

Mothers without Fathers or Nothing More than a Woman:

Gender and Anarchism in the Work of Federica Montseny, 1923–1929

by

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Mary Nolan

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*FEDERICA MONTSENY*

## DEDICATION

In memory of my father who first told me about the Spanish Civil War  
and those who died to preserve liberty.

For Liz, Malcolm, and Isabel

### **“A las barricadas”**

**Valeriano Orobón Fernández, 1936**

Negras tormentas agitan los aires  
Nubes oscuras nos impiden ver  
Aunque nos espere el dolor y la muerte  
Contra el enemigo nos llama el deber.


El bien máspreciado  
Es la libertad  
Hay que defenderla  
Con fe y valor.

Alza la bandera revolucionaria  
Que llevará al pueblo a la emancipación  
Alza la bandera revolucionaria  
Que llevará al pueblo a la emancipación.  
En pie el pueblo obrero a la batalla  
Hay que derrocar a la reacción.

¡A las Barricadas! ¡A las Barricadas!  
Por el triunfo de la Confederación.  
¡A las Barricadas! ¡A las Barricadas!  
Por el triunfo de la Confederación.

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Meetings of the International Association of Labour History Institutions (IAHLI) are chances meet with colleagues and see new cities, plus a chance to conduct research and learn about gender and the left in their respective countries. Marianne Enckell of the Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme (Lausanne, Switzerland) continues to answer questions. Marianne was a very gracious host when I visited, and took me to a squat. Urs Kälin of the Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv (Zürich, Switzerland) kindly allowed me to browse their Spanish Civil War materials and provided me with a photograph of Montseny and the Brupbachers. Anne-Marie Blanchenay and Franck Veyron of the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (Nanterre ) help me use their collections and Franck's sharing of his apartment has made me as comfortable in Paris as I am in Amsterdam and Barcelona.

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On this side of the Atlantic, I used institutions across the country. Julie Herrada of the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and I tried to figure out *Ética*. Sarah Shoemaker, Special Collections Librarian

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## FOREWORD

What began as an idea to work on anarchists and collectives in the Civil War became Federica Montseny and her fiction a decade earlier. I have long enjoyed radical novelists such as Jack London and Upton Sinclair. My original goal on my admission to the NYU History doctoral program was to write a study of Upton Sinclair's eleven Lanny Budd novels, his fictional history of the first half of the twentieth century. However, Molly's course on German history won me back to Europe.

I had long read and wondered about the anarchist fiction mentioned in passing by many historians of Spain. A 1996 Goddard Junior Faculty research trip enabled me to see collections of these novels in the Netherlands and Spain while visiting members of the International Institution of Labour History Archives (IALHI). I saw that not only were there were many series, one of which contained over five hundred titles. A Vladeck Junior Faculty research fellowship let me go back to these collections and spend the time necessary to do a complete listing (see my *La Novela Ideal and La Novela Libre* at <http://www.iisg.nl/collections/novela/>) and to make photocopies of the novellas of Federica Montseny and Federico Urales. I even began to find some in used bookstores and collect them.

If I have learned anything in writing this, it is how much more I want to read, and how little I have read. What I read earlier as pre-history (such as Temma Kaplan on Andalusia and George Esenwein on anarchist ideology)

quickly became extremely relevant. Moreover, things I had not read because of initial chronology became clearly relevant, but picked at rather than read.

Some notes for the reader. I decided to use Catalan for proper names of Catalans and Castilian for others so Joan Peiró rather than Juan Peiró. I did the same for names of places and streets which are given in their present spelling, so Paral·lel for Paralelo or Parallel. With Google Earth it is easier to find a place using its contemporary spelling. The exception is when it is used by Montseny or another author in a title, or in quotations.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on Federica Montseny Mañe (1905–1994) to examine the cultural history of Spanish anarchism in the second half of the 1920s. The young Montseny wrote several hundred articles and works of fiction, all published by *La Revista Blanca* (1923–1936). Anarchism in the 1920s was not dormant but more visible in cultural activities, especially in the publishing of *La Revista Blanca*. The dissertation attempts to restore to the historical record Spanish anarchism’s cultural activities during the 1920s in order to gain a clearer understanding of the Second Republic and the libertarian movement’s actions during the thirties.

Anarchist culture is an outlier in most studies rather than a participant in the process of constructing the ideologies and myths that form “imagined communities.” I evaluate anarchism in its own terms and through its own sources, rather than seeing it as a primitive, mythic, or failed ideology. Examining Montseny’s contribution to anarchist culture in the 1920s illuminates Spanish anarchism’s participation in a global anarchist network. Montseny’s writing reached an audience in Europe and the Americas. *La victoria* and *El hijo de Clara*, her first two novels, were at the center of a lively trans–Atlantic debate. I focus on these and two novellas to examine Montseny use of fictional exemplars to work out and theorize her ideal man and woman while making her own anarchist interventions in Spanish debates about the new woman, paternity, and gender roles.

In the work of Montseny anticlericalism was an omnipresent theme. Science was important as the materialist response to the ideology of religion. I examine the ways gender converges with science in Montseny's fiction and journalism and mutually constitute key components of her anarchism. I also examine how gendered conceptions of humanity, based in contemporary understandings of science, led to her conception of an alternative maternalism. Montseny shared her contemporaries' conviction that motherhood was the pinnacle of a woman's life but her ideal mother was in the public sphere. Her maternalism trumps her anarchism but by placing it in the historical context of contemporary debates I make its genesis clearer.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

“Anarchism was often nearer the world of science fiction and, indeed, such works did have a vogue in anarchist circles.” Raymond Carr<sup>1</sup>

“I have learned more [from Balzac] than from all the professional historians economists and statisticians put together.” Frederick Engels

This dissertation endeavors to intervene in debates about Spanish anarchism by seeking an explanation and understanding of the movement through its culture, specifically romance novels. Spain’s large and powerful anarchist movement is well known. Most of its historiography focuses on the Second Republic and the Civil War. Instead, I will focus on its cultural manifestations in the 1920s. I will be examining the early writings of one of the most prominent Spanish anarchists, **Federica Montseny Mañé (1905–1994)**.<sup>2</sup>

Federica Montseny was an important and widely read Spanish anarchist. At age thirty–one, Federica Montseny’s assured her place in history when she became the first woman to hold a cabinet position in Spain, as Minister for Health and Social Services in November 1936. This dissertation seeks to recover her importance by focusing on her work in the 1920s, especially 1923–1929. She worked out an anarchist theory on gender that solidified her ideology in these formative years, from age eighteen to twenty–three. Montseny’s principal activity in this period was writing essays and

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1. Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 455.

2. The Spanish custom of children bearing both the father’s and the mother’s surname can be confusing for readers. The first time a person appears I use the complete name. Thereafter, I will use matronymics only when necessary. Additionally, I will use the helpful Spanish practice of placing dates of death and birth (when available) in parentheses at the first mention of a person – but not the places of their birth and death.

fiction, both published by *La Revista Blanca*. Montseny's concern with women and the family was integral to her anarchism. Her writing sought to redefine the relationship between gender and anarchism. She used an evolutionary vocabulary similar to her contemporaries.

My examination of Montseny's fiction and journalism provide a different focus than previous studies while it necessarily builds on the work done by others. Montseny used fiction to examine contemporary social problems. These same issues occupied Spanish reformers and Spanish feminists, the latter dominated by bourgeois and Catholic organizations. She differed from the majority of reformers and feminists through her profound empathy for the women that society at best ignored but often ostracized and sought to reform. Montseny's protagonists were women seen by society as victims, but in her fiction these women became victors by asserting their own independence and will.

Montseny failed to deal with economic issues and consequently those demands made on women to secure their existence. While she wrote about the sexual harassment of a female factory worker, she did not write of the other daily demands that factory work made upon women. This failure reflected her vision of a pastoral life in preference to an urban one, a retreat into a mythic nature. Like the majority of her contemporaries in Spain, she was a

maternalist, sharing the conviction that motherhood was the pinnacle of a woman's life. Her authorial voice was completely maternalist.<sup>3</sup>

Montseny saw the church–state duopoly as a central problem and offered anarchist solutions that set her apart from state oriented reformers. I argue that Montseny not only rejected the state — as did all other anarchists — she also rejected the patriarchal family that reformers saw as the nucleus of society. She went even further. She presented arguments and fictional exemplars of women having children without fathers, making fathers redundant.

Montseny recognized men as being necessary for the act of conception. Beyond that act, whether or not the mother had a continuing relationship with the man depended on his character and his willingness to treat her as an absolute equal. This belief set her apart from state oriented reformers and other anarchists. Montseny proposed her solutions in her journalism and at greater length in her fiction, where she transformed the imagined and possible into the concrete and real.

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3. Koven and Michel define maternalism as “ideologies that exulted women’s capacity to mother and extended to society as a whole the values of care, nurturance, and morality. Maternalism always operated on two levels: it extolled the private virtues of domesticity while simultaneously legitimating women’s public relationships to politics and the state, the community, workplace, and marketplace. In practice, maternalist ideologies often challenged the constricted boundaries between public and private, women and men, state and civil society.” Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, “Womanly Duties: Maternalist Policies and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States,” *American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990), 1079.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

### THE VARIETIES OF ANARCHISM

Because anarchism has no doctrinal authorities, just interpretations, it promises no consistency beyond a central and pivotal belief. “The theory or doctrine that all forms of government are oppressive and undesirable and should be abolished” is a standard definition for anarchism.<sup>4</sup> Yet, in November 1936, four anarchists became cabinet ministers in the government of Spain.<sup>5</sup> Correspondingly, any attempt to create an overall taxonomy is full of exceptions. The definition above would not fit Federica Montseny and her compatriots who entered into the organs of government in the Spanish Civil War. Yet Montseny is an anarchist — albeit one who regretted her government service (but not what she tried to accomplish).

A number of variants are included within the definition above. Though little discussed, except in histories of anarchism, these variants are important for this dissertation. However, they are not pejorative divisions, like those used by historian Raymond Carr. Carr writes that in Spain anarchism’s divisions were “between syndicalists, professional revolutionaries, and

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4. *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “anarchism.” The second definition is just “terrorism against the state.”

5. The four ministers were Industry, Joan Peiró i Belis (1887–1942); Commerce, Juan López Sánchez (1900–1972); Justice, Juan García Oliver (1901–1980); and Montseny. The usual application of the term moderate to the first two confuses and obscures as much as it differentiates. The *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (Iberian Anarchist Federation, FAI) was purportedly made up of the more radical anarchists. Carr writes Peiró was opposed to the FAI but he was an early member of the FAI. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 570. Peiró also opposed a proposal for the CNT to participate in government arbitration panels. Writers frequently portray Montseny as an extreme radical but she only joined the FAI in July 1937, after the outbreak of the Civil War. Antonina Rodrigo, *Federica Montseny* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003), 97.

terrorists.” Carr places these in direct opposition to the socialists’ “personal and tactical divergences.”<sup>6</sup>

Despite what historian of anarchism George Woodcock labeled “the recurrent impulse towards individualism of approach and interpretation,” anarchism still produced some general categories.<sup>7</sup> Woodcock refers to them as “well-defined ‘schools’ of anarchist thought.”<sup>8</sup> Usually listed first is individualist anarchism, linked with the German Max Stirner (pseudonym of John Kaspar Schmidt, 1806–1856). In 1844/1845 Stirner published a “classic text” *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (usually translated as *The Ego and Its Own*).<sup>9</sup> A Spanish edition appeared, based on the 1892 popular edition.<sup>10</sup> The individualist tendency has been on the left or the right of the traditional political spectrum. Frenchman Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) was the leading figure of federalism (also called mutualism), which has as its basis freely formed associations. This is the root of many anarchist cooperatives and workers organizations. Proudhon had confidence in labor, especially their ability to manage themselves, known as *ouvriérisme*. This belief persisted in the other schools.

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6. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 440. Carr also observes “Employers got the working class they deserved.” *Ibid.*, 446.

7. George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), 19.

8. *Ibid.*, 20.

9. The first English translation was *The Ego and His Own*, published by the American individualist Benjamin Tucker (1854–1939) in 1907. William Godwin (1756–1836) is often included as an individualist founding father in these taxonomies. Godwin’s impact was insignificant among Spanish anarchists.

10. Max Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1996), 55. The first Spanish edition appears to be in 1907 as *El único y su propiedad*.



Next is Mikhail Bakunin's (1814–1876) collectivism, also with associations but with a stronger emphasis on the collective and less on the individual, and associated with the phrase “to each according to their deeds.” Peter Kropotkin's (1842–1921) anarcho–communism is usually last, with its emphasis on absolute equality and the sharing of goods and without wages. The classic expression of this variant is “from each according to his means, to each according to his needs.”<sup>11</sup> Revolutionary syndicalism, or anarcho–syndicalism – wholly *ouvriériste* – is a variant of anarcho–communism that argues that freely formed syndicates (unions) are the basis of the future communist society. The organization of workers, around the industry, trade, or chief work they performed. Its leading adherents–theoreticians were overwhelmingly Francophones.<sup>12</sup> Yet, the largest and most powerful anarcho–syndicalist organization was Spain's *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Labor Confederation, CNT, 1911–date).

In Spain, the early anarchist movement was a mix of federalism and collectivism, with the latter more prevalent. The introduction of anarcho–communism in the mid–1880s gave rise to debates, especially over tactics. Less connected to labor organizations, anarcho–communism emphasized individual action. From these debates arose the attempt to bridge the divisions by Ricardo Mella Cea (1861–1925). This was Mella's *anarquismo sin*

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11. Palmiro de Lida [Adrián del Valle], “Evocando el pasado (1886–1892),” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 103 (1 September 1927), 211.

12. Notably Fernand Pelloutier (1867–1901) and Émile Pouget (1860–1931).

*adjetivos* (“anarchism without adjectives”). Historian George Esenwein refers to this as Spain’s “only real contribution” to anarchist theory.<sup>13</sup>

The Montseny family and their journal *La Revista Blanca* are usually included as individualists.<sup>14</sup> However, they are more appropriately included in the category of without adjectives. *La Revista Blanca* published Kropotkin, including a Spanish translation of his unfinished *Ethics*. Errico Malatesta (1853–1932) and Elisée Reclus (1830–1905), former communists who published in the journal, also adopted *anarquismo sin adjetivos*.<sup>15</sup> Max Nettlau (1865–1944), another who abandoned anarcho–communism, was a regular contributor — as were other anarchists of varying hues.<sup>16</sup> Federica Montseny used individualist terms frequently and promoted individualism. Nevertheless, she joined the CNT in 1923 when she was eighteen, when it was not necessary.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, she wrote for the CNT’s Barcelona daily *Solidaridad Obrera*, and at one point in the thirties she became an editor. She published her first article in the newspaper on April 18, 1923, before the government suppressed the paper in May 1924, after the assassination of the

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13. George R. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working–Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 9. Esenwein’s book is the most accessible account.

14. Often referred to in Spanish as *la familia Montseny* (the Montseny family), this term included both parents and Federica Montseny. I will use her parent’s pseudonyms to distinguish the individuals.

15. The prominent American Voltairine de Cleyre (1866–1912) was another who adopted this term after meeting the Spaniard Fernando Tarrida del Mármol (1861–1915) in London. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working–Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 154–155.

16. Heiner Becker, “Introduction” to Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, xix.

17. She joined the CNT affiliated *Sindicato de Oficios Varios de Sardañola Ripollet* (Miscellaneous Occupations of Cerdanyola–Ripollet). Federica Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1987), 38.

executioner of Barcelona.<sup>18</sup> The Catalan–Cuban anarchist and novelist Adrián del Valle Costa (1872–1945) wrote in 1927 that such adjectival distinctions were not important. Instead, he argued for:

The essential libertarian doctrine of anarchism: no power, no authority, no subjugation of one individual to another, and the consequent equality in rights, duties, and condition among the individuals of the social group. What was first [primordial] was freedom and equality; the economic structure and how to handle the production and distribution of products was secondary.<sup>19</sup>

For the purposes of the dissertation, I use individualist. First, because *anarquismo sin adjetivos* is too cumbersome and has lost its meaning outside of a small circle of anarchist studies. Most importantly, I use it because the expression is an apt description of Montseny. It is not an ideologically rigid adjective, nor a critical one.<sup>20</sup> I am dealing with an earlier period, a time when Montseny’s individualism was a youthful self–assertion more than an ideological statement.

