-)conceptualisation of female behaviour and the direction of the women’s movement with Ángela Graupera’s depiction of maternity, discussed in Chapter Two, offers a productive means of concluding this section as it raises some interesting points about female autonomy in ‘Quem tiver’. Whereas Graupera’s vision for socio-political reform is more progressive than Sousa Costa’s approach, the work examined here deserves credit for hypothesising an explicitly female-led initiative that is pointedly divorced from ‘male’ influence in all senses. This contrast is accentuated if we consider that the authors’ beliefs about the heterosexual dynamic are fundamentally similar as Sousa



Costa, like Graupera, argued for a collaborative approach between women and men that reinforces hegemonic gender norms. As she argues in *A mulher*, for instance, women and men ‘são dois seres destinados pela natureza a funções diversas, bem marcadas’ and cultivating and capitalising on these differences results in ‘a harmonia, a perfeição’ (1916: 79). While Graupera’s emphasis on collaboration between women and men is evident in her narrative, Sousa Costa – rather obtusely – emphasises the importance of maintaining a distinctly female-centric network by centring her narrative almost exclusively on the female characters.

The only real exception is Fernando who, as noted above, is a manifestation of the failings of patriarchal authority in a practical sense (as the father-figure) and a symbolic sense (the character’s identification with the state). Helena’s suggestion that Leonor makes peace with Fernando could be read as both a means of submitting to the State that he personifies or a tacit endorsement of how a female-centric pursuit can function in tandem with the practical and symbolic manifestation of patriarchy, remembering here Bezhanova’s central thesis: the female Bildungsroman is a means through which women can develop a sense of autonomy *within* rather than *against* a conservative, androcentric environment. Read within the context of collective feminist discourse at this time, the eventual peace between father and daughter could be read as symbolic representation of ‘verdadeiro feminismo’, in contrast to the conflict between women and men implied by ‘falso feminismo’. Remembering here that Sousa Costa’s work is written with a range of feminist perspectives in mind, Leonor’s reconciliation with her father exemplifies the accommodating, and therefore inclusive, argument laid out in ‘Quem tiver’. For a conservative female reader or moderate feminist, there is no suggestion of the conflict between women and men or the deconstruction of the family unit (incorrectly) associated with revolutionary feminism, while a more progressive

reader would possibly discern an understated victory for the female sex in the fact that Fernando is dying when the reconciliation occurs.

Comparing the two authors' approaches, Graupera's narrative leaves an unsatisfactory aftertaste given the amount of space dedicated to the male characters' dialogue in the text. Sousa Costa, on the other hand, depicts a break between women and men that affords women a (safe) space for women to communicate and collaborate. The sense of unity and solidarity between women that this suggests is exemplified towards the end of the narrative when, before Helena locates Leonor, the protagonist is arrested and, when the male police officers struggle to communicate with her, one officer asks his daughter to mediate (QTF: 35). Somewhat paradoxically, then, Sousa Costa's narrative could be considered more 'feminist' than Graupera's, precisely because she reinforces (and clearly supports) the gendered public/male private/female binary. By reworking ideas about female behaviour and, by extension, the future of the women's movement, through a female character, Sousa Costa constructs a narrative that not only presents the act of educating as an expressly female function, but depicts a model through which women may exert ideological autonomy within the parameters of an increasingly conservative society.

The act of (re-)conceptualising female and feminist conduct is presented as an extension of the maternal/instructor role, divorced from all manners of patriarchal influence, which doubly reinforces female autonomy, as women reclaim the act of theorising models of womanhood and reframe hegemonic paradigms to allow for a less restrictive conception of female behaviour. Motherhood proves a useful metaphor to illustrate how instruction is, at its essence, an organically female role and, more importantly, to underline the need for a transgenerational support network between women that facilitates the continued (re-)conceptualisation of ideas of female and

feminist conduct. Read retrospectively, 'Quem tiver' manifests the transgenerational evolution of feminist discourse that it seeks to promote as Portuguese women writers such as Olga Gonçalves and Lídia Jorge, as Hilary Owen notes, would follow up Sousa Costa's insistently self-conscious narrative of female and feminist development with female *Bildungsroman* narratives that continue the author's initiative post-dictatorship.<sup>198</sup> By textually inscribing the development of feminist thought in her fiction, Sousa Costa makes use of a public medium that affords her a means of engaging with contemporary debates through an exclusively female-centric network at a diegetic level (the female characters in the narrative) and a metafictional level (the intertextual parallels between feminist fiction). The emphasis on an interconnectedness between women and feminist works that is divorced from male interests and influence reasserts women's ideological agency in the text (Helena) and in practice (the author), raising the question as to how Sousa Costa engages her female reader in the feminist dialogue(s) that she reworks in 'Quem tiver'.

### **The Politics of Writing: Textualising Female Subjectivity and Feminist Solidarity**

Although Sousa Costa can be seen to reinforce the gendered public/private binary and promote a hegemonic understanding of traditionally 'feminine' qualities, it has been argued thus far that Sousa Costa uses 'Quem tiver' as a means of (re-)conceptualising a female-driven model of womanhood and presenting a directive for the women's movement that constitutes a *matriarchal* alternative to male-defined behavioural paradigms. By identifying Helena with the maternal role, Sousa Costa sexes the mentor/disciple dynamic female in such a way as to connote the need for a

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<sup>198</sup> In her seminal *Portuguese Women's Writing 1972 to 1986: Reincarnations of a Revolution*, Owen reads Gonçalves' *Mandei-lhe uma boca* (1977) and *Sara* (1986) and Jorge's *Notícia da cidade Silvestre* (1984) as examples of female *Bildungsroman* that engage with female subjectivity, feminist politics and intergenerational bonds between women against the backdrop of an increasingly liberal, outward-looking society.

transgenerational support network amongst women that fosters a sense of unity, solidarity and communication. The notion of a female-centric system that centres on women's concerns constitutes an inverted version of Sousa Costa's description of governmental politics, which, she argues, was wholly corrupt because it was designed for and run by men seeking their own (male) interests (23 May 1931: 4). It is for this reason, she explains, that she opposed female suffrage. The 'otherness' of the political establishment and the implied conflict between state politics and Sousa Costa's understanding of womanhood is hinted at in the novella through a singular, allusive reference during Leonor's brief imprisonment when, bemused by the enigmatic, French-speaking woman, the policemen consider the possibility that she may be an 'espia politica' (*QTF*: 31-2); a suggestion that associates a female political figure with corruption, foreignness and discontent.