### **EDUCATION: CAPACITACIÓN AND INTEGRAL EDUCATION**

Anarchists used the word education frequently and what it meant is contextual. The anarchist role in education is widely recognized and it

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18. Her first article was “Relieves Sociales: El Lazarillo” (Social Profiles: The Guide). She published two more before the suppression. For the circumstances of the suppression, and the history of *Solidaridad Obrera*, see Susanna Tavera i Gracia, *Solidaridad Obrera: El fer–se i desfer–se d’un diari anarco–sindicalista (1915–1939)* (Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya, 1992), 42. The significance of the executioner is that municipal executioner, presumably of Barcelona, featured as a negative character in a 1927 novella. Federica Montseny, *La hija del verdugo*, *La Novela Ideal* 52 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1927]). The English translation of the title would be *The Daughter of the Executioner*.  
19. Palmiro de Lida [Adrián del Valle], “Evocando el pasado (1886–1892),” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 103 (1 September 1927), 211.

20. For a critical use see Chris Ealham, “‘From the Summit to the Abyss:’ The Contradictions of Individualism and Collectivism in the Spanish Anarchism,” in *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936–1939*, eds. Paul Preston and Ann L. Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 135–162.

influenced pedagogical reformers across the world, including Dewey in the United States. For anarchists, education was something much broader than classroom learning and the liberal arts. It included an understanding and love of nature, and the idealization of humanity's place in the world. Spain's anarchists expended a great deal of their energies trying to improve education, especially in this broader sense. The word "education" in this dissertation includes these broader concepts.

First is the concept of *capacitación*. Historian Martha Ackelsberg argues that while it has no direct English equivalent, it is the "combination of consciousness raising and empowerment (in the sense of developing and feeling confident in one's own abilities)."<sup>21</sup> Included in this is not just an awareness of the structures of oppression and self-consciousness, but actively teaching skills, including what is called in the United States vocational education, not as a separate track, certainly not a "lesser" one. It was for everyone.

This leads to the second important anarchist educational conception, an *integral education*. Historian Richard Sonn wrote that an "integral education would include outdoor activities and direct observation of nature as well as learning through books, combining manual skills with scientific knowledge."<sup>22</sup>

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21. Martha A. Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 115. Chapter 5, "Education for Empowerment" is an examination of the importance of anarchist education in Spain, especially for women.

22. Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 40. Kerensky offered Kropotkin the post as Minister of Education in the Kerensky government, which Kropotkin refused. *Ibid.*, 40–41.

Proudhon expanded on this concept, derived from Charles Fourier (1772–1837). The First International promoted it, and the Spanish section adopted it (see my chapter 4). The Paris Commune tried to institute it in 1871 with the creation of new schools in workshops for industrial arts, women, and orphans.<sup>23</sup> In 1898, the French anarchist Jean Grave (1854–1939) published an international manifesto on integral education in his journal *Temps Nouveaux*. Grave signed the manifesto, along with Kropotkin, Charles Malato (1958–1939), Louise Michel (1830–1905), and Leo Tolstoi (1828–1910). Kropotkin was a correspondent of the leading Spanish adherent of integral education, Francisco Ferrer i Guardia (1859–1909), founder of Barcelona’s *Escuela Moderna* or Modern School.

Another aspect of anarchist education is anti-intellectualism. Despite the belief that separating manual and mental labor was oppressive, there was a strain of anti-intellectualism in anarchism. In 1915, Montseny’s father, Federico Urales (née Joan Montseny i Carret, 1864–1942), wrote to Barcelona’s Biblioteca Pública Arús offering to sell his library. He referred to his life as a combination of mental labor (writing) and manual labor (agriculture). Other anarchists frequently dismissed Urales as an intellectual despite his working-class origins, background as a cooper, and union officer.<sup>24</sup> Anarchist activist Diego Abad de Santillán (pseudonym of Sinesio Baudilio García Fernández, 1897–1983) dismissed Urales’ writing as “stupid novels”

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23. Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 16–17.

24. Susanna Tavera i Gracia, *Federica Montseny: La Indomable (1905–1994)* (Barcelona: Temas de Hoy, 2005), 65. A reproduction of the letter is between pages 103 and 104.

and not useful for the movement.<sup>25</sup> Federica Montseny did not fare much better, and was quick to assert her trades were stenographer, typist, and writer. The Montseny family stressed that they wanted to aid in education, to unite the socially conscious intellectual to the workers' movement, and to accelerate the coming revolution. When I use education in relation to anarchism, it includes *capacitación* and integral education, but not anti-intellectualism.

### **NATURE, NATURAL, AND NATURALISM**

Nature (*la naturaleza*) and naturalism were concepts frequently invoked by Montseny and other anarchists.<sup>26</sup> She never clearly explains naturalism as a concept. Instead, she invoked it as a contrast to the existing society. Montseny described society as artificial and hence contrary to nature. For Montseny, like other anarchists and many other anticlericals, nature was in contrast to religion. She portrayed the two as opposite poles. In Montseny's writing, religion is an unnecessary addition to the human self, whereas nature was the intrinsic state of humanity. When only nineteen Montseny made the contrast between the morality of nature and that of religion. Religion was a "denier and desecrator of life," and one of the tasks of literature was to "impose the elevated morals of Nature" upon the "monstrosities of society"

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25. Diego Abad de Santillán to Max Nettlau, April 11, 1927, Max Nettlau Papers, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (henceforth IISG).

26. It is not the literary movement derived from Émile Zola that embodied late nineteenth century positivist and materialist thought, whereby man has no free will and material forces determine events.

through an optimistic vision of tomorrow.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, women were usually closer to nature because of their distance from the masculine (public sphere). Montseny sought to remedy this distance not by including women in a masculine conception of the world (as she accused Spanish feminism of doing), but by bringing men back to nature.

Montseny's use of naturalism, *la naturaleza*, is different from naturism (*naturismo*), the practices of nudism, naturopathy (use of natural remedies), and/or vegetarianism. While advocates of these practices could overlap with anarchism, in its first issue, *La Revista Blanca*, stated that these were a way of life yet not the means to regain humanity's lost compatibility with nature, which bourgeois civilization removed.<sup>28</sup> In 1927, Montseny denied any adherence to any naturist "sect or school."<sup>29</sup> Instead, she described anarchism and naturism as tendencies that sought the same end, the return of man to nature, but through two different paths.<sup>30</sup>

For Montseny, humanity's distance from nature affected health. Cities were inherently less healthy than the countryside; however, she thought that naturism alone was feeble as an ideology.<sup>31</sup> Her anarchism was more materialist; she did not believe that these naturist practices would overthrow

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27. Federica Montseny, "El pesimismo en la literatura," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 21 (1 April 1924), 6–7. I followed her capitalization of nature.

28. La Redacción, "Nuestras ideas y nuestros propósitos," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 1 (1 June 1923), 2–3.

29. Federica Montseny, "Naturismo y naturalismo I," *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), 740.

30. Federica Montseny, "Naturismo y naturalismo II," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 100 (15 July 1927), 108. She also perceived this return to Nature in the writings of authors as diverse as Spengler, Tolstoy, Kipling and Tagore.

31. Federica Montseny, "El naturismo," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 4 (15 July 1923), 12.

capitalism. She argued it neglected social reality, and without an anarchist ideology, naturists would never achieve their goals.<sup>32</sup> Naturism alone was not subversive and would not lead to struggle against capitalism. In 1923 she wrote that only in anarchism could one can truly implement the practices of naturism — only in a free society could one live without civilization.<sup>33</sup>

Nature does not produce illnesses. Bad social organization produces these. If there is no happiness without health and if health is in Nature and anarchism seeks the establishment of a free and happy man, a libertarian must be, above all, a lover of life, which is to be of Nature and with natural agents, refusing all comfort and all of the inventions that separate us.<sup>34</sup>

For the integral human of the future, naturism would be an appendix to anarchism, valued for its pacific and simple sensibilities.<sup>35</sup> Four years later, she saw a return to nature as being the future. This was not naturism since she used the term *naturalismo* in contrast to *naturismo*. She paradoxically advocated living in harmony with nature, staying in contact with it, and not moving to cities with their “noxious” air even as she lived in booming Barcelona.<sup>36</sup> In May 1927, she described making a living from agricultural pursuits, lauding a French attempt to live on the land. Montseny appeared to reject the very products of contemporary society that gave her an audience:

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32. *Ibid.*, 13. Her argument is hard to follow and lacks clarity.

33. *Ibid.*

34. La Redacción, “Nuestras ideas y nuestros propósitos,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 1 (1 June 1923), 3. In Montseny’s wrote that disease was entirely of social origin, and consequently, in a libertarian society it would not exist. *El otro amor*, La Novela Ideal 34 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1926]). See also the two part essay by Richard M. Cleminson, “Anarchists for Health: Spanish Anarchism and Health Reform in the 1930s. Part I: Anarchism, Neo-Malthusianism, Eugenics and Concepts of Health,” *Health Care Analysis* 3, no. 1 (1995), 61–67 and “Anarchists for Health: Spanish Anarchism and Health Reform in the 1930s. Part II: ‘Our Speech as Vibrant as a Dance of Swords’,” *Health Care Analysis* 3, no. 2 (1995), 157–166.

35. Federica Montseny, “El naturismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 4 (15 July 1923), 14.

36. Federica Montseny, “Naturismo y naturalismo I,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), 742.



mass communications, transportation, and networks. Yet, in the second part of the series published two months later, she states that this is not all that is involved, or even sufficient. Instead, she argued for a conscious return to nature to broaden anarchism beyond resistance to capitalism.<sup>37</sup> Her arguments about a return to nature, and its supposed adherents in *naturismo* and anarchism are erratic and scattered, though she does not perceive this. Yet, these inchoate ideas were widely shared across Spanish anarchism and in other locations as well. Historian Kirwin Shaffer describes a very similar situation in Cuba:

...the groundwork for the revolution had to be laid so that people could begin to conceive Cuban reality from an anarchist viewpoint. In addition, people in the present needed to know what Nature's dictates included and how to live according to those dictates. The anarchists' revolutionary mothers were people living in harmony with Nature: cooperative, freed from worrying about societal gossip, giving birth and then raising their children in a spirit of love and solidarity. In short, these mothers were breaking the chains of bourgeois morality and capitalist Cuba by living according to anarchist ideals of Nature. While anarchists established schools and institutes to help in this ethical and physical awakening, anarchist short stories and novels played a key role in creating the required conceptual leaps and revolutionary imagination necessary for a coming revolution.<sup>38</sup>

Montseny argued along these same lines for a commonality of purpose stating that the very things anarchism fought against were what kept humanity

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37. Federica Montseny, "Naturismo y naturalismo II," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 100 (15 July 1927), 109–110.

38. Kirwin R. Shaffer, "Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionary Mothers in Cuban Anarchism: Imagining Women in the Fiction of Adrian del Valle and Antonio Penichet, 1898–1930," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, no. 18 (1999), 3. The prevalence of disease was another example of anarchist viewing bourgeois capitalist society as contrary to nature. Also Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937* (London: Routledge, 2005), 159–160 and Kirwin R. Shaffer, "The Radical Muse: Women and Anarchism in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba," *Cuban Studies Estudios Cubanos*, no. 34 (2003), 133. The use of nature as a trope in anarchism perhaps is little analyzed but frequently invoked: "sentimental reasons always are the most accessible and natural." Marisa Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria: Trece años de «La novela ideal» (1925–1938)* (Barcelona: Península, 1981), 28.

from nature: “We only need to batter down those obstacles that impede a turn towards nature. And we must bring these down: state, religion, moral, customs, civilization, bourgeois society...”<sup>39</sup> She stated that contemporary anarchism has the benefit of being able to see the past as from a watchtower. Montseny referred to the utopias of Thomas More (1478–1535) and Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639); as well as the writings of Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, to call for a synthesis of anarchism and a return to nature, arguing that neither is possible without the other.<sup>40</sup> Montseny, like the well-known author Felipe Trigo (1864–1916), combined sexuality, anti-clericalism, and education as being the keys to a harmony with nature.<sup>41</sup> Both made the sexual problem one of the central problems of Spain, involving concepts of human freedom and dignity. I have tried to adhere to her use of the terms in the dissertation.

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39. Federica Montseny, “Naturismo y naturalismo I,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), 743.

40. Federica Montseny, “Naturismo y naturalismo II,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 100 (15 July 1927), 119–110.

41. Felipe Trigo was a doctor who joined the military as a physician and saw active service in the Philippines. In 1900, he abandoned medicine to write full time. He was a very popular novelist who committed suicide at the height of his success. He was very critical of contemporary society, especially sexual hypocrisy, and critics accused him of writing pornography. “True natural law, he [Trigo] argues, involves a dynamic harmony between reason and the body, a harmony which can find full expression in sensual love; Catholic doctrines of renunciation and chastity are evil, for human happiness demands the full satisfaction of natural sexual instincts; Spanish ideals of fidelity, honor, and purity are selfish concepts contrary to Nature; love can only be generosity, sexual as well as spiritual. Like the Anarchists, Trigo proposes that Spaniards be educated for liberty; women must be emancipated; only then will man be free, and like the anarchists, Nature is invoked in opposition to religion.” Brian John Dendle, *The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis, 1876–1936* (Princeton: Princeton University, Dept. of Romance Languages, 1968), 61. Also Phillip Ward, *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), s.v. “Trigo, Felipe.”

## **HUMANISM, FEMINISM, MASCULINISM**

Montseny defined humanism by what it was not. For Montseny, humanism was an ungendered concern with both sexes in opposition to feminism and masculinism. In her writings, feminism was frequently concerned only with women gaining the power and position of men, not replacing men, rather gaining their advantages without any improvement in the lives of humanity. Her presentations of feminism are usually negative, though not always, and not simplistic. Masculinism is the idea that men deserve the positions of power and authority that they have. Consequently, for Montseny, feminism would merely make women the same as men without any improvements for humanity as a whole. Feminism was selfish, based in class considerations. Feminism sought to gain access to the *status quo* of the bourgeoisie's power and authority, but to preserve it, not destroy it. Ultimately, the problem was the relationship to political power and authority. As long as feminism sought these, she saw it as a problem for humanity and the revolution. Her rejection of feminism is not a rejection of rights and equality for women. It was an anarchist's rejection of these as manifested in suffrage or other forms of political power.

## **LITERARY ANALYSIS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The fictional work of Federica Montseny is central to her exposition of ideology. It is significant that *La Revista Blanca* resumed publication in June 1923. This was only three months before the *pronunciamiento* (the term used in Spanish history for a *coup d'état*) of Primo de Rivera (see the following

chapter). It ushered in a period of military censorship and dictatorship. The political situation and censorship limited the topics that the journal could openly and directly address. It was not a coincidence that within two years they started publishing *La Novela Ideal*, their own series of novellas.<sup>42</sup> Despite the censorship of the novellas, they could write more freely in this form about topics of interest. Additionally, they used their fictional models as pedagogical tools. They wrote about fictional situations that may have been unrealistic in their actions, however, they carried the impression of reality in their description and presentation. Furthermore, they offered advice and models to follow. The serialized novella form was the popular format for fiction in the period (see my chapter 2). The editors of *La Revista Blanca* used this popularity to present their ideas to a much wider audience than they could reach with only the journal. The circulation of the journal was less than half of that of the novellas. *La Revista Blanca* printed 8,000 copies at its peak versus 10,000 to 50,000 copies of the novellas. The novellas were not just another ideological tool. They were the central place for Federica Montseny to develop her ideas at length, rather than in the journal.

Because Montseny's fictional work lies at the heart of this dissertation, I read a number of literary studies and histories. Hence, disparate works substantially influenced this interpretation of the Spanish anarchists. I used studies of literature and gender on varied historical periods and languages

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42. The "ideal" is one of many common synonyms for anarchism used especially in periods of censorship. So the title of the novella series was a double entendre, the Ideal Novel and simultaneously the Anarchist Novel.

fully conscious of the need for caution in using these. These studies provided me with specific questions, conceptual tools and models of arguments that were fruitful in analyzing Montseny. In the case of Soviet and American literature, it was directly applicable to Montseny's own reading and reviews of the same literature.<sup>43</sup>

The thesis grew out of a close reading of Katerina Clark's *The Soviet Novel*.<sup>44</sup> Clark's analysis and description do not treat Soviet socialist realist novels as literature. Instead, she presents them as ritual texts, documents from Soviet society to analyze as a way of interpretation and understanding of that society. While they may fail as works of literature, they are an important part of Soviet history. Another useful analysis of Soviet literature was *Men without Women*, Eliot Borenstein's examination of gender in Soviet fiction.<sup>45</sup> Borenstein's examples of the prevalence of masculinity in Soviet fiction and the absence of femininity served as a catalyst for a parallel recognition in the fiction of Montseny. However, here Montseny was almost the polar opposite of Borenstein's authors. She writes of mothers without fathers, and hence my title: "Mothers without Fathers." A side benefit of reading these and other works on Soviet fiction is that Montseny read many of the same works and reviewed them in *La Revista Blanca*. Because of the analysis in *Men without*

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43. The bibliography includes these works, even when they are not specifically referenced in the footnotes.

44. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

45. Eliot Borenstein, *Men without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917–1929* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). I also benefitted from reading studies of Soviet culture, especially the debates over proletarian literature, as well as some of the Soviet novels read by Montseny.

*Women*, I was able to recognize Montseny's review of a Soviet novel titled in Spanish *El amor en libertad* [*Love in Freedom*] as the same novel translated into English as *Dog Lane*.<sup>46</sup>

Judith Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight* was an important catalyst for my thinking about fiction and gender in history.<sup>47</sup> Walkowitz analyzes the complex ways in which power and gender interact and reappear in journalism and fiction. Her description of Stead's journalism seemed parallel to Montseny's: "He elevated sexual narratives to the level of sexual scandal, to a *social drama that exposed social division and forced people to take sides*."<sup>48</sup> Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* has provided a theoretical framework for understanding the use of fiction to create and sustain Iberian and trans-Atlantic anarchist communities (rather than national identities).<sup>49</sup> While traditionally applied to understanding nationalism, I found it useful in my understanding of anti-nationalism. That sense of belonging to a

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46. Federica Montseny, "Lecturas," *La Revista Blanca* 9, no. 200 (15 September 1931), 254–256. Her review is of V. Goodmilevsky, *El amor en libertad* (Madrid: Editorial Hoy, 1931, first published in Russian in 1927). The published English translation is Lev Gumilevskii, *Dog Lane* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930). The original's Russian title in transliteration is *Sobachii pereulok*. Borenstein translates this as *Dog Alley* and the author as Gumilevsky. According to Magnien, between 1926 and 1936, Spanish publishers published in translation close to a hundred Russian novels. Brigitte Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in *Los felices años veinte: España, crisis y modernidad*, eds. Carlos Serrano Lacarra and Serge Salaün (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 259. The roaring twenties is the translation of the title of this collection of essays. Later Magnien marks 1920–1936 as seeing 220 novels translated and published, with a marked increase after 1928. *Ibid.*, 298.

47. Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

48. *Ibid.*, 84. The italics are mine.

49. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and exp. (London: Verso, 1991).

community enabled anarchists of all types to pursue and persist in their dreams.

The first monographic study of the *Novelas Ideales* was *Literatura popular libertaria* by Marisa Siguan Boehmer.<sup>50</sup> Her coverage of the complete series enabled me to better place Montseny in the context of all the novellas and to refer to consistent trends. However, as a literary study focusing on the entire series' structure and text, Siguan Boehmer does not analyze Montseny in depth, nor fully consider anarchist ideology and the historical context in the way that I do.

I built on a reading of Peter Brooks' *The Melodramatic Imagination* with Patrice Petro's *Joyless Streets* and Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*.<sup>51</sup> Brooks fortified my belief that the melodramatic novel was a political weapon, and Petro and Armstrong helped deepen my understanding of gender in fiction (texts and cinema). Jo Labanyi's *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* gave me a useful guide to these issues in Spanish literature.<sup>52</sup> She details the close ties between changing scientific ideas, including the social sciences, in the construction of gender.

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50. Marisa Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria: Trece años de «La novela ideal» (1925–1938)* (Barcelona: Península, 1981).

51. Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

52. Jo Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

These I applied to my analysis of gender in Montseny's fiction and gave me the broader intellectual context in Spain.

Lucien Febvre's study of Rabelais contributed the concept of "mental tools" (*l'outillage mental*).<sup>53</sup> This is the evaluation of an individual's ideas and actions in the light of the conceptual tools of the period.<sup>54</sup> I have evaluated Montseny and others in light of her own ideas and concepts, rather than from my present.<sup>55</sup> I adopted Steven Stern's definition of patriarchy from his *The Secret History of Gender* where he argues that age is a crucial component of patriarchy.<sup>56</sup> Despite his focus on colonial Mexico, I found this definition useful because it focuses on a key component of the operation of power in the family. It explains the benefits many women gain from their position in the patriarchal family.

In trying to understand syndicalism as an intellectual ideology, I found Jeremy Jennings' *Syndicalism in France* useful. He treats the ideas of the syndicalists with respect and examines both the intellectuals and the militants who led the French syndicalists. Other works have dealt with syndicalism, though none with the depth and focus on the movement's intellectual history.<sup>57</sup>

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53. Lucien Paul Victor Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 150, 355–363.

54. See the examination of the Annalists in Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929–89* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

55. This is crucial in the question of Montseny's "feminism" because it depends on how one defines feminism. See my chapter 7.

56. Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

57. Jeremy Jennings, *Syndicalism in France: A Study of Ideas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990). Peter N. Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labor: A Cause without Rebels* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971). Frederick F. Ridley, *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France: The Direct Action of Its Time* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970).



Jennings examines the interplay of syndicalism and ideas in France and beyond.

### **ANARCHISM IN SPANISH HISTORY**

I focus on gender in the work of Montseny in order to reveal the centrality of it in her thought, how her concerns were very similar to contemporary debates, and her relationship to the broader movement in Spain and abroad. Without repeating the arguments of Joan W. Scott on the importance of gender in history, applying gender to Montseny gives new perspectives on the anarchist movement.<sup>58</sup> Gender analysis is an important aspect of analyzing the movement in a period of clandestine organizing when cultural activities, such as publishing, were the only legal avenues open. By including gender, I can tease out how Montseny presented her ideas of the ideal man and woman and the reception of her ideas in the anarchist press. I want to restore Montseny as an intellectual figure, who may not have been right, but she was important and influential at a very young age.

In the Anglo–American historical tradition the typical presentation of anarchists was of simple, inarticulate, and violent men (and only rarely women). They often describe eminent figures as gangsters, thugs, “secular saints,” or ascetic figures. They are miscast pre–modern actors on a modern political and social stage. Eminent historians have described them as “primitive rebels,” “chiliastic” adherents of a millennial ideology who lacked

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58. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

the necessary social and political development to adopt “modern” — i.e. political party — forms of protest, whether peaceful or violent. They rarely examine at any depth the publications of the movement and its own presentation or self-image. Frequently, they relied on the works of other commentators, official documents, police, and court records. I am not denying the usefulness or importance of these types of records, merely pointing out their obvious bias against the anarchists.<sup>59</sup>

Historians and others have marveled over the extensive social networks built up in the socialist movement. Vernon Lidtke’s *The Alternative Culture*, for example, is a study of the culture of German Social Democracy in Wilhelmine Germany.<sup>60</sup> They have rarely done so with the anarchists in Spain (Clara E. Lida would be a notable initial exception). This is due in part to the isolation of Spanish historiography during the Franco dictatorship.<sup>61</sup> In many writings on anarchism, the refrain is that they were more concerned about unimportant or “faddish lifestyle” issues.<sup>62</sup> Other than the problem that this lumps all anarchists into a homogenous and undifferentiated group, it also neglects the fact that politics is not the sum of human life. Most anarchists

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59. For an example see the little used review by Montseny’s mother, Soledad Gustavo (1865–1939), of the much used study of Andalusian anarchism by the notary Juan Díaz del Moral: Soledad Gustavo, “Historia de las agitaciones campesinas andaluzas,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 150 (14 August 1929), 146–148. A substantial amount of material on Spanish anarchism has been available at the IISG in Amsterdam for over seventy-five years.

60. Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

61. See the recent history of Spanish historiography by Gonzalo Pasamar, *Apologia and Criticism: Historians and the History of Spain, 1500–2000* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010.)

62. For example: “anarchist vegetarianism which always irritated non-Anarchists.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 453 n. 2. He apparently ignores the vegetarian recipes *El Socialista* published.

were concerned with both the means by which one lives and the means by which one makes the revolution, believing that both would have a significant impact on not only how successful and profound any revolution would be, but how free it would be. Thus, they actively cared about these so-called lifestyle issues. Furthermore, this belief translated into the firm conviction that even supposedly small things like diet and raising children were important — too important to be set aside or entrusted to others. It was precisely such changes in lifestyle that formed a crucial part of the wider left's regenerationist program.<sup>63</sup> All provided vegetarian recipes, recommended lifestyle adjustments, and offered advice. Understanding Spanish anarchists' focus on gender and lifestyle contributes to understanding the mass backing that anarchism had during the Republic and the Civil War. It also explains why anarchism faded under the authoritarianism of the Franco régime, which, in addition to suppressing dissident culture, enforced a vision of an imperialistic and nationalist Spanish Catholicism.

Absent in this study are the vast majority of the publications on the anarchists in the Civil War, as well as the histories of the Republic and the War. I am focusing on an earlier period, and, too often, the history of the war

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63. A number of historians criticize anarchism's concern with the body as a part of nature as a digression from what they saw as the real work of building political parties. Few of the same histories that are critical of anarchist vegetarianism or nudity offer the same critique of the socialists, even though *El Socialista*, its daily newspaper, was more important than the anarchist journals *Iniciales* or *Estudios*. I saw more photographs of naked humans (as opposed to the nudes in paintings and sculptures) in *El Socialista*, than in *Solidaridad Obrera* or *La Revista Blanca*. There are no photographs of nude living humans in *La Revista Blanca*. The key here is a photograph of living humans because *La Revista Blanca* ran paintings with nudes as works of art and culture. There are photographs of nudes in *Iniciales* and *Estudios*, especially the former.

is teleological. I seek to understand the movement in its own contemporary contexts, rather than retrospectively in light of the Civil War.

The classic early study on Spanish anarchism is Gerald Brenan's 1943 work, *The Spanish Labyrinth*.<sup>64</sup> The author, associated with Bloomsbury group in Great Britain, lived in Spain and wrote a book full of details, yet eminently readable. It is also romantic and has a tendency to use ethnicity as an explanation for the success of anarchism in Spain.

A portrayal of Andalusian anarchism that contrasts to the overall favorable one of Brenan is Eric Hobsbawm's 1959 *Primitive Rebels*.<sup>65</sup> Hobsbawm's subtitle sums up his thesis: "*Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.*" For Hobsbawm, anarchism was millennial (i.e., anarchism as a surrogate for religious faith) and unable to meet the needs of modern society, and those who followed it were correspondingly primitive — a phrase Brenan also used.

Joaquín Romero Maura, a Spanish scholar then at Oxford, published a seminal article in 1971. This article, "The Spanish Case," appeared in an anthology of writings on anarchism edited by David E. Apter and James Joll.<sup>66</sup>

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64. Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War*, 2nd ed. (1950; reprint Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). I am ignoring the unscholarly and tendentious works of Franco's policemen such as Comín Colomer's three volume history of Spanish anarchism, and his intellectual successors such as Pío Moa. Consequently, I will focus principally on Anglo-American works until after 1975.

65. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1965). Hobsbawm's study was limited by the lack of archival research and by its printed sources, including ones that were profoundly anti-anarchist.

66. Joaquín Romero Maura, "The Spanish Case," in *Anarchism Today*, eds. David E. Apter and James Joll (London: Macmillan, 1971), 60–83.

Romero Maura criticized existing explanations of the strength of anarchism in Spain. It did not have a larger impact but strongly influenced the way I look at Spanish anarchism.<sup>67</sup> His critique of the standard explanations for the strength of the Spanish libertarian movement was fundamental.

*Primitive Rebels* became the genesis of a number of scholarly works on the Andalusian anarchists. The most notable examples are the works of Clara E. Lida and Temma Kaplan. Lida's work on the *mano negro* (Black Hand, an alleged anarchist conspiracy in Andalusia in the 1880s) and her 1972 book *Anarquismo y revolución en la España del XIX*, began the process of moving away from studying the high politics of anarchism in Barcelona to examining it in the context of labor struggles throughout Spain.<sup>68</sup> She links anarchism to previous social movements and thoroughly documents the history of the movement in her period. Kaplan's 1977 *Anarchist's of Andalusia* argued that so-called rural anarchism drew upon local organizations of skilled workers, including sherry growers, vintners, and child care workers in the southern agro-towns.<sup>69</sup> By taking into account social organization and gender, it moves beyond a focus on ideological debates to indicate why the movement periodically coalesced in general strikes that sometimes threatened the state. She specifically challenged the argument about anarchist millenarianism.

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67. In part, this is because the essay appealed to specialists on anarchism, rather than Hispanists broadly.

68. Clara E. Lida, *Anarquismo y revolución en la España del XIX* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España editores, 1972).

69. Temma Kaplan, *The Anarchists of Andalusia 1868–1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Kaplan makes extensive use of local archival records and especially police files.

*Primitive Rebels* was also behind the genesis of Jerome R. Mintz's 1982 local study, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*.<sup>70</sup> Mintz's use of anthropological fieldwork — especially interviews — and the benefit of working in post-Franco Spain, presents a very different picture of Andalusian anarchism in the important village of Casas Viejas.<sup>71</sup> Mintz's exploration of the social relations in the community and the role of anarchism in these relationships are in marked contrast to Hobsbawm's.

The same year as Kaplan's study, the noted American anarchist Murray Bookchin published *The Spanish Anarchists*, a history that stopped just before the Civil War.<sup>72</sup> Bookchin's subtitle is as informative as Hobsbawm's: "*The Heroic Years 1868–1936*." Bookchin's history is a militant one that is full of rousing accounts of anarchist struggle and government repression, however, it is slight on analysis and not based on archival research. The publication date is also misleading, since he acknowledges that he was unable to use works published after 1969, the year before he finished his research.<sup>73</sup> One year later, in 1978, Robert W. Kern published *Red Years/Black Years*. This work provides fuller coverage of the Civil War years, however, it still has traces of

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70. Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

71 Casas Viejas was the site of an important conflict between Assault Guards, Guardia Civil, and anarchists in 1933. Not yet an independent town before the Franco period, various sources give the population in 1933 as being between 1,500 and 3,000. *Ibid.*, 17.

72. Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868–1936* (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977).

73. *Ibid.*, 326.

the millennial interpretation.<sup>74</sup> Bookchin and Kern both focused on political activity and privilege masculine “heroic actions.”

José Álvarez Junco’s book *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868–1910)*, first published in 1976, took the ideas of anarchists seriously.<sup>75</sup> Having written his first book on the impact of the Paris Commune on Spanish communalism, he went on to publish his doctoral dissertation as his second book. He analyzes anarchism as born of the Enlightenment faith in reason, science, and progress. He first details specific topics as the intellectual bases for anarchist ideology. He follows this with an examination of the anarchist criticism of contemporary society, the ideal of the future social organization, and concludes with a history of organization and tactics in Spain.

In 1989, anarchism, as an intellectual current in Spain, finally got a substantial academic treatment in English with George R. Esenwein’s *Anarchist Ideology and the Working–Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*.<sup>76</sup> Esenwein thoroughly documents the different tendencies and conflicts within the movement, its theoretical influences —from inside as well as outside Spain — and its impact on the growth and development of a conscious working–class movement. Martha A. Ackelsberg’s 1991 *Free Women of Spain* filled the gap in monographs applying gender analysis to twentieth century Spanish

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74. Robert W. Kern, *Red Years/Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism*, (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978).

75. José Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868–1910)*, 2nd corrected ed. (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, 1991).

76. George R. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working–Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

anarchism.<sup>77</sup> She makes extensive use of a wide range of sources, including interviews with female anarchists. Focusing on the organization *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women, the Spanish anarchist women's movement founded in the spring of 1936), her study provides a close examination of anarchism in feminist terms. She deftly uses feminist scholarship while acknowledging and placing this analysis in an historical context. She examines the problematic relationship between how *Mujeres Libres*' conceived of feminism and their consequent differences with other European feminist movements.

In 1996, Pamela Beth Radcliff published her study of the social movements in the city of Gijón, *From Mobilization to Civil War*.<sup>78</sup> Drawing on some of Kaplan's seminal work, Radcliff looks at how social movements (with an eye towards gender) operated in the city and linked up with consumer (usually women protesting in the marketplace) and other movements through a Gramscian perspective of contests for hegemony.<sup>79</sup> The British historian Chris Ealham also discusses a Gramscian contest for hegemony, in Barcelona, and he explicitly focuses on anarchism. Of note in Ealham's body of work is his 2005 book, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*.<sup>80</sup> He extensively documents the important role that the perception of anarchist

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77. Martha A. Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

78. Pamela Beth Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijón, 1900–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

79. Also important are the essays in Temma Kaplan, *Red City Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

80. Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937* (London: Routledge, 2005). A paperback edition has just been published under a different title: *Anarchism and the City* (Edinburgh: AK Press in collaboration with the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, 2010).



irresponsibility and criminality played in the creation of social panics in the city, though less grounded in gender than Kaplan and Radcliff. Understandably — because their focus is elsewhere — none of these provide a substantial analysis of Montseny.