The conclusions reached about 'Quem tiver' thus far would suggest that fiction allowed the author a means of conceptualising and facilitating a female-centric alternative to this androcentric political system. Sousa Costa's systematic rejection of marriage and religious schooling, furthermore, is presented in such a way as to underscore how fiction and education are key to developing and imposing models of female behaviour; a self-reflexive acknowledgement of the didactic quality of the work. Examining this work, therefore, offers an interesting perspective on how fiction could afford Portuguese (and Iberian) women a means of engaging with socio-political debate at a time when women's relationship with the public/political domain was unstable and ambiguous. While De la Torre, by way of comparison, would have the benefit of both public fora, Sousa Costa was aware of the fact that her ability to advocate a social role for women and exercise her own political autonomy was limited to written output. As noted in the Introduction, therefore, juxtaposing the diverse politics of these authors

represents a gradual shift of women writers and activists to a more understated, subversive means of feminist activism and feminist fiction when confronted with the authoritarian, patriarchal regimes that dominated the political landscapes in twentieth-century Iberia. In this final section of the analysis, I argue that 'Quem tiver' facilitates the continued evolution of feminist discourse that Sousa Costa seeks to promote in the work, affording the female author and reader a means of asserting their own ideological autonomy. To this end, the examination that follows first outlines how the Helena/Leonor dynamic mirrors Sousa Costa's relationship with her envisaged female reader, then considers how the dialogic quality of the work encourages a solidarity amongst women that surpasses the confines of the text and concludes by examining how Sousa Costa uses the female narrative as a means of prompting the reader to continue (re-)evaluating feminist discourse.

As argued in the previous section, Sousa Costa underlines Helena's ideological subjectivity in 'Quem tiver' by associating her with the maternal/instructor role. Not only does this afford the character a sense of personal autonomy as she exercises influence over the protagonist's behaviour, but the mother/daughter analogy can also be considered on a broader scale in relation to older women directing the future generation of Portuguese women. Helena's role in the narrative, in this sense, encapsulates the interface of the private and public spaces as her influence over the protagonist functions on a micro scale (Leonor's conduct) and a macro scale (a re-evaluation of female conduct and the feminist movement). Building on my reading that Helena's advice to the protagonist can be understood as a self-conscious (re-)conceptualisation of models of womanhood and the women's movement, as argued in the last section, the analysis now considers how Sousa Costa uses the character as a conduit for her own views as a means of asserting her own ideological authority. Comparing the character of Helena

with the first-person narrative voice that Sousa Costa employs in her children's fiction raises some interesting parallels. The manner in which Helena offers advice to the protagonist, for instance, reflects the self-consciously didactic quality of Sousa Costa's children's fiction, as she uses the works as a means of imparting a lesson to her young readership.<sup>199</sup> More significantly, the author defends a type of instruction that encompasses moral, intellectual and spiritual development in her children's fiction,<sup>200</sup> mirroring the advice Helena offers Leonor in 'Quem tiver'. While the author addresses her readership in a direct, unmistakable fashion in her children's fiction, emphasising the didactic quality of these works, what is interesting about her approach in 'Quem tiver' is how, through the character, Sousa Costa voices her own understanding of feminism and education and underscores the intergenerational female network that underpins the narrative.

By fictionalising the guidance an older woman offers to a younger female, the author is able to present her message in such a way that it imparts a lesson to the female reader and, at the same time, encourages a female reader to guide other women. The communicative channel between author and reader that the relationship between Helena and Leonor implies suggests that Sousa Costa views her objective to guide her reader through literature in relation to maternity. Returning to the author's children's fiction evidences this point, as Sousa Costa consciously identifies her fictional output as an

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<sup>199</sup> Carlos Nogueira notes the didactic quality of Sousa Costa's fiction for children (2013: 170, 173, 176), while the numerous footnotes or comments in brackets in the works to explain particular vocabulary or concepts to her young readership suggest the author saw her writings as a means of education: *Memórias da Lili* (1922: 158); *Mosquitos por cordas* (1926: 102, 103); *Os contos do Joãozinho* (1927: 28); *A caixinha dos segredos* (1929: 82); *Contos dos meus netinhos* (1931: 38); *Joanito africanista* (1932: 81); *No reino do sol* (1933: 73); *Mestre burro em calças pardas* (1938: 21); *História da Feialinda* (1942: 17, 19, 37, 43, 56); *Por esse mundo além* (1942: 21). It is noteworthy for this analysis how, in *Primeiras lições*, the author entwines her defence of education and solidarity with a reminder for children to wash themselves (1914: 67-72).

<sup>200</sup> Literacy, numeracy, household skills and kindness are portrayed as interrelated in two children's books published two decades apart, *Mosquitos por cordas* (1926: 60) and *História da Feialinda* (1942: 19), while, in *Memórias da Lili*, a fictional conduct manual for children, she argues that '[b]ondade e educação formam um todo homogêneo, inseparável' (1922: 159; original emphasis).

extension of her maternal role. Not only does she dedicate many of her works to her children and grandchildren,<sup>201</sup> the author also acknowledges how her experiences as a mother have informed her writings in prologues to *Memórias da Lili* (1922: 12), a collection of short stories, and her textbook *Moral prática elementar* (1925: 7). The fictional mother in *Primeiras lições*, furthermore, is most likely based on Sousa Costa's own (egotistical) perception of herself, as she is intelligent and educated, while the male child in the story has the same name as Sousa Costa's son (1914: 39). Literature, therefore, allows the author a means of projecting the maternal/instructor role on a national scale.

As well as reading Helena as a mouthpiece for the author, the fact that she has the same name as Sousa Costa's daughter (who was born before 'Quem tiver' was published) suggests that the character could be considered a fictionalised depiction of the author's daughter, constituting a textual manifestation of Sousa Costa's ideal vision of womanhood. The author's boastful description of her daughter in a speech supports this reading, as it evidences her determination to illustrate how her ideas about female behaviour work in practice: '[C]riada e educada aos reverberos dos suavissimas claridades do Porto recebidas, e que alumiam na infância a alma da sua mãe' (1930: 7).<sup>202</sup> The boundary between fiction and reality, in this sense, is blurred in such a way as to underscore how the author uses her fictional creations as a means of theorising models she intends to apply to real life. As no details are offered in relation to (the character of) Helena's parentage in 'Quem tiver', which appears pointed given it is stated explicitly that Olga is an orphan (QTF: 5), it is therefore feasible that, to the

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<sup>201</sup> The author dedicates her works to her children (*O último enforcado*, 19-- : 5; *Primeiras lições*, 1914: 9), nieces and nephews (*Aventuras da carochinha japonesa*, 1928: 5) and grandchildren (*Tagaté – Às do futebol*, 1933: 7; *Triste vida a da raposa*, 1943: 7). The collection of short stories entitled *Contos dos meus netinhos* is also effectively a dedication to her grandchildren (1931).