So far, I have focused principally on Anglo–American scholarship because it dominated the field until the death of Franco.<sup>81</sup> Post–Franco Spanish historiography gave us a different perspective, as historians in Spanish universities began to examine the historical record freely. By the death of Franco, the growth of social history and the impact of social movements expanded the field. The impact of the women’s movement played a significant role in this, as did the development of cultural history. Historians in Spain had the advantage of the post–Franco boom in interest in the nation’s history as journals sprung up and reached a wide and popular audience. After this, Spanish scholarship on anarchism blossomed and often acknowledged the role of gender.<sup>82</sup> For this dissertation, the work of Mary Nash has been important. Her work was pioneering, beginning with her anthology of writing by *Mujeres Libres*.<sup>83</sup> She followed this up with a number of other studies, including *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, her

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81. R. Martin Blinkhorn, “Anglo–American Historians and the Second Spanish Republic: The Emergence of a New Orthodoxy,” *European Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (1973), 81–87 and Paul Preston, “War of Words: The Spanish Civil War and the Historians,” in *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939*, ed. Paul Preston (London: Methuen, 1984), 1–13.

82. This was beneficial in many ways as historians began to recognize gender as having an important role historical development and it influenced their work, even when it was not about gender.

83. Mary Nash, ed., *Mujeres Libres, España, 1936–1939*, Barcelona: Tusquets, 1975.

first book in English.<sup>84</sup> Nash has been crucial to examining the role of gender in Spain, not just in anarchism. Susanna Tavera i Gracia wrote her dissertation on *La Revista Blanca* and has produced a study of *Solidaridad Obrera*, the major anarcho–syndicalist newspaper.<sup>85</sup> Both these historians treat the ideas of anarchists fairly, and with an appreciation of the importance of location and gender in the development of differing social movements. Tavera also published a biography of Montseny (see below).

Shirley Fay Fredricks wrote the first lengthy academic study of Montseny, her 1972 dissertation at the University of New Mexico, supervised by Robert Kern.<sup>86</sup> She never published it. Fredricks’ dissertation is a very straightforward biographical narrative of Montseny and her thought. As Fredericks wrote during the Franco dictatorship, for political reasons she was unable to take full advantage of material held in Spain. She did use the Nettlau correspondence and received at least two letters from Montseny herself.<sup>87</sup>

Patricia Virginia Greene’s “Autobiography as Resistance: Strategies of Self–Representation in the Personal Narratives of Constanca de la Mora, Pilar

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84. Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, 1995). As a few reviewers pointed out, it is almost entirely about women on the Republican side, something that is clarified in the Spanish edition: *Rojas: Las mujeres republicanas en la guerra civil* (Madrid: Taurus, 1999) [*Reds: Republican Women in the Civil War*].

85. Susanna Tavera i Gracia, *Solidaridad Obrera: El fer–se i desfer–se d’un diari anarco–sindicalista (1915–1939)* (Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya, 1992).

86. Shirley Fay Fredricks, “Social and Political Thought of Federica Montseny, Spanish Anarchist 1923–1937” (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 1972).

87. I was unable to find any of Fredricks’ papers, as she appears to have passed away, and so I am unable to locate their correspondence.

Primo de Rivera, and Federica Montseny” appeared as a dissertation in 1995.<sup>88</sup> Greene’s dissertation focuses on these three women from differing ideological and cultural backgrounds and discusses memory and autobiography in order to examine the ways in which these women fought marginalization in a male-dominated society.

I have made use of three recent biographies of Montseny, of differing character. The first is a book with two works and one title: *Federica Montseny* by Antonina Rodrigo and Pío Moa. I made use of the part done by Rodrigo, a writer of popular biographies of women seeking to restore them to the common historical memory.<sup>89</sup> Rodrigo’s work is a biography in the heroic figure of history genre. What makes it of interest is the author’s longstanding relationship with Montseny and the quotations from meetings between the two. The second biography is by a journalist for the Madrid daily *El Mundo*, Irene Lozano. Lozano’s biography, *Federica Montseny: Una anarquista en el poder*, has a strong narrative line and covers the entirety of Montseny’s life.<sup>90</sup> It is rich in detail and well documented, which is important as Lozano often

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88. Patricia Virginia Greene, “Autobiography as Resistance: Strategies of Self-Representation in the Personal Narratives of Constanca de la Mora, Pilar Primo de Rivera, and Federica Montseny” (PhD. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1995).

89. Antonina Rodrigo / Pío Moa, *Federica Montseny* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003). This is the Cara & Cruz series where two different authors write entirely different perspectives on the same individual. The Pío Moa portion has little of interest for my thesis.

90. Irene Lozano, *Federica Montseny: Una anarquista en el poder* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2004). She graciously answered my emails and tried to help me contact Montseny’s surviving daughter, who lives in France.

recreates conversations, a technique that makes for a strong narrative, but makes me uncomfortable as an historian.<sup>91</sup>

The third biography is Susanna Tavera's *Federica Montseny: La indomable, 1905–1994*. This is an academic study of Montseny published on the centenary of her birth.<sup>92</sup> Tavera is strong on Montseny's life until exile. Her strong focus on gender, especially the relationships in the family household, and consequently was very useful. Tavera's biography is less detailed on Montseny's life after 1939 than Lozano's, though for my purposes that is not an issue.

Tavera's purpose is a study of Montseny's life and she focuses more on the period of the Republic. In my thesis, I focus on Montseny early years as a young woman, from her late teens until she was 25. I look in greater depth at the debates over Montseny's novels and relate these to some of the concurrent ideas of figures such as Gregorio Marañón y Posadillo (1887–1960) and Émile Armand (pseudonym of Ernest–Lucien Juin, 1872–1962).<sup>93</sup> I further differ from Tavera by paying closer attention to the more popular novellas in addition to the novels. Furthermore, I do not think Montseny was an anarchist because her parents were. Instead, I believe she made the conscious

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91. Lozano always indicates her source for the dialogues, and sometimes it is copied verbatim from a text by Montseny.

92. Susanna Tavera i Gracia, *Federica Montseny: La Indomable (1905–1994)* (Barcelona: Temas de Hoy, 2005). I have also benefitted from conversations with Tavera on my trips to Barcelona.

93. Gregorio Marañón was a well-respected physician. He was a founder of the study of endocrinology in Spain and the personal physician of King Alfonso XIII. Representatives of the monarchy and the Republican committee met in his home to negotiate the transition to the Second Republic. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 600. Émile Armand was an important French anarchist. Both men are examined at greater length in the thesis.

choice. Montseny's parents exposed her to anarchism, yet that also would have exposed her to all the worst aspects as well. She persisted in this adherence until her death, through exile, prison, and post-World War II. In general, the children of prominent anarchists did not become anarchists.<sup>94</sup> Montseny was an exception to this generality, albeit not the only one. Moreover, by using the novellas and Montseny's surviving correspondence, I see more conflict within the family, and at an earlier period.<sup>95</sup> However, these differences are very few and I owe a great deal to her work. She is one of the foundations I built upon and she provided me with important information.

I made extensive use of two important studies of gender in Spain by Nerea Aresti Esteban. The first is her 2000 SUNY Stony Brook dissertation, *Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)*, a crucial study of the change in gender over the period of my dissertation.<sup>96</sup> A year later, she published a significantly different work, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres*

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94. I benefited from a series of email exchanges with the German anarchist historian Heiner Becker. He had this to say about the ideological choices of the children of anarchists: "there were basically two (or two and a half) reasons given for why they weren't interested in anarchism: because 'daddy' was anarchist only for the outside world and nothing but a tyrant at home, or — if everybody was like daddy, then yes — but they saw from childhood onwards how dad was treated by 'comrades' and in the 'movement' (which, it seems to me, in Montseny's case should convinced her also to rather abstain from any participation in the movement!); and then, of course, anarchism didn't offer careers in the party or the government or the administration." Heiner Becker, email to the author, August 23, 2011.

95. Before I went to the research at the Archivo General de la Guerra Civil Española in Salamanca (henceforth AGGCE), Tavera alerted me to the existence of Urales' letter that was the factual base for my discussion of the conflict between Urales and Montseny in Chapter 5. This made me certain that there was material in Salamanca I had to see, even after the staff member I was speaking to denied it and told me that I was a "lying Catalan student making things up."

96. Nerea Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)" (PhD. Diss., State University at Stony Brook, 2000). This thesis was done under the direction of Temma Kaplan.

*modernas*.<sup>97</sup> Together they gave me new insight on the transformation of relations and identities in Spain during the period before the Civil War. Aresti Esteban's second work helped me understand and contextualize the impact and strong influence of evolutionary theory and European scientific debates in Spain. By providing an historical framework, it advanced my understanding of the impact of the ideas of Gregorio Marañón. He was the preeminent medical writer of the period, a writer Montseny read and criticized. The question of evolution was an important one in Spain, and closely intertwined with ideas about gender. Another important secondary source on evolution was Mike Hawkins' *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945*.<sup>98</sup> He examines Kropotkin's reaction to evolutionary theory and rejection of Social Darwinism. He places anarchist ideas on evolution and social progress within the broader context of ideas.

After the death of Franco, anarchists and their sympathizers were able to resume publishing in Spain, and as many continued to fight the internecine battles that so dominated studies on the Republican side during the Civil War. A number of memoirs appeared. Montseny, at eighty-two years of age, published a partial autobiography in 1987, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*.<sup>99</sup> As the title indicates, she only wrote about her life until the end of the Second World War, lightheartedly writing that if she lived another forty years (i.e.,

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97. Nerea Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas: Los ideales de feminidad y masculinidad en el primer tercio del siglo XX* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, Servicio Editorial / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko, Argitalpen Zerbitzua, 2001).

98. Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

99. Federica Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1987).

lived to 120) she would write the second forty years. Invaluable for my study, it is understandably more sympathetic to certain individuals than it would have been before the Civil War. The shared experiences of power, defeat (within the government and in the Civil War), and a long and difficult exile, significantly soften Montseny's portrayals.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

After the initial introductory chapter and a chapter providing background, I organize the remaining chapters thematically, rather than chronologically. They broadly parallel the transformation of a woman from youth to maturity. I focus on how Montseny's writings depict the particular issue or issues under discussion. The third chapter examines the role of the Catholic Church in Spain and the importance of anticlericalism, concluding with a detailed examination of one of Montseny's novellas that centered on a conflicted young priest. The fourth chapter focuses on education, a subject close to the Montseny family and one which was of supreme concern to almost every anarchist periodical, writer, and activist. Montseny and her parents firmly believed that writing and publishing were acts of supreme importance.

The fifth and sixth chapters examine how Montseny used youth and the crisis of the family to examine the problems facing the Barcelona working class. I examine how Montseny used her novels to try to destabilize the existing social order as part of her campaign against patriarchy as a tool of control and oppression. I focus on her novella *Hijos de la calle*, a harshly

worded letter to her from her father, and a key contemporary text on juvenile delinquency.

The seventh chapter focuses on feminism in Spain in the period and Montseny's criticisms of two Spanish feminist organizations. This leads to an examination in the penultimate two chapters of Montseny's first two novels, the 1925 *La victoria* and its 1927 sequel, *El hijo de Clara*.<sup>100</sup> These were Montseny's most popular full novels and garnered the most attention in the press. The eighth chapter gives detailed textual analysis of these works, attempting to prise out Montseny's aims. In the ninth chapter I discuss the numerous responses — negative and positive — by anarchists to these novels, in both Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

The concise tenth chapter summarizes my conclusions on her work in the 1920s and her engagement with contemporary debates. Finally, a brief epilogue offers an explanation of the factors behind Montseny's reduced fictional output and yet a greater public presence by an examination of her life in the Second Republic, her ministry during the Civil War, and her exile.

I refer to a number of her novellas but chose to focus on two novellas and her first two novels for several reasons. While anticlericalism was a consistent refrain in her fiction, the novella *Resurrección* offered Montseny's romantic vision of nature, the most direct critique of the rural Catalan

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100. Federica Montseny, *La victoria: Novela en la que se narran los problemas de orden moral que se le presentan a una mujer de ideas modernas*, Biblioteca de La Revista Blanca, (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1925) and Federica Montseny, *El hijo de Clara (segunda parte de "La Victoria")*, Biblioteca de La Revista Blanca. (Barcelona: Impresos Costa, 1927). Except when otherwise noted, all references are to the first editions.



patriarchal social structure system, and abounded with another favorite of anarchist writers, references to classical mythology. *Los hijos de la calle* also reflected her romantic naturalism but in an urban setting. The novella's focus on two orphaned street vendors concentrated on the problems of youth, but also included street vending, housing, *donjuanismo* and sexual harassment, and the repression of the syndicalist labor movement. Montseny uses the greater length of the novel format to fully present her arguments. *La victoria* expands on the independent woman and develops the questions of maternalism and the role of women in her society. She critiques *donjuanismo* and state paternalism more pointedly than in the substantially shorter format of the novellas. She also takes anarchist men to task for their failure to accept women as true equals. *El hijo de Clara* serves not only as a sequel, but also proves the dominance of gender ideology over anarchist ideology in her thought. While she tried to combine the two, ultimately contemporary maternalism triumphed over individual choice and freedom.

## CHAPTER 2: MELODRAMA AND HISTORY

The novel, friend of women and youth, gentle fiction that hosted the best and sweetest of our smiles and our tears! Who, in the youthful and delirious dawn of adolescence, has not felt their soul awakened to love through adoring the heroes and heroines of the novels? I learned to love, across many generations, with Paul and Virginia, Romeo and Juliet.<sup>1</sup>

### MASS CULTURE

For Montseny, writing fiction was a way to get her message out to a large number of people, and melodrama was the perfect genre for her specific concerns on gender and patriarchy. Canonical distinctions in culture fail to recognize the existence of popular literature; instead, what constitutes the canon is a judgment based on the fiction's mode of consumption rather than its quality.<sup>2</sup> Romance novels and melodramas permit readers of both sexes to respond to these genres via emotion rather than reason. Literary scholar Jo Labanyi argues that "mass culture thus invites consumers of whatever sex to respond in a 'feminine' fashion, encouraging the emotional and indeed bodily identification that is necessary for a cultural product to affect the identity formation of its consumer."<sup>3</sup> *Los hijos de la calle* allows readers of both sexes to transcend boundaries and respond from a feminine perspective. That is, the reader identifies with the protagonists emotionally and shares their traumas. Thus, melodrama allows men to experience the supposedly irrational

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1. Federica Montseny, "Ha muerto un novelista," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 114 (15 February 1928), 556.

2. Jo Labanyi, "Introduction: Engaging with Ghosts; or, Theorizing Culture in Modern Spain," in *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain: Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*, ed. Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

3. Jo Labanyi, "Editor's Introduction," in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 90.

feminized world of emotions and its intrusion into the supposedly rational male sphere of the public and politics. This shift offers men as well as women a chance to overcome accepted gender and other social values. It becomes a threat to the established order and the exclusivity of men's power.<sup>4</sup> It was precisely this potential that made romance novels an exceptionally useful format for Montseny's novellas.<sup>5</sup> Montseny implicitly knew this and used it to advance her project. Literary scholar Roberta Johnson argues that literary modernism of the twenties "emphasized form and philosophy over shifting social phenomena ... Canonical modernism, cosmopolitan and abstract, subjectivized knowledge and eschewed the realism and domesticity associated with women."<sup>6</sup> Montseny consciously ran counter to this modernist grain of the canonical fiction by male authors by making her female protagonists' consciousness central to her work.<sup>7</sup>

Montseny drew upon the emotional ties she created between her reader and her characters. She cements the relationship as we, the readers, follow the protagonist in her effort to create an independent identity, a subjectivity that stands alone. Montseny realistically portrayed the subordinate position of women in contemporary Spain. At the same time, she created independent

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4. "The presence of a female audience, in other words, not only represented a threat to traditional divisions between public and private, cultural and domestic spheres; it represented a threat to the maintenance of social legitimacy, to the distinctions preserving traditionally defined male and female gender roles and responsibilities." Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 8.

5. This is in contrast to what Louis argues about the prevailing treatment of women in melodrama. Anja Louis, "Melodramatic Feminism: The Popular Fiction of Carmen de Burgos," in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 96.

6. Roberta Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2003), 1.

7. *Ibid.*, 3.

women who offer a model for readers of the ideal woman. In Montseny's use of the fictional genre of romance, the defining principle is that the characters live by choices made by their own free will.<sup>8</sup> Her principal characters turn our expectations and hopes as readers into a quasi-political experience. The reader vicariously participates as the protagonist battles against opposing forces to become an independent and fully realized individual subject.<sup>9</sup> Montseny broke with the gendered discourse of patriarchy dominant in fiction of the time by advocating the agency of the young, independent, and frequently single, women. For many male authors, the repression of the feminine as a threat to the stability of the social order was crucial.<sup>10</sup> Montseny exalted the feminine threat in her writing — precisely to subvert the social order while elevating women.<sup>11</sup>

With the expansion of literacy, there was an increase in autobiographies by male members of the working class and a slow yet steady development of a mass market for such publications.<sup>12</sup> This left a gap that Montseny filled by

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8. Catherine Jaffe, "Mothers and Orphans in *La desheredada*," *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura* 5, no. 2 (1990), 28.

9. As discussed earlier, "natural" was an amorphous term that anarchists like Montseny used to valorize their opposition to contemporary society, most notably the Church and its morality as well as the capitalist and Social Darwinist aspects of daily life. Thus her unnatural forces would be the state, the bourgeoisie, and the Church in addition to those elements of society that the previous groups corrupted.

10. Jaffe, "Mothers and Orphans in *La desheredada*," 28.

11. Montseny greatly enjoyed reading the works of Pérez Galdós, Spain's pre-eminent nineteenth century novelist, especially his characters, which reminded her of Balzac and Zola. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 25.

12. The growth in autobiography was due to two things. First, the poor educational system and problems of illiteracy gave those members of the working class who could write the desire to do so as well as a potential market as the authors offered working-class exemplars and the practice of reading aloud in groups at *ateneos* and bars. Second, the gap between what the working-class actually had as lived experience of daily life and what was in domestic novels;

writing biographical sketches of real and fictional women.<sup>13</sup> Her propaganda by the deed was writing, her weapon a pen, and this activism earned her a death sentence in post–Civil War Spain.

## MELODRAMA

Peter Brooks' 1976 study, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, links melodrama to realism in its focus on the actual, the mundane, and the personal and argues that certain canonical realist authors use melodramatic forms. Patrice Petro argues that the limitations of realism created the need for melodrama. Melodrama heightens and exaggerates the mundane and private in order to sharpen the contrast between right and wrong. In contrast to realism's frequent indirectness, melodrama is brutally direct and it also gives disempowered characters subjectivity.<sup>14</sup> Truly a popular form of mass entertainment, melodrama offers several important characteristics that make it an invaluable tool for political propaganda.<sup>15</sup> It is extreme, offering up Manichean examples of good and evil; moreover, it uses a blunt and sharp morality to make direct demands, on not only the characters, also of its

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just as was the case in Britain. See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working–Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*. For Britain, see Raymond Williams, "The Ragged–Arsed Philanthropists," in *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983), 240–241.

13. "By and large, however, the editors of *Kommunistiska*, led by Krupskaja, expressed their advocacy of the new woman not in theoretical essays but in biographical sketches of real and fictional women, thereby creating the Soviet heroine." Barbara Clements, "The Birth of the Soviet Woman," in *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, eds. Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1985), 226–227.

14. Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 29–30.

15. Consequently, melodrama was subsidized in the Soviet Union in the 1920s as the best way to represent revolutionary ideology. Louis, "Melodramatic Feminism," in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 95.

audience. Melodrama shows and says all, directly, with no ambiguity.<sup>16</sup> It is didactic, showing lessons from life and drawing direct conclusions with little subtlety and absolutely no ambiguity. There is the distinct possibility of attaching to characters political signs and symbols and hence a political message.<sup>17</sup> Brooks states “melodrama from its inception takes as its concern and *raison d’être* the location, expression, and imposition of basic psychic and ethical truths. It says them over and over in clear language, it rehearses their conflicts and combats, it reenacts the menace of evil and the eventual triumph of morality made operative and evident.”<sup>18</sup>

In the period of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923–1930) and censorship, Montseny’s novellas gave her the chance to provide quasi–heroic tales of individual triumph and perseverance against the currents of contemporary society. Though not able to directly reference anarchism or its manifestations, she was able to do so indirectly in her fiction. Her anticlericalism, the stress on the power of an individual’s will, and the portrayal of independent women all come through despite censorship. This is because where the melodramatic convention of virtue–rewarded and vice–punished is followed, it allows the space for frank and direct social commentary, and consequently the possibility of a trenchant political critique of existing society. The melodramatic form frees the reader from repression by

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16. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 4.

17. Of course, there is also the political message inherent in the lack of such signs and symbols, whether they are covert or overt.

18. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 15.

drawing upon emotions and making unambiguous moral arguments.<sup>19</sup> This Montseny did, but the virtue rewarded and vice punished were not those of the wider society, much less those of the Church.

Melodrama has historically been closely associated with periods of immense social change. Roberta Johnson argues that while the canon of modernist authors traditionally excludes women, they often engaged with the same questions and issues as the male authors, though often with different stylistic techniques. Rather, they used popular venues to articulate questions that engaged their more numerous readerships, a style that she labels as social modernism.<sup>20</sup> This enduring popularity in conjunction with its appeal to emotions has ensured that it remains outside of any constructions of the canon. Stephanie Sieburth, another literary scholar, argues that there was a continuity of this popular literature. Originally published in the nineteenth century magazines intended for women, she sees it continuing well into the twentieth century. Initially it reinforced the ideology of domesticity, the woman symbolically as the *ángel del hogar* (angel of the hearth or home) and therefore intended to conserve rather than question private/public, domestic/political arrangements.<sup>21</sup> But she later points out that mass culture

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19. *Ibid.* As Louis points out, Brooks does not consider gender in his study of melodrama. Louis, "Melodramatic Feminism," in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*.

20. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, vii–viii.

21. Stephanie Anne Sieburth, *Inventing High and Low: Literature, Mass Culture, and Uneven Modernity in Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 117 and Akiko Tsuchiya, "Discourses on Gender and the Question of 'Woman's' Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Spain," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000), 90. To make the *ángel del hogar* distinct as an ideology I am going to use the Spanish, rather than an English translation.

can also stimulate awareness, and the “recovery of true identity.”<sup>22</sup> This is how Montseny used mass culture, to awaken each individual’s subjectivity.

I go beyond Brooks in arguing that melodrama allows both author and reader a dramatic and cathartic breakthrough of the gendered boundaries between the private and public spheres, linking the supposedly unrelated, protected, and private worlds of the domestic to the open and insecure public space of political action. Montseny used melodramatic literature to provide her readers with counter-examples of the family and create alternatives in the public sphere. She thrust the private and feminized sphere, where emotions are supposed to be contained, into the supposedly public and rational masculine sphere. The emotions involved in melodrama’s Manichean portrayal of good and evil are inherently political and allow for active participation.<sup>23</sup> This participation requires challenging the very constructions of gender that help create melodrama’s powerful impact, which is exactly what Montseny did, both in her life and in writing. She provided a stark contrast to previous Spanish melodrama where virtuous members of the working and middle classes triumph over the aristocracy and the woman remains at home as the *ángel del hogar*.<sup>24</sup> Not only do her working class characters triumph,

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22. *Ibid.*, 217.

23. “Melodrama regularly rehearses the effects of a menacing ‘primal scene,’ and the liberation from it, achieved through articulation and a final acting out of conflicts. Desire achieves full satisfaction in enunciation of the integral psychic condition. Morality is ultimately in the nature of effect, and strong emotion is in the realm of morality: for good and evil are moral feelings.” Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 54.

24. Louis, “Melodramatic Feminism,” in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 95–96. Here I am relying on secondary sources, particularly literary criticism and studies of the canonical authors.



the female characters frequently triumph independently of or with minimal male assistance, and outside the home.<sup>25</sup> Montseny gave women subjectivity; she created female characters that were able to be independent of men. As Nancy Armstrong argued, “written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological reality.”<sup>26</sup>

Melodrama is a broader genre than Romance. The romance between two figures drives the plot in Romance fiction and has “an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending.”<sup>27</sup> The Real Academia Española defines it as having “conventional settings and characters in which is related the vicissitudes of two lovers, whose love triumphs over adversity.”<sup>28</sup> While Montseny’s fiction does not always fit into these two categories, I still believe it qualifies as romance fiction, because often the romance is the individual learning to love herself for whom she is, not what society wants her to be.

### **ROMANCE FICTION**

In her groundbreaking 1984 study of the Harlequin series of Romance novels, *Reading the Romance*, Janice Radway asked a crucial question: why do women read romances, do they identify with the characters?<sup>29</sup> Alternatively, as another author has suggested, do they find in these novels

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25. *Ibid.*, 95.

26. Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 8.

27. This is from the Romance Writers of America, “About the Romance Genre,” accessed December 23, 2011, [http://www.rwa.org/cs/the\\_romance\\_genre](http://www.rwa.org/cs/the_romance_genre).

28. Real Academia Española *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 22nd ed., accessed December 23, 2011. <http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/>, s.v “Novela ~ rosa”

29. Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

what they do not find in their own lives, tenderness, care, comfort, or true love?<sup>30</sup> Because there are no exact figures for the readership of *La Novela Ideal* and *La Novela Libre*, I cannot answer these questions with any certainty. However, based on the limited amount of surviving correspondence between readers and *La Revista Blanca*, I can hazard some educated guesses.<sup>31</sup> Print runs ran between 10,000 and 50,000, very large for the period.<sup>32</sup> The publications had an international reach, including China and Japan.<sup>33</sup> Reviews appeared in the anarchist press in France and the Americas, and readers in these countries also wrote to the journal commenting on the fiction. I know that the series attracted readers of both sexes who were not necessarily anarchists.<sup>34</sup> A response to a letter from a reader pointed out that the audience for the novellas was quite diverse, and that the series was written for the non-anarchist as well. The Montsenys assumed that the non-anarchist would “little by little comprehend the ideal.” Several of the authors were not anarchists; the Montsenys did not ask the ideology of those who submitted novellas. At least one author was a regular contributor to *El Socialista*;

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30. Denise De Weerd, “Bread and Roses: Pragmatic Women in the Belgium Workers’ Party,” in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars*, eds. Helmut Gruber and Pamela M. Graves (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 253.

31. I base this on my examination of the letters preserved in the AGGCE. It is impossible to know which letters burned, lost, or misfiled, but the readers’ letters that are saved were from both sexes. We do know from Montseny’s memoirs that the victorious Francoists burned almost all of her correspondence, including daily letters between her and her partner Germinal Esgleas before the exile. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 51.

32. Miguel Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español* (Vitoria: Asociación Isaac Puentes, 2008), s.v. “La Novela Ideal.”

33. “Nuestro intercambio,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 78 (15 August 1926), V.

34. Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria*, 43. “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 12, no. 308 (14 December 1934), 1012.

another was the daughter of the editor of *El Diluvio*, a Barcelona newspaper devoted to yellow journalism. The Montsenys paid the authors of *La Novela Ideal* for their contributions, so it is not surprising that it had a diverse group of contributors.

There was a great deal of reader identification with her characters. Montseny's author's note after the title page of her 1926 novel *La victoria* asked women to read it with sympathy and for men to learn as a result of reading her novel.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the readership and identification with the series was not only women. Men wrote to the editors as well, discussing how much they enjoyed the series, inquiring after their subscriptions, and even submitting novels to the series. Yet it is curious to see gender and social boundaries being followed when a women's reading group in Casas Viejas wrote to Urales explicitly as Montseny's father, expressing their admiration for her and requesting a current photograph, yet addressing both the praise and the request to him as the family patriarch rather than directly to her.<sup>36</sup>

Radway argues that women often read romance novels because of availability and length.<sup>37</sup> This echoes what Magnien wrote about the popularity of the serialized fiction series in the 1920s.<sup>38</sup> The serialized novel was a medium widely used by political activists.<sup>39</sup> The *Novela Ideal* series

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35. Montseny, *La victoria*, [4].

36. Anna Cabezas Valle to Federico Urales, 3 June 1931, AGGCE.

37. Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 9.

38. Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 237.

39. See the multiple entries under the initial word novela in Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, for several examples of the use of this format and genre by Spanish

followed a consistent format of size and length, usually thirty to thirty-two pages, never longer. This format lent itself to group reading and listening. The *Novela Libre* series was exactly twice as long, sixty-four pages. Montseny's 1926 novella *Los hijos de la calle* sold out that year and *La Revista Blanca* subsequently reprinted it.<sup>40</sup> It must have been a popular title. Soledad Gustavo (1865–1939), Montseny's mother, took the texts to the commercial printing firm Costa and she handled all of *La Revista Blanca*'s business affairs. According to information Susanna Tavera received from Costa, payment would be made retrospectively for printing costs. The public was able to acquire issues of the two series in various ways. Two of the most common were through subscriptions or via kiosks.<sup>41</sup> Kiosk owners sold directly to the public and maintained lists of local customers. These customers would pay a fraction of the cost of a serial publication, would get to read it, and then return it to the kiosk owner who passed it on to the next reader. The kiosk owner made money while the reader paid significantly less than for a purchase or a

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anarchists. The serials were also popular with bourgeois novelists and readers. In my April 2003 conversation with Tavera, she stressed the importance of this type of publication, mentioning *El Cuento Semanal*, *La Novela de Hoy* (1922–32), *La Novela del Cinematográfico*, and *La Novela Blanca*. In the twenties there were also the series *Los Contemporáneos* (1909–26), *La Novela Corta* (1916–25), and *La Novela Semanal* (1921–25). The ending dates of these series were concurrent with the launch of *La Novela Ideal*. Socialist and anarchist authors contributed to these as well. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 25. See also Louis' study of Carmen de Burgos' 1921 novela *El Artículo 438* that was credited with helping to reform Spanish divorce laws in the Second Republic. Louis, "Melodramatic Feminism" in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, and Louis' monographic study of Burgos, *Women and the Law: Carmen de Burgos, an Early Feminist* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005).

40. "A las coleccionistas de 'La Novela Ideal,'" *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 82 (15 October 1926), IV. The novella was also republished in France shortly after the Second World War.

41. In 1928 *La Revista Blanca* requested that subscribers ask their local kiosk to sell its publications or to take their business elsewhere. "Aclaración necesita," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 119 (1 May 1928), IV.

subscription.<sup>42</sup> Montseny informed Tavera that they also used the CNT railway union to distribute the novellas to railway stations (often in kiosks).<sup>43</sup> The format of the printed novella facilitated its use for group reading and listening. This was crucial because of the high levels of illiteracy and limited leisure time. Thus, these novellas met at least some practical needs of readers, as well as intellectual ones.

### **IDEOLOGY**

Raymond Williams pointed out that the relationship between society and writing is reciprocal.<sup>44</sup> Fiction offers us the possibility to gain a different insight into a society, and popular fiction offers a broad perspective. Williams recognized that there is inherent worth in the literature outside the canon, and this value lies in its ability to aid in understanding the society that produced it in this reciprocal relationship.<sup>45</sup> Readers of these novellas were certainly not passive consumers, purchasing and solely consuming the fiction. The series sought engagement with its readers. These often were active participants, as when they wrote in to suggest stories and to comment on the fiction. On the cover of numerous issues of *La Revista Blanca* was the statement that the purpose of the publication was to challenge readers and established views.

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42. I am indebted to conversations with historians Cristina Borderias and Jesus Cruz about getting reading matter from kiosks during their youth in Francoist Spain.

43. For the information on the role of Soledad Gustavo, Costa, and the railway unions I am grateful to Susanna Tavera for speaking with me about Montseny and the novellas in Barcelona, April 2003.

44. Raymond Williams, "Notes on English Prose," in *Writing in Society*, 72.

45. Raymond Williams, "Writing," in *Writing in Society*, 2.

“Reader, whatever your condition and sex, make sure you read this magazine.”<sup>46</sup>

Montseny sought to provoke, to cause readers to think about the contradictions and problems of their society and even more, to act. Her texts, both fiction and non-fiction, served to propagate and reproduce her ideology of individualist anarchism. Certainly, the novellas did so indirectly and lightly.<sup>47</sup> Montseny sought readers and thinkers. Anarchism placed a premium on individual liberation, and literature offered her the chance to teach people about anarchism, contrasting the old and the new worlds.<sup>48</sup> According to Montseny’s understanding of evolutionary theory, the struggle between old and the new ideas would lead to human progress — which corresponded to greater human freedom and eventually anarchism.

Montseny wrote in her memoirs that the intended audience for the two series of novellas was youth. The advertisements repeatedly stressed youth as the audience, in either text or the accompanying image. She believed that it would be the young, in age or spirit, who had the energy and drive to take the ideals in the novellas and remake society. She acknowledges that few contemporary men would accept her ideas. Presumably, this was another

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46. Covers of *La Revista Blanca*. Due to the unfortunate practice of removing covers when binding, many of the covers are lost. I have found a few in the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular. Heiner Becker has been kind enough to give me scans from his personal collection of unbound issues.

47. Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Press, 1988), 16–17.

48. “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 12, no. 308 (14 December 1934), 1012. Martha A. Ackelsberg, “Anarchist Revolution and Women’s Liberation,” *Society* 25, no. 2 (1988), 29.

reason for the appeal to youth, to begin remaking the future in the present.<sup>49</sup> The point of *La Novela Ideal* and *La Novela Libre*, was, as advertisements for *La Novela Libre* put it, precisely to “break with existing morality, customs and dominant ideas.” The authors in these two series have not only the “mind and ideals” for this task, but also the “heart and sentiments” to do so.<sup>50</sup> Thus the novels were a conscious effort to change hearts as well as minds.