<sup>202</sup> This citation is taken from a speech Sousa Costa dedicated to Guerra Junqueiro, the poet and Republican politician, entitled *Guerra Junqueiro e a mulher*, which, as the title suggests, celebrates his contribution to feminist progress in his life and works.

author's mind, Helena is a fictionalised realisation (rather than recreation) of her own daughter. The intergenerational communicative channel between (Portuguese) women, in this sense, functions on multiple textual levels: in the diegesis (Helena's advice to Leonor); allegorically (applying Helena's advice to the women's movement); and in a metafictional sense (the author fictionalises her own daughter). Sousa Costa could therefore be considered the proverbial grandmother of the protagonist and the women's movement that she represents. The distance that this creates between the author and the feminist movement of the future (Leonor) implies the need for an interconnected chain between the past and present that will facilitate the evolution of feminist discourse. The need for a continuous, unbroken link, which is implied in the narrative by the fact that it is explicitly pointed out that Helena and Olga are of the same generation, underscores the importance of united a collaborative female network that works together to look to the future.

The sense of solidarity between women that this suggests surpasses the confines of the text, as Sousa Costa makes use of the dialogic structure of the work to invite the reader to collude in her/Helena's (re-)writing of female behaviour. The dialogic quality of 'Quem tiver' is worth underlining here as it reinforces how Sousa Costa constructs the narrative in such a way as to unite (Portuguese) women. As well as using the character of Helena as a mouthpiece for her views, there are also instances where the author appears to interrupt the narrative. When the narrator hints that Fernando is having an affair, for instance, the narrative voice shifts and is followed by a sardonic afterword about his '*freqüentes viagens de negócios*' (*QTF*: 17; original emphasis). The use of italics is jarring to a reader, making these interruptions visually jump off the page. As was argued in relation to Graupera and O'Neill, such interjections demonstrate how the author effectively 'wrestles control' of the narrative from the narrator to



emphasise or clarify key points. In Sousa Costa's case, the italicised asides serve to foster a sense of unity between women by ridiculing and undermining men, constructing a communicative channel between the author and a female reader that reflects a mature woman (Sousa Costa) offering advice to an inexperienced younger woman (the reader).

While the example in 'Quem tiver' points out Fernando's indiscretions, the usage in another of the author's short stories, 'Pecados da mocidade', illustrates how Sousa Costa uses the interruptions to identify selfish, immoral behaviour with men. By way of justifying his careless disregard of his pregnant lover, a feckless philanderer, Ernesto, insists that he is simply behaving like a typical man: '*O homem é sempre um homem*' (1937: 98; original emphasis).<sup>203</sup> In this instance, Sousa Costa voices her generalised critique of men through a male character, as the act of textual crossdressing allows the author to simultaneously suggest that men actively take part in the oppression of women, as her male character effectively admits to taking advantage of his male privilege, and, through her authority as a (female) writer, can be seen to force this confession, reclaiming a victory for the female sex. In 'Quem tiver', the author underlines how fiction is a profitable medium for the act of re-working models of behaviour by sharing in her initiative with the character of Helena, blurring the divide between fiction and reality in such a way as to emphasise how both the story and the text facilitate a female-led re-working of female conduct.

The transformative potential of literature that this suggests is alluded to through the metafictional depiction of Leonor's reading habits during her trip. Through reading, the protagonist is able to '[a]limenta o espirito de leituras succulentas' (QTF: 24), a description that underlines how literature cultivates her intellectual, spiritual and

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<sup>203</sup> The almost tongue-in-cheek approach of Sousa Costa here is also evidenced in *Ideias antigas* where she comments that, for a married woman, 'o primeiro filho é seu marido' (1923: 10) and in *A mulher*, as she argues that women need to be good cooks as men are gluttonous (1916: 17).

personal development. Such an impact, indeed, evokes the *Bildungsroman* paradigm specifically, as the works Leonor reads evidently harbour the potential to develop a sense of self. Not only does this process help Leonor to realise her *Bildung*, but it can also be applied to Sousa Costa's envisaged female readership on a micro level (the reader) and macro level (the female collective). In this sense, the author's identification with Helena allows her to propose a model of female conduct that is theorised by Helena (Sousa Costa) and actualised by the protagonist and, hopefully, her female readership. The communicative channel between author and reader can therefore be seen to function on multiple levels, as Sousa Costa capitalises on the novel of development paradigm as a means of not only proposing a model of behaviour, as she does in her conduct manuals, but also illustrating its effectiveness. For the reader, the narrative can be considered a training exercise that manifests the author's (re-)evaluation of her position and the process of testing out solutions.

Whereas Graupera and O'Neill work through ideas across numerous texts, as argued in the previous chapters, the benefit of Sousa Costa's approach is that it allows the reader to follow the process, placing onus on the act of conceptualisation as well as the ideas advocated by the author. Taking the extreme illiteracy rates amongst Portuguese women at this time into account, the apparently basic models of Sousa Costa's fiction, which has attracted criticism and is one possible reason that her works receive little critical attention, mean that the women who *were* reading would find such models accessible and easily digestible. Chatarina Edfeldt's brief reference to Sousa Costa in *Uma história na história* refers to the criticism in *História da língua portuguesa* published by Alfa: "Sobre Emília de Sousa Costa: "dá à estampa as novelas, moralistas e sem inovação"" (Edfeldt, 2006: 93). In A. José Saraiva and Óscar Lopes' *História da língua portuguesa*, published three years later, there is no reference to

Sousa Costa in the authors' summary of female authors who, to their mind, produced fiction that questioned 'a posição social e política da mulher' (2005: 1029). Sousa Costa, then, is a prime example of how a limited understanding of how or where we expect to find feminist or politicised literature excludes many important female figures from literary histories; a fundamental driving force behind my critical approach that I identify in the Introduction. Through her inclusive approach (or, at least, as inclusive as feasibly possible for female-centric fiction at this time), Sousa Costa indicates how her envisaged readership relates to her message. Her readily accessible fiction, that is, mirrors the sense of inclusivity and solidarity she seeks to promote amongst women, just as De la Torre's androcentric, highbrow reworking of socialist theory reflects her aim to re-conceptualise socio-economic theory from within male-dominated discourse.