Further enhancing their popularity was that ideology did not weigh down the story. In this Montseny continued another anarchist tradition. Clara E. Lida argues that anarchists were successful in combining old elements and themes with modern expressions of the community and a working class literature. This literature linked daily experience of rural and urban men and women to the stories they were reading. According to Lida, socialists typically adopted a Marxian theoretical language, one that was remote from this lived experience. She argues that because anarchists used vernacular speech, they were more popular.<sup>51</sup> By maintaining the traditional forms and filling these with a new ideological content, anarchists established a closer relationship

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49. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 42.

50. “La Novela Libre,” *El Luchador* 3, no. 116 (23 June 1933), 2. According to this text, the authors in these two series have not only the “mind and ideals” for this task, but also the “heart and sentiments” to do so. Thus the novels were a conscious effort to change hearts as well as minds.

51. Some of Mauro Bajatierra Morán’s (1884–1939) stories for children had me pulling my hair out as he used dialect. See his “Nanin y Lolita (Cuento para niños),” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 97 (1 June 1927), 14–18.

with the working class of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through their rhetorical success.<sup>52</sup>

#### **OUTLINE OF MONTSENY'S LIFE**

The historical circumstances were not propitious for an exceptional young woman, much less one who was an anarchist. Born in 1905, she was the only surviving child of two prominent individualist anarchists, Juan Montseny and Teresa Mañé i Miravet.<sup>53</sup> Her parents, better known by their pseudonyms, Federico Urales and Soledad Gustavo, were internationally famous for their journal *La Revista Blanca: Publicación de sociología, ciencia y arte*, which attracted not only anarchists but also many contemporary Spanish intellectuals in its first iteration from 1898–1905. Urales was first a cooper, then a lay teacher, a journalist, always a novelist and unsuccessful playwright.<sup>54</sup> Gustavo was a lay teacher, journalist, and later worked as a translator for publishers. Gustavo's 1899 essay on free love won Barcelona's second Certámen Socialista (Socialist Literary Competition) and her work on feminism and anarchism was read and translated in Europe and the Americas.<sup>55</sup>

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52. Clara E. Lida, "Discurso e imaginario en la literatura anarquista," *Filología* 29, nos. 1–2 (1996), 135–136.

53. They had several children but only Montseny survived childhood. Thus stories about the loss of children were personal as well as political.

54. Montseny stated in her memoirs that because Urales wrote on the theatre and working class life for *El Liberal*, a bourgeois newspaper, the CNT opposed him reporting on their meetings. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 24. Urales was an unsuccessful playwright because the "legitimate" stage produced none his plays. Rodrigo mentions that Barcelona's Teatro Apolo at Avenguda del Paral·lel, 59 performed some. Rodrigo, *Federica Montseny*, 51.

55. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 40. For the significance of the two Certámen Socialistas, see Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 115–



Montseny grew up in the anarchist movement from her birth due to her parents and accompanying them to meetings and lectures. After the Montjuïc Trials of 1896, Urales and Gustavo went into exile in France and Britain only to sneak back into Spain late in 1897.<sup>56</sup> Urales and Gustavo lived in Madrid when Federica was born. Urales worked as a publicist for the property developer Arturo Soria y Mata (1844–1920).<sup>57</sup> Urales accused Soria of fraud by collecting money as payments for homes in his Ciudad Lineal and never building them. Soria successfully sued Urales who was banished from Madrid in 1912. Yet, they remained in Madrid for a period before leaving. At the outbreak of the First World War, Urales joined a few other prominent anarchists in supporting the Allied Powers against “German absolutism.” This

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116. Tavera provides the fullest treatment of Gustavo’s importance and intellectual trajectory. Gustavo figures less prominently in this dissertation for two reasons. First, her writing is reduced due her central role in managing the publications and dealing with the printers. Second, Montseny’s essential personal conflict in my period is with her father, not her mother. In 1937 Urales even accused Federica of turning Gustavo against him. Federico Urales to “Compañera Federica Montseny,” April 1, 1937. AGGCE. See my chapter six for Montseny’s conflict with Urales.

56. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 202. The Montjuïc Trials were a result of the June 1896 bombing of the Corpus Christi procession in Barcelona. The authorities suspended constitutional guarantees from the day after the bombing until the end of 1897. They arrested 305 anarchists and their sympathizers, held a series of trials (using a law passed only in September) in Barcelona’s Montjuïc military fortress. The court condemned eight to death (five were executed), four to prison for 20 years, fourteen to 19 years, thirteen to 9 years, and thirty-six to 8 years. The courts sentenced others to exile in Spain or abroad, including Urales who went to London. There was widespread revulsion in Europe and the Americas due to the pervasive use of torture and the method of execution (garroting). Referred to as a new inquisition, liberals across Europe formed committees of protest and a crowd of several hundred stormed the Spanish embassy in Paris. See Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v “Montjuich, 1896, Procesos de;” Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, especially 31–35; and Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, especially pages 191–201.

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led to a break with other anarchists, notably his fellow Montjuïc defendant, Anselmo Lorenzo Asperilla (1840–1914).<sup>58</sup>

The family returned to Catalonia, first to Barcelona, and then to the “belt” of towns around the city before they moved to Barcelona’s calle Guinardó in 1924.<sup>59</sup> Montseny began to write fiction and, in 1923 she convinced her parents to resume publishing *La Revista Blanca*. The first issue of the second series (*época*) came out in June 1923 and it ceased in August 1936. In 1925, they added *La Novela Ideal*, a series of novellas that simultaneously served as a critique of contemporary Spanish society and offered role models for a better future. The series ended in 1937 due to the war after a successful run of 591 numbers published.<sup>60</sup> Between the resumption of publication and the proclamation of the Second Republic in April 1931, Montseny became one of the most important and popular contributors to the

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58. Lorenzo is one of the great figures of the early years of Spanish anarchism, from his participation in the meeting with Bakunin’s emissary Fanelli in 1868 through the founding of the CNT in 1910. He was also involved with the First International, attending the 1871 congress in London, exiled in the Montjuïc Trials, and worked with Ferrer at the Modern School.

59. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 63. Now it is 46 Carrer d’Escornalbou. The Carrer de la Renaixença, or Street of the Renaissance, marks her block.

60. Note that this is a fiction series that, though anarchists published it, also included non-anarchists amongst its contributors. See my list in order of publication at <http://www.iisg.nl/collections/novela>. Magnien counts 167 authors and states that known writers numbered just eight. Magnien, “Crisis de la novela,” in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 364. For an examination of the important differences between those who used anarchist themes or topics and anarchists who wrote novels see Clara E. Lida, “Literatura anarquista y anarquista literario,” *Nuevo Revista de Filología Hispánica* 19, no. 2 (1970), 361–381. For comments on this from a contemporary of Montseny’s, see José Peirats i Valls, *Para una monografía de escritores anarquistas españoles* (Caracas [Venezuela]: Ruta, 1972).

family's publishing ventures.<sup>61</sup> By the beginning of the Civil War she had contributed fifty works to *La Novela Ideal* and to its sibling series, *La Novela Libre*, and she had written three full length novels (also published by *La Revista Blanca*), and more than seven hundred articles for *La Revista Blanca* and *El Luchador* (1931–1933).<sup>62</sup>

Montseny's concerns were very much in tune with debates in Europe and the United States about society and the role of the individual in it. The First World War acted as a catalyst, accelerating changes that had been occurring even in non-belligerent Spain, especially from 1917 until 1923 when a pronunciamiento ended the parliamentary system. The impact of the war included the increasing instability of both the political system and of gender roles.

This type of publication, the serial fiction series, existed before *La Novela Ideal*; however, the period of the twenties was a boom time for such series. Brigitte Magnien's essay "Crisis de la novela" details the state of Spanish fiction in the "Roaring Twenties."<sup>63</sup> She attributes the boom to the

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61. Undoubtedly the other two were Urales and Nettelau. Urales was a prolific writer of novels, novellas, pamphlets, and articles. Nettelau was an internationally recognized historian of anarchism, who contributed to journals around the world and became a close friend of the Montseny family.

62. The censorship of *La Revista Blanca* during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was a regular occurrence but not as severe as the censorship and suppression of the weekly *El Luchador* (1931–1933) would be under the Second Republic (1931–1939). The weekly *El Luchador* was outspoken, moreover, due to a weekly publishing schedule it contained news that was more current and frequently incurred the repression of the censor. María Dolores Saiz, "Prensa anarquista en el primer bienio republicano: *El Luchador* (1931–1933)," in *La segunda república española: El primer bienio*, ed. José Luis García Delgado (México: Siglo XXI, 1987), 315–334.

63. Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 233–301.

growth of its market due to the expansion of literacy and the growing development of middle classes, especially in the cities. The weekly or bi-weekly fiction series both contributed to and benefited from this process by providing light reading material. It benefited because while a full-length novel represented a serious investment in time and money, the weekly series did not.<sup>64</sup> What stands out in the period is the recognition and development of a specifically working-class reading market.

The titles of these collections proclaim their orientation: *La Novela roja* is the first of this type and published 49 issues, from the summer of 1922 until October of 1923. Then there was *La Novela social* (1923, Barcelona...), *La Novela ideal* (1925–1938, Barcelona...), *La Novela nueva*, *La Novela del pueblo* (1927, Barcelona...), *La Novela política* (1930, Madrid...), again *La Novela roja* (June 1931, Madrid), *La Novela proletaria* (1932), etc. Aside from the last three mentioned, more in tune with the new times of the Republic, all these collections were inspired by libertarian ideology and the authors were, in their majority, anarchist militants. ... [t]he most important and most wide spread of all was *La Novela ideal*.<sup>65</sup>

Montseny's style was well suited to the style and format of the novella series. The Montsenys generally printed *La Novela Ideal* in runs ranging from 10,000 to 50,000. They distributed it through the mail to subscribers, kiosks, libraries and cultural centers, and the railway unions placed it in rail stations. The novels are easily understood, well paced, direct, and popular while fulfilling a didactic purpose. The plots had situations familiar to her readers, thus creating an imagined community, rather than actual events.<sup>66</sup> Montseny's fiction analyzed the oppression and subordination of the individual, especially

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64. *Ibid.*, 237.

65. *Ibid.*, 261.

66. The one notable exception is Montseny's *El rescate de la cautiva*, *La Novela Ideal* 62 (Barcelona: *La Revista Blanca*, [1927]). This novella fictionalized the true story of the Church seizing a young woman from her adoptive parents, a shared fear.

the female individual.<sup>67</sup> Unsurprisingly, as an anarchist she viewed the state and its ally the Church as the founts of that oppression. Because individuals experience oppression as a series of differentiated occurrences, they need to develop a sense of gender and class to understand oppression. Montseny sought to awaken a consciousness of political and social repression. As Magnien notes, the novellas featured stories without date or definite locations and without specific relation to the political struggle of the moment. More than solely attempts to evade the censor, they reflected a desire to provide a moral rather than a civic education, a cultural grounding rather than a revolutionary one because the liberation of the individual was the precondition for the liberation of the people.<sup>68</sup>

Montseny's fiction provided examples of the manner in which anyone, including people who were not direct agents of the state, could carry out this oppression.<sup>69</sup> These "oppressors" were themselves oppressed by the dominant morality of the state and Church, which in turn gave them the mentality to become oppressors. The state was very much a part of the scenery in the novels, present yet not active in people's lives. Montseny made frequent references in her writing, especially her journalism, to the moral ambience in which people operated and their mentality — how they carried out life on a

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67. I have read Montseny's work published in the *La Novela Libre* series as well but as those were published during the Second Republic, they are out of the scope of the dissertation.

68. Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 262–263.

69. It is only rarely that the state's actions are at the center of the plot. Usually the state influences actions indirectly, like the sea in *Moby Dick* or space in science fiction.

daily basis and related to one another. Montseny expressed the need to break with this dominant morality, especially in relationships amongst men and women.

Montseny's salient critiques of gender roles did not arise in a social vacuum or out of an unchanging and undifferentiated anarchism. Montseny's attacks on contemporary mores were particularly sharp in discussing the issues facing women, yet her overall concern was with an ungendered humanity, as she repeatedly and emphatically stated. Montseny wrote that men and women had the potential to be absolute equals, that neither cruelty nor tenderness was the heritage of one sex. She rejected feminism as a movement of bourgeois women solely interested in power, which would lead to oppression. Instead, she demanded humanism, which for her meant both sexes of humanity working together to solve their problems.<sup>70</sup> Both sexes would solve the "Woman Question" — not women alone. Solving the question necessitated a substantial change in men as well. Montseny was very much a product of her time and gestured toward the future. She participated in contemporary debates on gender roles in her journalism and fiction as she aimed to educate her readers about anarchism and anarchists. Montseny wanted to create a new female identity that presumed an egalitarian relationship between men and women. She wanted to participate in creating a humanity in harmony with nature (see above). This model of womanhood

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70. Federica Montseny, "La falta de idealidad en el feminismo," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 4. See my chapter 7. In this essay, she also used illness as a metaphor, labeling any measures to ameliorate repression as injections that merely prolong the illness.

came to life in her fiction. She propagated this image throughout her journalism and eventually in her propaganda tours during the Second Republic.

Only twenty years old in 1925 when she published *La victoria*, her first novel, she wanted both to come to a personal understanding of the changes needed in contemporary society and to help accelerate what she perceived as an evolution towards a better future. Her principal focus was change through individual empowerment of both sexes (see *capacitación* in chapter one). She and her family seized upon fiction as an exceptionally useful medium of educational propaganda, especially to the young.

The plots of her novels drew on conflicts arising in contemporary society. I will examine the issues closest to Montseny, using her fiction, journalism, and memoirs. To appreciate her novels it is necessary to give proper weight to the intellectual currents in Spain and, following the advice of Roger Chartier, “not to isolate ideas from the milieu that shaped it (the conditions of production) or from life and render them as abstractions.”<sup>71</sup> I follow Quentin Skinner’s injunction that “[t]he historian must see in the text before him the embodiment of a particular intention, on a particular occasion, addressed to the solution of a particular problem.”<sup>72</sup> The sources I have from

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71. Roger Chartier, “Intellectual History or Sociocultural History? The French Trajectories,” in *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, eds. Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 17.

72. Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969), 3–53.

Montseny, especially her responses to critics, enable me to see what problems she was consciously addressing in her work.<sup>73</sup>

## **CAPSULE HISTORY OF SPAIN, 1874–1930**

### **THE 1874 RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY**

A pronunciamiento in December 1874 restored the Bourbon monarchy. The Restoration is the period from 1874 until the proclamation of the Second Republic in April 1931. The 1876 constitution established a parliamentary system of government. The Conservative and Liberal parties shared power in a system of alternating governments known as the *turno pacífico* (peaceful rotation). When the mood of the country was restless and unhappy with the government, the opposition forced an election with a parliamentary vote of no confidence. The king dismissed the ruling party replacing them with the opposition. This opposition then called for elections that would be under the administration of their own Interior Minister, thus ensuring that the result favored them. Then the elections were “made” by local party bosses known as *caciques*.<sup>74</sup> Thus, an oligarchic society maintained its control of the system, even after the 1890 restoration of universal male suffrage, through pervasive electoral fraud and demobilization of the population.<sup>75</sup>

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73. Since I have little in the way of readers’ responses except those critics, I must use Montseny’s stated intentions.

74. The word is from the Taino, the original inhabitants of the Antilles. By the first third of the twentieth century it carried pejorative connotations.

75. Carolyn P. Boyd, “The Second Battle of Covadonga: The Politics of Commemoration in Modern Spain,” *History and Memory* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002), 43; Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 1–17; Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 366–379.



Dissidents from the régime viewed it as “insincere” and elections as unreflective of the true will of the people (*el pueblo*). Increasingly over the course of the Restoration, election returns in the cities for municipal councilors and parliamentary deputies reflected popular opinion more accurately.<sup>76</sup> The central state appointed mayors and police chiefs of cities, as well as provincial governors.<sup>77</sup> For the police, the distinction between civil and military was a mute point. The central government could appoint generals as police chiefs in major cities, and in some instances, as civil governors (there was a parallel military governor). In this situation, an anti-electoral stance and the immense hostility of not only anarchists, but of much of the working-class, towards the Restoration, is completely comprehensible.

In 1898, the United States thoroughly defeated Spain in a war. The war and resulting loss of all of Spain’s colonies, except those in Africa, led to demands for changes in Spain. Whether from the left or the right, these calls for change were known as regeneration. These differed on whether Spain should look outward towards Europe and potential secularization or withdraw inwards with a more austere Catholicism. Regardless, those demanding changes in either direction were known as regenerators. “At the turn of the century regeneration was a theme essayed by all, from the cardinal archbishop of Valladolid to Blasco Ibañez, the Republican novelist, from professors to

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76. The municipal elections of April 1931 had overwhelmingly Republican returns in the major cities. This led to proclamation of the Second Republic.

77. Hence the immense power of the Ministry of Interior, in this period known as *Ministerio de Gobernación*.

poets, from heirs of the sober tradition of Jovellanos to political quacks, from Catalan nationalists to Castilian patriots. ... All were regenerationists of a kind.”<sup>78</sup>

### **SPAIN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

Historians agree that there was significant change in Spain in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The period saw the rapid increase of secularization, the development of mass politics, and the collapse of the monarchy. Spain was neutral in World War I during which the right wanted to support the Central Powers and the left the Allies. King Alfonso XIII (1886–1941), who was married to the niece of Britain’s King Edward VII, famously observed, “Only myself and the *canaille* are on the side of the Allies.”<sup>79</sup> Despite being a non-belligerent, in Spain the First World War served as a catalyst for major changes. The collapse of the monarchies of four belligerents, the apparent triumph of the liberal democratic powers, and the Russian Revolutions fueled demands for change in Spain. Additionally, the changes in gender relations during the First World War, well documented for the belligerent countries, had an impact on Spain.<sup>80</sup> Spain’s neutrality meant that it acted as a supplier of goods to both sides as its shipping and manufacturing

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78. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 473. See below for the importance of science for the regenerationists.

79. Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 58.

80. For examples see the collection of essays in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, & Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Mary Nash, “En torno a las consecuencias sociales de la primera guerra mundial,” *Sociología del trabajo*, no. 13 (1991), 115–134.

boomed during the war, especially in textiles. Mary Nash argues that this produced an intensification of home work and there was a worsening of women's working conditions.<sup>81</sup>

Spain became a place of intrigue for spies from all sides, especially Barcelona. In that port city, German agents tried to disrupt production destined for the Allies. The growth of employment in industry drew rural workers to the cities. Concurrently, there was also an expansion of agricultural production and labor gained from the demand in both sectors. However, the portion of the active population employed in agriculture dropped from 66 percent in 1910 to 57% in 1920.<sup>82</sup> The CNT went from 15,000 members in 1915 to 600,000 four years later.<sup>83</sup> The CNT expanded after being re-legalized in 1914, the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (General Union of Workers, UGT, the trade union confederation affiliated with the socialists, 1888-) actually shrunk.<sup>84</sup> The UGT was at its highest pre-war level of 147,000 in 1913, collapsed to 76,000 in 1916, and would not regain the 1913 numbers until 1919.<sup>85</sup> By 1920, they had surpassed these, tripling the number of sections as the membership went to 211,342.<sup>86</sup>

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81. Nash, "En torno a las consecuencias sociales de la primera guerra mundial," 133-134.

82. Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above: The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain, 1923-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3.

83. Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, 446.

84. Benjamin R. Martin, *The Agony of Modernization: Labor and Industrialization in Spain* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 1990), 182.

85. Martin, *The Agony of Modernization*, 182.

86. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 3.

The war led to massive inflation and a scarcity of goods. The cost of living more than doubled during the war, with the majority of this occurring between April 1917 and November 1918.<sup>87</sup> Food prices grew during the war: wheat 72%, rice 98%, chickpeas 70%, and potatoes 90%.<sup>88</sup> Wages increased at a smaller rate than prices.<sup>89</sup> The national average showed an increase of 25.6% for wages and 61.8% overall for prices.

In the province of Córdoba, a village reported that field hands wages increased by one peseta, from 2.25 in 1913 to 3.25 in 1919. In the same period, the cost of living increased from 2.57 to 4.55 pesetas. Even before the increase in wages, the worker was behind and by the end of the war after the increase the worker was even further in arrears.<sup>90</sup> As wages grew, the cost of food and shelter ensured that life was a constant struggle.<sup>91</sup> According to Meaker, Spaniards spent more than three quarters of their income on food, and lived closer to subsistence than most Europeans.<sup>92</sup> Barcelona had a high cost of living. A working-class family with two children needed 58,45 per week

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87. Using 1914 as a base of 100, the index of prices went to 220 in September 1920. Edward E. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 145, especially n. 34.

88. Gerald H. Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914–1923* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 37.

89. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 4

90. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, 145.

91. This brings to mind E.P. Thompson's critique of quantitative history. "I do not object to counting (a useful and often essential method): I object to the notion that phenomena that can be counted are always more real and usually more relevant than phenomena that cannot. ... Thus what is wrong is not counting, but counting the wrong things from too great a distance with indices that are too blunt." E. P. Thompson, "Rural Riots," *New Society* (February 13, 1969), 251.

92. Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914–1923*, 38.

versus 50 in Madrid, while a day laborer had to earn daily “the impossible wage of 9.75 in Barcelona.”<sup>93</sup>

This led to an increase in protests and strikes. Initially protests against food prices were demonstrations against high prices and “proletarian shopping” in bakeries: consumers seizing goods and paying the price the consumer thought was proper.<sup>94</sup> Meaker observes that disturbances over prices began in 1915 and that by the end of the war demands by demonstrators had forced local authorities in most major cities to distribute food.<sup>95</sup> Benjamin Martin, a former industrial worker who eventually became a labor specialist with the Department of State, has the some of the best information on the strikes as a whole. In 1915 there were 91 strikes involving 30,591 workers with 383, 885 days lost. In 1916, the numbers were 178 strikes, 96,882 workers, and the loss of 2,415,305 workdays.<sup>96</sup>

The UGT threatened to strike in the summer of 1916, demanding higher wages due to increased cost of living. What made this strike threat unusual was the threat to follow it up with a revolutionary strike, a marked departure

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93. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 35.

94. Martin, *The Agony of Modernization*, 82. Martin refers to these as impromptu and spontaneous protests and assaults on bakeries by “irate housewives.” Proletarian shopping is my addition, as I suspect these were more coordinated. See also Temma Kaplan, “Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910–1918,” *Signs* 7, no. 3 (1982), 545–566.

95. Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914–1923*, 37. Meaker phrases this differently: “Before the end of the war authorities in nearly all the larger cities were compelled, from time to time, to distribute bread and even money to starving, angry mobs.”

96. Martin, *The Agony of Modernization*, 182. Compare Martin with Malefakis, whose information is different. Malefakis has an annual average of 231 strikes from 1914 to 1917, but also includes the number of agricultural strikes in the total: 32 on average or 14% of the total. He does not give number of workers nor days lost for this period, but does for the succeeding years. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, 147.

from the UGT historical focus on economic rather than political demands. This made possible an understanding between the UGT and the CNT.<sup>97</sup> On July 17, 1916, the Pact of Zaragoza committed the two organizations to pressure the government to take action against prices and threatening a general strike.<sup>98</sup>

The Madrid government was under pressure from the labor movement, now united over the cost of living. Even the bourgeoisie protested food prices.<sup>99</sup> Army's officers and Catalan industrialists pressured the régime as well. A movement of officers protesting a series of issues in the Army formed committees known as *Juntas de defensa* demanding changes.<sup>100</sup> Catalan industrialists were interested in acquiring power to wield through their political vehicle, the *Lliga Regionalista* (Regionalist League, 1901–1936).<sup>101</sup>

The government relied on the Army to suppress labor unrest, as did the

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97. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 502 n. 2. Carr's phrasing is illustrative of the persistence of the gap between the two trade unions: "This new tone made a rapprochement with the Anarchists possible, though the Socialist leaders felt both uneasy and contemptuous of the revolutionary infantilism of the C.N.T." The revolutionary infantilism in this passage was known by the anarchists as "revolutionary gymnastics. See the discussion in Romero Maura, "The Spanish Case," in Apter and James Joll, *Anarchism Today*, 72.

98. Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914–1923*, 41. For the power of the myth of the general strike, see the classic fictional account published by the French syndicalists Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget, *Comment nous ferons la Révolution* [*How We Shall Bring About the Revolution*] (Paris: J. Taillandier, 1909) translated and published in Spain in the first decade of the century as *Cómo haremos la Revolución: Seguido de un apéndice sobre "La Confederación general del Trabajo de Francia por E. Pouget* (Barcelona: La Escuela Moderna, n.d.).

99. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, 146.

100. These were complaints by colonels and below over wages and "political" promotion. Modeled on professional societies, the juntas were not trade unions, and definitely not like Russia's Soldiers and Sailors Soviets. When the non-commissioned officer and enlisted men tried to organize their own juntas, they were smashed. See the detailed study by Carolyn P. Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

101. Carr states that since 1914 the Lliga was the political power in Catalonia. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 502.

Catalan industrialists. A loose alliance of the Army, Catalans, Labor, and Republicans, known as the Assembly movement, formed to extract reforms from the government, augmented by the threat of a strike if the government did not accede.

This alliance of reformers did not last. The Army was against Catalan regionalism and did not accept the promises of Francesc Cambó i Battle (1876–1947), the leader of the Lliga, that it was not seeking the destruction of Spain. The association of Catalanism with the movement ensured that the two dynastic parties, both centralists, would not participate.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, Cambó's warning that without reforms, the government would face revolution from below, alienated the unions, never sympathetic to the bourgeois Catalanism of the Lliga.

A general strike was proclaimed in August and was defeated as the Army reverted to its role, albeit it a violent one, as guarantor of social order. The loss of the strike had a far-reaching impact. As Carr observes "Failed revolutions can create traditions as easily as successful revolutions."<sup>103</sup> For the UGT it made the tactic of the general strike unusable, while for the CNT it confirmed their suspicions and mistrust of the "bureaucratic" UGT and the unreliability of politicians. More intellectuals started joining the two working-class organizations, especially the Socialists. A significant left-wing

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102. Carr notes that in any case, the Liberals were unacceptable to both the Catalans and the Army. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 508.

103. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 505.

nationalism began in to coalesce within Catalanism. The bankruptcy of the Restoration political system was evident.

Strikes and unrest continued. Edward Malefakis' *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain* provides the following strike figures for succeeding years (with percentage of agricultural strikes in parentheses): 1918 463 (14%), 1919 895 (21%), and 1920 1060 (18%). Using Malefakis' figures, the number of strikers and days lost in 1917 were slightly smaller than in the previous year, 71,400, and 1.8 million, respectively. The numbers swelled in 1920: 244,700 strikers and a staggering 7.3 million days lost.<sup>104</sup>

The agrarian increase in strikes was important because contemporaries related it to the arrival of news of the Russian Revolution reaching Spain and dominating discussions within the left. The years 1918 through 1920 saw a surge of peasant unrest in a period know as the *trienio bolchevique* (Bolshevik Triennium). The success of strikes in the rural areas of Andalusia and the Levante spread to other areas. In 1920, Zaragoza was second only to Seville in the number of agricultural strikes.<sup>105</sup> In May 1918, a new administration sent troops to Andalusia, crushing the strikers and restoring the *status quo ante*.<sup>106</sup> The earlier success had a direct impact on the growth of the CNT as the

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104. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, 147. I derived the percentages from his numbers.

105. *Ibid.*, 148. See the description by Malefakis, certainly not a sympathizer with anarchism, of the orderliness of the strikes on page 150.

106. Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 182.



Federación Nacional de Agricultores de España, the anarchist organization of the peasants, folded into the CNT in December 1918.<sup>107</sup>

Agricultural employment as a total percentage dropped while industry grew more than services, surpassing it for the first time. The 1920 percentage of the active population employed in industry was 21.94% and in services 20.81%. These were increases from the 1910 figures of 15.82% and 18.18%, yet still substantially less than the 57% figure for agriculture. Mining grew by 47%, transport by 37% and metallurgy more than tripled its figures, going from a 1910 figure of 61,000 to 1920's 200,000. Cities increased their percentage of the total national population, especially the larger cities. In 1910, the percentage of urban population was a little above 9%. At the end of the decade that figure had risen to 12.5%.<sup>108</sup> It was to the largest cities that most of the migrants went, especially Barcelona and Madrid.<sup>109</sup> Other cities also benefited as even the small provincial capitals, such as Jaén, grew.

#### **POST-WAR LABOR CONFLICT IN BARCELONA**

The fall in profits made the growth in wartime employment in textiles a point of contention between employers and the unions. Textiles had grown from 155,000 workers to 212,000.<sup>110</sup> Employers wanted to reduce their labor costs by firing employees made redundant by the downturn in demand and

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107. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*, 149.

108. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 3.

109. Barcelona's migrants had greater opportunities for industrialized factory work, and both cities saw massive growth in the building trades. The employment in Madrid was principally in construction, light industry, and service trades. Martin, *The Agony of Modernization*, 39-40.

110. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 3.

reduce the wages of those who remained.<sup>111</sup> The social panic of the city's bourgeoisie, terrified by the Russian Revolution and the trienio bolchevique, distorted events in Barcelona. A Catholic commentator observed in early in 1919 that "the muse of fear, the diligent companion of the conservative classes, to suggest in these direful hours long madrigals and ballads in tribute to social order. Social order before anything else! Everything should be sacrificed on the altar of social order!"<sup>112</sup> The Catalan's fear of social unrest led them to see every manifestation of the CNT as a plot by foreign agents and a threat to order.<sup>113</sup>

Industrial labor throughout Spain faced a backlash. During the war industrial production declined; however, since profits continued to rise, employers tolerated the unions because of labor shortages. As Spain benefited from the boom caused by the war, it also suffered from the postwar European economic contraction. The wartime positive trade balance became a deficit of 1,396,800,000 pesetas in just four years.<sup>114</sup> The end of the First World War and the resulting crash in profits increased the stress on urban society, as prices were high, employment was uncertain, and more and more immigrants went to cities from rural areas.<sup>115</sup> These economic factors combined with a

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111. *Ibid.*, 7.

112. Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo as quoted in *Ibid.*, 9.

113. The Catalan bourgeoisie generally viewed non-Catalans in Barcelona not as migrants from the same country but as immigrants from foreign lands – as foreign as Zaragoza.

114. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 6.

115. A contemporary fictional account by a participant is Victor Serge's novel *Naissance de notre force* (Paris: Rieder, 1931). The English translation is *Birth of Our Power* (London: London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977). Eduardo Mendoza Garriga's 1975 novel *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*, is an account of this period in Barcelona that follows

deadly struggle in Barcelona between, on one hand, employers allied with the *Sindicatos libres* (Free Trade Unions, 1919–?), and, on the other, the syndicalists of the CNT. The unions tried to simultaneously maintain both wage and employment levels, as employers sought cutbacks in the same areas.

In Barcelona, not only were there strikes and clashes between authorities and the CNT, there were additional armed confrontations and assassinations by police, employers, and both unions. This became a national issue. The central government continued to rely on the military to suppress social unrest in Catalonia. It allowed the military increasing power, especially in Catalonia when the Captain–General of the military region was General Milans del Bosch. Joaquín León Milans del Bosch y Carrió (1854–1936) was from an aristocratic Catalan family. He served in the last Carlist War, in the Philippines and in Morocco. His family connections gave him entrée into the élite of Barcelona society. As Captain–General he supported this élite against the CNT and the government. Milans del Bosch routinely disobeyed the instructions of the central government in Madrid and instead used his military command to support the efforts of the industrialists against the CNT.<sup>116</sup>

Barcelona was the site for street fights between gangs of “patriotic” Spaniards and Catalanist youth. On January 16, 1919, the government suspended constitutional rights in Barcelona. The suspension would last for

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the struggles of a young immigrant from the provinces against the background of social conflict. Translated into English as *The Truth About the Savolta Case* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

116. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 510.

over three years.<sup>117</sup> The apogee of the labor conflict occurred in the 1919 strike against the hydro–electrical power company Ebro Power and Irrigation.<sup>118</sup> There a dispute began over unionization of clerical workers in its Barcelona offices. The company fired a small group of employees who tried to organize a union, followed by the dismissal of others who supported them. The CNT’s practice of mass mobilization ensured that the strike spread from the office workers to the entire company. On February 15<sup>th</sup> strikers presented their demands that included wage increases and the restoration of fired employees. Employer intransigence spread the strike. On the 21<sup>st</sup> the employees at the power generation plant went out, stopping trains and plunging the city into darkness. The Army sent troops to restore power. In protest, workers at other utility companies struck, including gas and water. After pressure from the British ambassador, on March 8<sup>th</sup> the government drafted the strikers.

The government gave the draftees the choice of working or being confined to their barracks, with almost all choosing the latter. In support, Barcelona’s printers declared “red censorship” and refused to print government edicts and news detrimental to the strikers.<sup>119</sup> Teamster and tram workers struck next, halting deliveries of coal and public transit. Under

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117. Ángel Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction: Catalan Labour and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898–1923* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 292. The government restored constitutional guarantees on March 22, 1922.