It has been argued thus far that the Helena/Leonor dynamic mirrors Sousa Costa's relationship with her envisaged female reader, allowing the author a means of asserting her own ideological autonomy and inviting the reader to collaborate in the re-writing of feminist discourse(s). The suggestion that Helena can be read as both a fictionalised reification of the author and the author's daughter illustrates how the author makes use of metafiction to demonstrate how the intergenerational female divide that underpins the narrative can surpass the confines of the text. The mobilising potential of the work that this suggests raises the question as to where Sousa Costa sees her work fitting into the broader feminist project and, more specifically, how she considers the work as a contribution to a pluralistic discourse made up of constantly evolving debates, re-workings and (re-)evaluation. Helena's musings about the 'educadoras' of the future (*QTF*: 11) illustrates how the narrative dialogues with contemporary debates and, more importantly, prepares the reader to navigate and contributes to a re-working of feminist thought in the future. Not only can the character

herself be considered an example of these female instructors, but her ambiguous reflections on what is to come, evidenced by juxtaposing her critical review of an education that is ‘muito à moderna’ (*QTF*: 11) with her seemingly positive perception that such (female) instructors will be ‘necessárias do amanhã’ (*QTF*: 11), demonstrates how the narrative is insistently self-conscious about its own contribution to feminist discourse.

The contemporaneous quality of ‘Quem tiver’ is suggested by comparing Helena’s comments with a point Sousa Costa makes in *Ideias antigas*, as she argues that women should be educated to become ‘práticas, progressivas, cultas, civilizadas’ in the hope of becoming ‘[a] mulher de amanhã, consciente, dignificada pela lei e pelos homens’ (1923: 54-5). Although the characterisation of Helena manifests the values of this work, as evidenced most clearly by the title (*Ideias antigas* [Helena] *sobre a mulher moderna* [Leonor]), Helena’s position suggests a pessimism that alludes to a sense of foreboding for the vision of womanhood she advocates. The fact that such progress is not necessarily positive, of course, only serves to emphasise the need for solidarity. The work, therefore, constitutes a textual manifestation of this female-led re-working of female behaviour, as literature is the medium through which Sousa Costa reifies, advocates and proves her theorisation of womanhood and directive for the women’s movement.

The sense of female and feminist solidarity that forms the basis of Sousa Costa’s argument constitutes an inverted mirror image of her critique of government politics. As she believed ‘formal’ politics was governed by and for men, fictional output offers her an expressly female alternative. A further look at Sousa Costa’s reasons for opposing women’s suffrage suggests that the author considered her double-edged educational narrative to be a practical, preferable alternative to participating in governmental

politics. As she outlines in *Eva* in 1931, education, not state politics, was the means through which women could make their mark on domestic and public life:

Os colílios turvos da política seriam nefastos a quem tem por fusção principal educar no lar e na sociedade, sem desfalcar um átomo da sua gentileza, sem quebrar a endulação elegante das suas atitudes espirituais, sem perder, em masculinismos irrisórios, o perfume capitoso da sua gracilidade. (1931: 4)

By identifying literature and education as female-centric public media in the narrative, Sousa Costa constructs a female and feminist narrative of development that she intends as an empowering – as well as moralising – tale for the female characters, readers and author, and facilitates the continuation of female-led debates about womanhood and feminism. The author’s approach, of course, would prove prophetic, as it echoes the feminist paradox of women’s political parity in Portugal. Other than Carolina Beatriz Ângelo’s pioneering efforts to play the system in order to cast her vote under the First Republic,<sup>204</sup> Portuguese women’s first foray into government politics would not occur until 1934. This reform was enacted by the Estado Novo as a means of suppressing feminism and, taking its lead from Spain, maintaining an ultra-conservative government that was upheld with the support of women.<sup>205</sup> As Salazar explained in the publication *O Século* in 1934, the introduction of female deputies did not mean that ‘ter-se o Estado

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<sup>204</sup> As outlined in the Introduction, Ângelo registered to vote on the basis that, as a widow, she was the head of her household. Although voting regulations were understood in relation to men, it was not stated explicitly in the legislation.

<sup>205</sup> Three women would become the first female *deputadas* in the National Assembly in 1934, Maria Baptista dos Santos Guardiola (1895-1987), a teacher, Maria Cândida Parreira Bragança (1877-1942), a lawyer, and Domitila Hormizinda Miranda de Carvalho (1871-1966), a doctor and teacher, all of whom were selected by Salazar. Taking their seats in parliament, they joined the União Nacional (UN), the party of the dictatorship and the only political party legally permitted under the regime. It would not be until after the 1974 Revolution that Portugal achieved universal suffrage, legislated in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976 (Art. 10).

ou elas próprias convertido, agora, ao feminismo' (cited in Reynolds de Sousa, 2013: 40).

Rather than play into the regime's hands and inadvertently legitimise a system that she believed was built by and for men, Sousa Costa's narrative of female and feminist development manifests the need to maintain, re-work and encourage feminist dialogue through an alternative public medium. Whereas De la Torre, by way of comparison, looked forward to a Republic and hypothesised women's future contribution to ideological discourse and (governmental) political life, Sousa Costa seems to predict that such reform would be a short-lived source of conflict, which, ironically, suggests that she was more perceptive of the socio-political climate than one of the first female politicians in Iberia. By drawing a link between women's educational reform and political parity, Sousa Costa symbolically unites a divided, wounded women's movement with the shared objective of allowing women to become autonomous beings in the public and domestic space, an aim that, for Sousa Costa, was solely reliant on women's ability to read and write.

Bearing in mind that Sousa Costa's work was intended for a middle-class, literate female reader of any feminist persuasion, the probable impact of the work on the female collective she addresses merits consideration. The most salient drawback of the work, and Sousa Costa's fiction more generally, is that the experiences of the female characters would likely be alienating to the few (literate) working-class women that read the works. The final passage of the novella, nevertheless, connotes a conscious effort on the author's part to make 'Quem tiver' marketable for a wide audience, as it echoes the closing lines of *A Severa*, the hugely popular 1931 film about the untimely death of the famous Fado singer Maria Severa Onofriana:

*Quem tiver filhas no mundo  
não ria das malfadadas  
as filhas da triste sina  
também nasceram honradas! (QTF: 41)*

Considered in tandem with her vast fictional output, this reference suggests that the text would have held great popular appeal for Sousa Costa's target market. Through a combination of Sousa Costa's moderate approach to feminism and the successful publishing career she enjoyed under the dictatorship, it can be concluded that her works would have been well-received by a conservative female reader. The fact that 'Quem tiver' concludes with Leonor's eventual rehabilitation denotes that this novella would be no different. A female reader with a more progressive feminist outlook, however, would take some encouragement from the unequivocal rejection of marriage and religious indoctrination in the narrative, and would perhaps recognise the allusions to Castro Osório's writings. Although, on balance, it is unlikely that a revolutionary feminist would have responded favourably to many of Sousa Costa's views, the fact that Maria O'Neill dedicates a poem to her in *Cartas de guerra* (1916) indicates some form of friendship, despite O'Neill's more politicised brand of feminism, reminding us that feminists of all stances did share common ground; forming a network that mirrors the connections Sousa Costa highlights in her narrative that would, undoubtedly, have been all the more meaningful under the dictatorship.

Of particular significance are Sousa Costa's contributions to *Eva* in the late 1920s that celebrate the life and works of over a dozen of her contemporaries, including revolutionaries, such as Castro Osório, and conservative figures like Vaz de Carvalho. The sense of female solidarity that this initiative implies is tangible in 'Quem tiver', and

all categories of female and feminist readers would have recognised how Sousa Costa negotiates between extremes of political discourses regarding female identity. The narrative voice, which comes across as overly didactic (and rather simplistic) to a modern reader, would have guided the female reader through Sousa Costa's reflections and conclusions about the future of the women's movement in Portugal at a time when women's literacy rates were in steady decline. The female *Bildungsroman* narratives that would accompany second-wave feminism in Portugal, which form the basis of Hilary Owen's study (2000), demonstrate how, read retrospectively, 'Quem tiver' forms part of a fictionalised intertextual feminist dialogue that afforded women a public voice that would have otherwise remain silenced.



## Conclusions

# Fiction, Feminisms and Fatherlands

With the fall of the Portuguese Estado Novo on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974 and the death of Francisco Franco on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1975, the feminist movements that had been suppressed, silenced and persecuted during these longstanding patriarchal regimes would be revitalised. The democratic governments that would follow outlined equality of the sexes, legislating women's social, legal and personal emancipation. Under the 1976 Constitution in Portugal and the Spanish Constitution promulgated in 1978, women were liberated from the misogynistic, anti-feminist laws that had legislated women's segregation to the private/domestic space during the dictatorships, enforcing a model of womanhood in line with the docile, self-sacrificing paradigm of the 'angel of the hearth'. Fundamental objectives of first-wave feminists would be realised once more, such as divorce laws, equality within marriage and educational reforms, as would key initiatives of the second-wave feminist movement, including LGBTQ+ rights and abortion legislation. Women's entrance to the formal political arena, the most divisive, polemical issue for first-wave feminists in Spain and Portugal, was made law, as new voting rights applied to women and men equally and female politicians would be elected to office in the newly democratic countries.<sup>206</sup> At long last, women were considered autonomous, rational beings under the law.

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<sup>206</sup> For historical context, see: Ferreira, Bermúdez and Rodal (2018).

Accordingly, critics note a boom in female-authored fiction in post-dictatorship Spain and Portugal,<sup>207</sup> as what Cláudia Pazos Alonso would term the ‘direct correlation between a society’s developments and the appearance of women writers within the society’ (1996: 24) would be evidenced once more. The cultural and social suppression and censorship which characterised the dictatorships not only inhibited the literary output and socio-political participation of women during the regimes, but also ensured that the life and works of women who fought for emancipation in the early decades of the century would fade from the collective memory in Spain (see Davies, 1998: 186; Johnson and Bieder, 2017: 2; O’Byrne, 2014: 22) and Portugal (Edfelt, 2006; Ferreira, 2000; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011: 70; 206). As Lisa Vollendorf argues, ‘it is a poignant fact of literary history that a woman who wrote powerful prose aimed at improving society’s estimation and treatment of women would herself nearly disappear from the historical record’ (2001: 30). In response to a wealth of critical literature inviting, even demanding, research into ‘forgotten’ women writers from this period in history, this thesis centred on four women whose works will not be known to the majority of critics. Nevertheless, as the analyses have demonstrated, the figures all enjoyed successful careers as writers and activists in their day, during a period when the domains of literary production and public debate were literally and symbolically gendered male. The main objective of this thesis was to ‘recover’ these figures from critical oblivion which I hope to have achieved, particularly considering my expressed efforts to situate my close readings within the authors’ oeuvres more broadly and draw on their socio-political activism to elucidate the ideological subtexts of their fiction.

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<sup>207</sup> As outlined in the Introduction, critics have observed the relationship between socio-political progress and female-authored fiction in Portugal (see, for example, Kauffman and Klobucka, 1997: 27; Macedo, 2009: 22; Moers, 1986: 159; Owen, 2000; Owen and Pazos Alonso, 2011) and Spain (Brown, 1991: 13; Davies, 1991: 108; Hart, 1993: 1; Nichols, 1992: 17; Prádanos, 2013: 209; Tsuchiya, 2006: 212; Weaver, 2013).

Given critics' interest in *politicised* fiction by women from the 1970s onwards in Spain and Portugal, the fundamental observation that narrowed the thematic focus of the present enquiry was to explore if and how female-authored fiction manifested a similarly acute engagement with the political backdrop the last time women's rights were in such a state of flux. The research findings presented here illustrate not only a sustained interest in the question of women's ideological autonomy in the works but demonstrate how the writers capitalised on the medium of fiction to engage with public discourses, subverting and refracting generic convention and blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction in such a way as to self-consciously underline their political agency and the socio-political significance of their work. All of the works selected for close reading can be seen to dialogue with the contemporary socio-political climate and, to varying degrees, function as a consciousness-raising exercise for the reader, as the texts afforded these female writers a means of participating in male-dominated debates.

While the need for continued archival research into non-canonical female authors is a shared objective of feminist literary critics, one aim of this analysis was to illustrate the benefits of reading historic (otherwise 'forgotten') female-authored fiction as manifestations of political discourse rather than placing undue emphasis on present-day standards of literary merit or aesthetic quality. Centring on the intersection of fiction, feminist thought and political discourses, this study has illustrated how literary strategies and ideological messages were interconnected for these authors and, by selecting an eclectic, diverse range of authors and texts, I hope to have made a convincing argument for firmly grounding analyses of non-canonical works within their socio-political and cultural contexts. Although, admittedly, not all of the works in this study make for gripping reads, they all illustrate a perceptive, (self-)conscious engagement with public debates and contribute to contemporary political dialogues. The

texts, in this sense, can be considered manifestations of ideological discourse that chart the development of feminist thought(s) at numerous, interrelated levels: the author's own evolving positions, shifts that encapsulate changes within the writers' immediate circles and a more abstract conception of first-wave feminism that crossed geographical, cultural and linguistic divides. Importantly, a concerted effort on the part of the authors to formulate narratives that would resonate with their intended readership is tangible in all of the works. One of the central contributions of this thesis is to provide a model for further research into non-canonical female authors that exemplifies the benefits of not basing such studies on a limiting or restrictive expectation of how we expect feminist literature to be. Indeed, if, as feminist critics, we wish to trace a female and feminist literary heritage, using an arbitrary, subjective understanding of literary 'quality' as a starting point is counterproductive and further risks occluding works that, at the time of publication, were important feminist initiatives for both the author and reader. A continued negotiation between examining the works as evidence of the writers' own ideological autonomy and cultural artefacts that form part of a collective feminist project has illustrated how the evolution of feminist discourses was made possible by an eclectic array of voices that, I have demonstrated here, were manifested in female-authored fiction.

Although the analyses encompass a diverse range of topics and literary strategies that reflect the personal(ised) political priorities of the authors, the thematic focus on women's ideological agency and the female and feminist political voice raised three important commonalities: sexual politics as a metaphor for women's relationship with the public/political space; a parallel or loaded contrast between the ideological agency and textual subjectivity of the female characters; and the invocation of the authors. These points of comparison form the basis of my concluding thoughts as they

support the hypothesis with which I began this analysis: fiction could prove a productive, at times preferable, alternative for women aiming to engage with contemporary political discourses. After addressing each of these points in turn, I conclude this study by reflecting on the future of feminist approaches to Iberian Studies and suggesting some possible avenues for further research.

The blurring of sexual and state politics offers an interesting starting point for this discussion as it exemplifies how the flexibility of fiction afforded women writers a means of unravelling and reinforcing their ideas about women's place in public discourse. Relating the female-male dynamic to women's relationship with the 'formal' political space capitalises on the figurative potential of literature by implying an organic, symbiotic link between the private and public spaces that is in consonance with hegemonic gender norms. In Sousa Costa's case, the authoritarian father-figure literally and symbolically represents patriarchal convention in such a way as to make the conflict between women and the state unmistakable to her reader. As I argued in Chapter Four, the formulaic, at points simplistic, nature of Sousa Costa's fiction can be considered a conscious effort on the author's part to package her ideas in such a way that they would resonate with her female readership and, consequently, make an impact. The more complex, nuanced works of De la Torre and O'Neill also draw on this parallel in order to present the authors' views clearly and, for these authors, satirically. The slippery, intangible nature of a re-conceptualisation of socialist discourse that incorporates female and feminist concerns and a redressing of the asymmetrical power balance of the immanently gendered muse/creator binary, tackled by De la Torre and O'Neill respectively, is, indeed, more digestible, and engaging, when portrayed in relation to a tortured love story or scandalous affair.

As Graupera's fiction exemplifies, furthermore, (hetero-)sexual and socio-economic politics need not be mutually exclusive but, rather, function best in tandem, illustrating how the female/male dynamic can be considered a means of gauging and symbolising women's exclusion from the male-dominated political sphere. By using (hetero-)sexual politics as a metaphor for women's exclusion from public discourse, the authors simultaneously draw the reader's attention to women's subordination in relation to men and a society that is invested with patriarchal convention, inviting a female reader to collude in the woman writer's critique of both. As well as constituting a productive means of packaging a potentially abstract ideological point so that it lends itself well to a fictional story, remembering here the importance of maintaining a living and marketability for the female author, the analogy also invites a female reader to identify with the issues being tackled in the work. Presenting such commentaries through a symbolic representation of the female/male dynamic not only makes the authors' methods more effective but, more importantly, implicitly invites a female reader to identify with the oppressed female Other; symbolically constructing an immanently feminist bond between author and reader that surpasses the confines of the text.

As a means of underlining women's exclusion from public debate and reinforcing the mobilising potential of literary production, the authors all parallel their female characters' visibility within the text with their degree of ideological agency. While Sousa Costa's portrayal of a transgenerational feminist network foregrounds female voices and includes a female figure (Helena) whose ideological autonomy is such that she is able to eclipse her husband, De la Torre's reflections on women's exclusion from socialist discourse, accordingly, is borne out in a narrative that is dominated by ideological debates voiced by male characters and the lone female, and

arguably feminist, socialist voice is all but silenced. Graupera and O'Neill can be seen to play on the question of women's ideological subjectivity, as the agency of their leading female characters (Micaela and the vice Countess respectively) is never explicitly outlined to the reader. Rather the works are constructed in such a way as to invite the reader to piece together clues that are embedded in the narratives that suggest a greater degree of agency for the figures than is first apparent from a cursory reading of the stories. By charting their ideas about women's ideological autonomy across several works, both Graupera and O'Neill appear to use their fiction as a training exercise for their readers; a practice, which, somewhat conveniently, also encourages the sale of their works. One important distinction between the authors' methods is how Graupera tests out her ideas across several novellas published in a short period of time, suggesting that she hoped her readership would, at the very least, be convinced by one of her approaches, while O'Neill's shifts reflect a more gradual evolution of her ideas as charted in works published over a period of almost twenty years.

Whether changing the prominence of the female characters in the narratives is an intentional political strategy, as in Graupera's case, or arises organically in response to the author's ideological development, like O'Neill, it illustrates how textual visibility for the female characters, in this literary and socio-political context, relates to the author's views on women's prominence in public life. As I note in the final chapter, it is, regrettably, not unexpected that the most powerful display of a feminist voice in all of the works examined here is found in Sousa Costa's short story, as the writer who does the least to challenge the separate spheres dichotomy does not have to contest with a male-dominated public space in the same way as her more revolutionary or progressive counterparts. The order of the analyses, as indicated in the Introduction, is an attempt to underline how the female characters' ideological autonomy negatively

correlates with their involvement with and connection to male-dominated public discourses.

Not only does presenting women's political agency and textual subjectivity as analogous empathically suture the message and form of the works, but it also makes the female author's presence in the narrative a pointed comment about the writers' own ideological authority. The contrast between the agency afforded to the female characters and the degree of control evidenced by the female authors connotes the distinction between the reality of women's role in public discourse and the authors' attempts to redress this asymmetrical power balance through their fiction. To varying degrees, all of the writers self-consciously underline how their works contribute to political debate, dropping the fictional façade at points so as to emphasise how they are making use of the public platform to articulate and proliferate their viewpoint. De la Torre's multifaceted novel is the most salient example, as her perceptive critical commentary on the Soviet Union reads as a call to arms for Spanish socialists to unite against a corrupted revolutionary model. While De la Torre's directive to the Spanish left plays on the porous boundary of fact and fiction, O'Neill, in a similar vein, blurs any clear distinction between reality and the narrative so as to make her critique of women's limited creative and political autonomy unmistakable to the reader.

By using fiction not only as an instructional tool but, at the same time, a means of publicising the authors' own experiences, these analyses have illustrated how literature can constitute an important political artefact and a fundamentally personal expression for the author. In all of the works, the voice of the author, as a real historical entity rather than the 'implied author' that is invoked by the narrative, is tangible at key points. Graupera and Sousa Costa both make use of textual cross-dressing – voicing their points through male characters – to undermine the conservative, misogynistic



rhetoric that is identified with men and the male-dominated public space. The dialogic quality of the works that this suggests not only adds to the insistently politicised characteristic of the texts, but also illustrates how, for the selected authors, fiction was a productive means of engaging with public discourse. Fictional(ised) (re-)creations of the writers, which arise in various formats in all of the analyses, connote how the female authors cannot resist the opportunity to make use of the public media to (re-)assert their ideological agency at a time when anxieties surrounding women's ability and suitability for political debate were heightened.

As the foregoing illustrates, grounding a literary analysis within its historical and literary contexts without the limitations of linguistic, geographic or cultural divides offers an illuminating perspective on feminist literary criticism as it denotes how female authors capitalise on the flexibility of fiction to exert their critical and creative agency. The writers' determination to underline their creative autonomy is best illustrated by the reworked or distorted literary paradigms that are evident in all of the analyses. De la Torre and O'Neill manipulate established literary models to reinforce their political commentaries, as De la Torre satirises elements of socialist realism in her critique of Marxist discourse and contemporary socialist debates while O'Neill subverts the romance plot in her ideologically-loaded 'anti-romance trilogy'. By modifying narrative paradigms that were extremely popular in these geographical, temporal and literary contexts, the authors also evidence an acute awareness of the need to give their works popular appeal in order for them to be effective.

Graupera, in a similar vein to O'Neill, politicises the romantic paradigm as a means of cultural and ideological subversion, a literary model which was hugely marketable for female readers in this historical and literary context. Though Sousa Costa's approach is less subversive (and, arguably, therefore less creative) as she

broadly follows the *Bildungsroman* pattern, it does, nevertheless, imply a degree of creative autonomy and resistance, as her short story charts the conflict(s) between feminist discourses and the misogynistic rhetoric of the state. The writers' imaginative re-workings underline the didactic potential of literature and connote how, for these authors, fictional patterns need to be re-written if socio-political debate is to be confronted and re-conceptualised. Modifying canonical paradigms constitutes both an act of feminist resistance against a literary world dominated by male voices and functions as a consciousness raising exercise for the reader; by disrupting a reader's expectations, that is, the author presents a corrupted version of the narratives in such a way as to pointedly remind the reader that disrupting hegemonic norms is possible. Despite their diversely different written styles, then, the authors all play on genre and literary convention in order to find a place for themselves, their ideas and their works within male-dominated public media.

Without seeking to arbitrarily homogenise women's writing or 'Iberian' literature, a discussion of the key commonalities between the analyses leads to a productive means of reflecting on how the fields of feminist literary criticism and Iberian Studies can coexist. Returning to Santiago Pérez Isasi's definition of the Iberian Peninsula as an 'interconnected, multilingual and multicultural political, identitarian and literary polysystem' (2013: 11), this analysis has considered how the comparable and, at points, interconnected feminist movements in Spain and Portugal and similarly male-dominated literary traditions in both countries proved a fertile context for women to articulate their public voice through fiction. This thesis makes an important contribution to this field as it illustrates how examining fiction outside of unduly restrictive geographical categories can be a productive means of approaching feminist literary criticism and, crucially, how a feminist take on the burgeoning field of Iberian

Studies can develop this evolving critical field. The findings of this study, somewhat paradoxically, can be seen to ratify the recent critical shift towards transnational cultural studies, particularly Iberian Studies, and, at the same time, serve as a reminder of the necessity of situating analyses within a specific geographical context. The most salient example of this is the much more overt engagement with socio-economic politics in the work of the Spanish authors than is found in the Portuguese analyses; a distinction that, as I indicated in the Introduction, could be attributed to the fact that, from a purely socio-political perspective, Spanish women had closer ties to leftist politics than their Portuguese counterparts, partly due to the suffrage law of 1931 and, later, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936.

Part of the reason for the stronger emphasis on women's issues (if not always necessarily feminist) in Portuguese women's writing is, conceivably, the close historic ties between the feminist movement and Republicanism in twentieth-century Portugal.<sup>208</sup> While a commitment to both leftist and feminist politics would result in a conflict of loyalties for a Spanish writer, which is discernible in Chapters One and Two, a Portuguese female writer with republican sympathies could, to her mind, defend these same values by foregrounding her feminist message(s).<sup>209</sup> Subject matters such as divorce, maternity and education, furthermore, would, undoubtedly be more marketable than a thinly veiled proclamation in favour of women's political emancipation. As this suggests, women writers, in this socio-political and cultural context at least, did not (or perhaps could not) produce fiction according to their own political agenda without

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<sup>208</sup> For further information, see: Esteves, 1991, 2008, 2010; and Wank-Nolasco Lamas, 1995: 23-36.

<sup>209</sup> This suggestion is supported by turning to Célia Carmen Cordeiro's examination of Castro Osório's feminist fiction entitled *Ana de Castro Osório e a mulher republicana portuguesa* (2012) which focuses on Castro Osório's depiction of women's education, divorce and maternity, and returning briefly to the work of O'Neill. The favourable reference to Plato's *Republic* in one of her children's stories, *Os bonecos de Joaninha* (1922), could imply that, for O'Neill at least, republicanism, in its broadest sense, was almost interchangeable with feminism: 'Platão, no livro V da sua República, defendera a mulher propondo-lhe direitos políticos e reconhecendo a sua igualdade mental e política ante o homem' (1922: 48).

considering the reception of their work as a *female* author. Comparing the work of De la Torre with O'Neill illustrates how this tension can manifest in very different ways: while De la Torre conveys her critique of socialist thought through male voices, which is partly a calculated attempt to legitimise the work and partly a critique of women's relationship with socialism, O'Neill foregrounds (anti-)love stories in order to underline women's ignorance to the *political* subtext that underpins her narratives.

Ironically, then, while my study has highlighted a drawback to cultural studies analyses that look beyond geographical divides, such as this thesis, the key evidence to exemplify this failing (re-)affirms the driving force of my approach: fiction is inflected by the socio-political context in which it was written. My findings add a feminist perspective to current scholarship on Iberian Studies, which, as I indicate in the Introduction, is currently lacking. In a sense, this thesis seeks to mirror the aims of the selected writers by carving a place for female and feminist voices in male-dominated public discourse. It has been my aim here to not only 'recover' these authors, but to present their works in such a way that they form part of a distinctive feminist literary tradition and, critically, play an important role in the dominant cultural narrative. Thus, while this thesis has highlighted some of the methodological failings of studies that reject national boundaries, it would, nevertheless, be counterproductive to divorce my study from this growing critical trend as it would reinforce the sense of isolation or Otherness that has a detrimental effect on women writers' careers and, crucially, on their legacy.

Of the numerous avenues for future research that this thesis could lead to, my findings point primarily to a diachronic study of female writers that maps out the development of a female (and feminist) literary tradition in twentieth-century Iberia. While studies such as Catherine Davies' *Spanish Women Writers, 1849-1996* (1998)

and Hilary Owen and Cláudia Pazos-Alonso's *Antigone's Daughters* (2011) have laid the groundwork for charting how women's writing has evolved in Spain and Portugal respectively by focusing on canonical authors,<sup>210</sup> my research builds on their work by incorporating lesser-studied women writers into a female and feminist literary heritages and provides a detailed account of the diversity of women's writings about women's relationship with the political domain over a twenty year period in the Iberian Peninsula in broadly comparable circumstances. The writers in this study could be considered the literary foremothers to the feminist authors and activists from the mid-1970s onwards, and further comparative approaches<sup>211</sup> could trace a subterranean feminist literary heritage that existed in spite of and because of the dominant patriarchal narratives. As this thesis has demonstrated, comparable socio-political contexts prove fertile ground for comparative studies of female-authored fiction in Spain and Portugal. In particular, the parallels between second-wave, post-dictatorship feminist texts in both countries would offer a productive means of examining how fiction afforded women a means of (re-)claiming their voices after decades of metaphorical silencing, while comparative analyses of female-authored (and, more intriguingly, feminist) fiction produced during the dictatorships would augment critical understanding of how the intersection of gender and state politics can be negotiated in fiction.

Building on my findings, such research would benefit from a transnational approach as it would highlight how women respond to literary, social and legal patriarchal convention, pointing to a feminist literary tradition in Iberia that surpasses geographical, linguistic and cultural divides. While I noted Edfeldt's observation that

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<sup>210</sup> Davies and Owen and Pazos Alonso acknowledge this in their works: Davies explains that her objective is 'not so much to discover unknown women writers', focusing instead on 'a handful celebrated women writers' (1998: 4), while Owen and Pazos Alonso recognise that their selected authors can be considered "'consagradas" or canonized' (2013: 14).

<sup>211</sup> As I outline in the Introduction, my emphasis on a 'comparative' approach is an effort to avoid flattening significant cultural distinctions that do, inevitably, arise.

women's writing can engage with patriarchal norms in such a way that it transcends national borders (2006: 137) at the outset of this thesis, the research presented here not only supports her assessment but, crucially, exemplifies how focusing on leading feminist activists introduces a range of otherwise 'forgotten' female-authored texts. There are, furthermore, a range of intriguing figures who do not form part of my analysis as it was beyond the scope of one study to examine all of the authors and works that formed the basis of my preliminary research. Key examples in Portugal include Sarah Beirão (1880-1974), Maria Archer (1899-1982) and Conceição Vitória Marques (who wrote under the pseudonym 'Mercedes Blasco') (1867-1961), while female authors writing in Spanish such as Eva León (n.d.), Rosario Pruenca (n.d.) and Regina Opisso (1879-1965), also offer intriguing avenues for future research.

The most important examples of ground-breaking activists and writers in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal, of course, are Carmen de Burgos and Ana de Castro Osório, bringing us back to where this study began: at the intersection of feminist thought, female-authored fiction and the comparable, often interrelated, feminist movements in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal. By focusing my analysis on a geographical and temporal context that saw debates surrounding women's ideological autonomy and right to participate in political dialogue heightened, I have sought to underline how, even for women who were actively involved in social, feminist and political activism, literature proved a productive means of communicating their ideas to their readership. In the first major study of Matilde de la Torre, Ángela Graupera, Maria O'Neill and Emilia de Sousa Costa, this analysis has argued that the selected authors used literature as a means of (re-)establishing a *political* voice for women, not least of all their own, and provides a model for future comparative studies

of Spanish and Portuguese women writers. The major contribution to knowledge that this thesis presents, therefore, is to contest the male-dominated literary canons in early twentieth-century Spain and Portugal by demonstrating how firmly grounding female-authored works within their historical and literary contexts reveals the important political function of otherwise misrepresented or ‘forgotten’ texts and evidencing this point through an in-depth analysis of the selected authors. Above all, I have demonstrated the important contribution to public debates and women’s writing by these figures, illustrating how continued research into non-canonical women writers can simultaneously augment our understanding of feminist thought and reveal tropes in female-authored fiction that can allow us to chart a female literary tradition.





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## Appendix One: Matilde de la Torre

### Fiction

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## Appendix Four: Emília de Sousa Costa

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<sup>212</sup> Maria Alice Samara is uncertain of the date of publication, citing it as '1924(?)' (2007: 216). I have based the date of publication on information available on the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal catalogue.

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