118. The firm is better known as *La Canadenca* (The Canadian or *La Canadiense* in Spanish) for its Canadian ownership (actually it was an Anglo–Canadian firm). I have drawn from Ángel Smith’s book *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction*, especially his chapter 9, “1919 The Apogee of the Catalan CNT and Employer–Military Counteroffensive,” pages 290–318 for my account of this strike. The term apogee is his.

119. The printers also fined newspapers breaking red censorship. Interestingly, these fines were paid. Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction*, 293.

pressure from the Catalan industrialists and Milans del Bosch, on March 12<sup>th</sup> the government declared martial law. Then the government quietly changed tactics and started negotiations, and replaced the civil governor. They sent a former civil governor to negotiate directly with one of the leaders of the CNT, Salvador Seguí Rubinat (1886–1923), the famous “*noi de sucre*” (sugar boy in Catalan, he had a notorious sweet tooth).<sup>120</sup>

The agreement reached over the strike between the union and the company called for a partial payment of wages for the period of the strike, the restoration of all fired employees, an increase in wages, and the establishment of an eight hour work day. Most important was the release of prisoners, which included those confined to barracks. Milans del Bosch refused to do so, leading to a general strike on March 24.<sup>121</sup> The result was the re-imposition of martial law, suspension of constitutional rights throughout Spain, prior censorship of newspapers, and the massive arrests of members of the CNT and labor lawyers. The military armed the Somentent (the Catalan rural militia) and employers created a parallel police force. There were widespread firings of CNT members, blacklists, and lockouts.

The Catalan employers were the principal beneficiaries here, at least for a few years. Unable to get the government to smash the union, they supported

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120. Carr refers to him as “an autodidact bred in anarchist cafés.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 510. Seguí also wrote *Escuela de rebeldía*, a novella that appeared in the *Novela de Hoy* series just before his assassination. See the sketches in Meaker and Smith, and the biographical entry in Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Seguí Rubinat, Salvador.”

121. “The government settlement of the La Canadiense strike was undone by Milans del Bosch’ refusal to release syndicalist prisoners, and the employers refusal to restore all workers.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 511.

the local Capitan-General in his defiance of the central government. The government tried unsuccessfully to discipline Milans del Bosch. When the civil governor protested to Milans del Bosch about the latter's refusal to release strikers, Milans del Bosch supposedly sent the governor packing, placing him on the train to Madrid. The Madrid government resigned, replaced by a pliant conservative one.<sup>122</sup>

In the summer of 1919, there were 6,000 CNT members in prison. However, the increasing violence had a greater impact. The employers' police force began beating and assassinating the leading CNT militants, as did the *Sindicatos libres*. This created an escalating cycle of reprisals and violence. Anarchist militants gunned down the head of the employers' police force in the summer of 1919. The gun battles and assassinations gave Barcelona the nickname "Chicago of the Mediterranean." The government replaced the civil governor in November 1920 with General Severiano Martínez Anido (1862–1938), "who for two years ruled Barcelona as he wished."<sup>123</sup> According to some reports Martínez Anido stated, "I have personally recommended to the *Libres* that for each of their dead militants they should go out and kill ten syndicalists."<sup>124</sup> In 1920 Martínez Anido and his police chief, General Miguel Arlegui y Bayones (1858–1924), organized a massive imprisonment of régime opponents: syndicalists, left-wing Catalanists, and Republicans. Soon

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122. Prime Minister Count Ramanones (1863–1950) resigned on April 14th. Count Ramanones would negotiate the departure of the King and the proclamation of the Second Republic exactly twelve years later to the day.

123. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 512.

124. Quoted in Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 14.

afterwards, *Sindicatos libres* gunmen assassinated the syndicalists' leading lawyer, Francesc Layret i Foix (1880–1920), as he went to work with his clients. According to historian Stanley Payne, Arlegui “gave free rein to the hooliganism of the counter–terrorism already in place.”<sup>125</sup> After a failed assassination attempt on Ángel Pestaña Nuñez (1886–1937), the moderate syndicalist leader and friend of Seguí, Arlegui then stationed gunmen outside his hospital room, presumably to finish the job.<sup>126</sup>

The government replaced Martínez Anido as Captain–General of Barcelona in October 1922. His successor was General Miguel Primo de Rivera Orbaneja (1870–1930).<sup>127</sup> The bourgeoisie in Catalonia saw the Madrid government's attempts at negotiation with the CNT as weakness. Conversely, they viewed the refusal of the military to follow policy (i.e., obey orders) as strength. When the government hesitated to authorize armed force, the military in Catalonia had not hesitated. The bourgeoisie gave the military credit for stopping the violence of the labor struggle in Barcelona. While 1923 saw the lowest number of strikes since 1919, the number of attempted assassinations increased ten times.<sup>128</sup> Among those assassinated in 1923 was the syndicalist leader Salvador Seguí, gunned down on a street corner by *Sindicato libre* gunmen.

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125. Stanley G. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 148.

126. Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*, 227.

127. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain*, 184 and 190.

128. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 512.

The figures for strikes reflect the actions of only one side; they do not count the number of averted actions. Assassinations were from both sides, though it would appear the syndicalists were the principal victims. The credit given by the Catalan bourgeoisie to the military for working to eradicate syndicalism was crucial. It helped lay the foundation for the reappearance of a general as the force in politics.<sup>129</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera would be that general.

What finally brought down the political system was another war: Spain's colonial war in Morocco. "The First World War undermined the system and the Moroccan war destroyed it."<sup>130</sup> The massive 1921 military defeat of the Spanish Army by Riffian forces at Annual in the colonial war was a profound shock. Thousands of Spaniards died at Annual and in the ensuing retreat, "slaughtered by Moorish tribesmen," as Riffian forces drove an army 20,000 strong into a panic.<sup>131</sup> Rumors of corruption in the Army spread despite censorship of the newspapers, and these became public in October 1921 through debates in the Cortes.<sup>132</sup> The Army consumed thirty-five percent of the national budget.<sup>133</sup> The government began to simultaneously discuss reforms of the military and investigate the Annual disaster (investigations which reputedly implicated the King).

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129. *Ibid.*, 509.

130. *Ibid.*, 497.

131. *Ibid.*, 517.

132. *Ibid.*, 521.

133. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 17.



The September 13, 1923 pronunciamiento of Primo de Rivera halted this.<sup>134</sup> A brief attempt at a general strike to prevent the pronunciamiento failed. The government declared the CNT illegal on September 23, 1923.<sup>135</sup> The syndicalists went underground or into exile. Very quickly, the new régime had eliminated the CNT as an active actor in Spain. This made the role of the anarchist cultural journals like *La Revista Blanca* even more crucial.

Primo de Rivera said he took power to solve problems. First was the problem of Morocco, another was ensuring social peace. He would appear to resolve both of these issues. The Primo de Rivera régime ushered in an era of comparative political stability as the monarchy, the Army, the UGT, and the Catalan bourgeoisie of the Lliga collaborated with Primo de Rivera's version of the regenerationist project.

### **SPAIN AND THE PRIMO DE RIVERA DICTATORSHIP, 1923–1930**

Ben-Ami observes “Primo was presented as the legitimate executor of the regenerationist myth: ‘He who comes to cure the sick has started already to operate; politicians and political parties are being uprooted from power and the enterprise of recuperation has started.’”<sup>136</sup> Primo de Rivera achieved several of his stated goals. He eliminated the colonial problems in Morocco and achieved social peace. The latter he accomplished through a fierce

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134. Colonial policy in Spain led to even greater alienation from the army and the state as war was unpopular among the middle classes and vehemently opposed by the workers. Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4.

135. Kern, *Red Years Black Years*, 65.

136. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 72.

repression of the CNT and a cooption of the UGT. The leader of the UGT, Francisco Largo Caballero (1869–1946), became a member of Primo de Rivera’s government, and benefited from an expansion of social programs.

Initially, Primo de Rivera proposed abandoning Morocco, or at least pulling back to defensible positions. Primo de Rivera’s ‘abandonist’ position corresponded with that of the Lliga, for whom Morocco represented a drain on the national economy. Cambó viewed the military presence in Morocco as an important factor in working class radicalization.<sup>137</sup> In 1925, Primo de Rivera seized upon the moment when he could form an alliance with the French in Morocco. Abd el Krim (1882–1963), leader of the Riffian independence movement attacked the French who formed an alliance with the Spanish.<sup>138</sup> After a successful campaign, Morocco was “pacified” and Primo de Rivera had “solved” the Moroccan problem.

As Primo de Rivera went to take the train to Madrid to assume power, members of the Lliga and the Somentent accompanied him.<sup>139</sup> The Lliga strongly supported him, though its leaders would soon regret this support and withdraw from political life. Primo de Rivera had led them to believe that he

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137. *Ibid.*, 51.

138. Abd el Krim, as he is usually referred to in Spanish history, was Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi. The son of an Islamic judge, Abd el Krim worked in the Spanish colonial administration and led an independence movement in the Rif. Defeated by the combined French and Spanish forces, he surrendered in 1926 and was exiled to the French island of Reunion until after World War II. He eventually found asylum in Egypt where he continued to fight colonialism. He was on the cover of *Time* on August 17, 1925. “From 1921 and especially between 1924 and 1927, the Spanish army and air force dropped hundreds of tons of mustard gas on enemy civilians and soldiers alike, causing widespread death, injury, and illness, including cancer.” Sebastian Balfour, Review of José E. Álvarez, *The Betrothed of Death*, *The International History Review* 24, no. 1 (2002), 165.

139. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 82.

understood and supported them. The same issues caused the rupture with them as their earlier alienation from the Renovation system. Though Cambó initially tried to take the credit that Primo de Rivera's pronunciamiento was a Barcelona creation, the general quickly showed his independence. He declared "Regionalist feelings are incompatible with a Great Fatherland," or "Spain One, Great, and Indivisible," and "We can compound with Republicans, even with Anarchists, but never with those who consistently attempt to destroy the unity of the patria."<sup>140</sup> The left did not forget that the members of the Lliga did gain from the dictatorship and their association with it — especially with Martínez Anido and Arlegui, its most brutal figures.

Martínez Anido served Primo de Rivera as an undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for a brief period at the start of military régime, and very shortly became the Minister.<sup>141</sup> In December 1925 when Primo de Rivera replaced the Military Directory with civilian rule, Martínez Anido remained the Minister of Interior until 1930, and was Vice–Premier at the end of Primo de Rivera's régime.<sup>142</sup> The position of Director General of Security, in effect the national chief of police, went to Arlegui.<sup>143</sup> The appointments of Martínez

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140. *Ibid.*, 194–195.

141. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain*, 205. Reportedly when dealing with the student demonstrations at the end of the régime, Martínez Anido demanded harsher measures from the police: "Repress student movement! Report number of victims!" Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 352.

142. Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 209; Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain*, 233. Martínez Anido was one of the three potential successors that Primo de Rivera suggested to King Alfonso XIII and would be Minister of Public Order in the Nationalist government until his death in 1938.

143. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain*, 205. Payne, definitely not sympathetic to anarchism, calls Arlegui "brutal."

Anido and Arlegui were widely approved of by the Lliga. The expansion of the Somentent, originally a Catalan rural militia, to a national militia force, was another gift to the Catalans in their campaigns for social order and a larger role.<sup>144</sup>

While in office Martínez Anido and Arlegui continued to support the Sindicato libres and persecute any hint of syndicalism. Peiró, as secretary of the CNT's national committee, had a dalliance with leftist Catalanist Francesc Macià Llussà (1859–1933) though this did not amount to a serious endeavor.<sup>145</sup> After Seguí's death, Pestaña became the leading figure among CNT moderates. He argued that the CNT should accept the new government's labor arbitration processes, the Comités Paritarios, and participate alongside the UGT.<sup>146</sup> The majority of the CNT, including Peiró, another moderate, resolutely opposed Pestaña's proposals and they were defeated.

The sharp drop in "social crimes" under the Dictatorship appeared to prove the success and validity of Martínez Anido and Arlegui's harsh policies. Official statistics recorded 253 killed and 382 injured from 1919–1923.<sup>147</sup> The

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144. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 77.

145. There was the attempted invasion of Spain by Macià from Prats de Mollo la Preste on the French side of the border. French police intercepted it before it could cross. Macià, however, dreamed of drawing the CNT into his movement and making them his. The socialists refused to have anything to do with this and decided to collaborate with the dictatorship. Kern, *Red Years Black Years*, 66–67. Macià became the first leader of Catalonia during the Second Republic. He would again be unsuccessful in his endeavor to get the CNT to participate in his administration.

146. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 579.

147. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 332. Of course, this begs the question of what counts as a social crime? These figures are highly suspect, and clearly do not include the five deaths listed by Kern in his account of the November 1924 raid on a border post. Kern, *Red Years Black Years*, 66.

new régime reduced these figures to three dead and 15 wounded for the period 1923–1928. What factors were more central to this drop was the expansion of public works and the growth of building as the cities continued to expand. Important cities in industrializing areas grew faster than those in agricultural zones. Even as migrants sought industrial positions, part of this migration still went to provincial capitals. Barcelona and Madrid continued to far outpace all the other cities. The figures for the increased population were 280,032 and 238,436 respectively. The next major city was Valencia with 65,381, less than a fourth of Barcelona’s figure.<sup>148</sup> During the decade, the workforce grew by almost a million, as the active population climbed from 7,962,400 to 8,772,500.<sup>149</sup>

The UGT seized the opening created by new political situation. Already strong in Madrid and with the CNT removed as competition in Barcelona, it only had to compete with the confessional *Sindicatos libres*. The position of Largo Caballero as Councilor for Labor ensured that the socialists became, in Raymond Carr’s words, the “the spoilt child of the régime.”<sup>150</sup> By participating in Primo de Rivera’s *Comités Paritarios*, the UGT gained members and influence that helped it grow and relieved the stresses caused by the post-war slump. Largo Caballero was a plasterer by trade, and closely attuned to the needs of skilled building workers. Primo de Rivera not only made promises, he generally kept them — if on a lesser scale than the grandiose

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148. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 313.

149. *Ibid.*

150. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 581.

pronouncements announcing the promises. One of the qualified successes of the government was its provision of low cost housing.

The Institute of Social Reforms, abolished by Primo de Rivera early in his administration, had long called for inexpensive housing for workers. The government recognized that living conditions played a key role in social stability. Primo de Rivera's government modified legislation and incorporated new laws, such as the 1924 Municipal Statute, that would allow municipalities to undertake the construction of such housing.<sup>151</sup> The funding of this housing was provided by the state, though the Municipal Statute also allowed municipalities to use loans for housing construction.

The housing campaign launched in October 1924. Decrees augmented the housing campaign by making available credit credits and subsidies to builders receiving government contracts. In the country where tax evasion is the true national sport, the law exempted income from the "cheap houses" (*casas baratas* in Spanish, *cases barates* in Catalan) from taxation for thirty years on, as were tenants and owners. The opportunities for corruption were staggering and not ignored. "To attract money to the project, the government even allowed savings banks, public pawnshops, and funds of mutual and charitable character to constitute themselves into construction companies and thus benefit from the splendid conditions it had granted to those engaged in

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151. Carr views this as a typical: "the fulfillment of earlier promises, on a modest scale, but with much publicity." Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 579 n. 1. His student Ben-Ami repeats this criticism: "the Dictatorship's social legislation, the wide publicity of which admittedly surpassed its rather modest application..." Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 287.

the building of cheap houses.”<sup>152</sup> By the end of the decade the municipal deficit of the city of Barcelona was the same size as the national debt of Portugal.<sup>153</sup> The claims of success in housing were greater than the reality. As of December 1928, only 1600 families had gotten new housing in the *casas baratas*.<sup>154</sup>

To bring this back to the social question, Primo de Rivera made promises, kept them, and shared the benefits with his supporters. Simultaneously, the UGT was able to get construction jobs for its members, promise the expansion of affordable housing, and expand its membership base. It worked similarly with roads, hydro–electrical projects, and other public works projects. In addition, there was the attempt of Barcelona to host an Olympics and the resulting building boom, as well as the 1929 exhibition.<sup>155</sup> There were corporate endeavors that went on building sprees. Notably, the Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España (CTNE), the beneficiary of the

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152. Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 287–288.

153. 44 percent of the 1930 municipal budget went for loan repayment. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 57.

154. Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 289 n. 43. Ben–Ami points out that military housing was the real success story of this project as a Patronato de Casas Militares was created. *Ibid.* Ealham argues that these houses were far from cheap. “The cases barates was also a misnomer: they were not ‘cheap’ (rents were more or less comparable with those in the private sector), nor could these hastily erected dwellings credibly be described as ‘houses.’ In addition, the social wage and urban fabric and the new housing projects were deficient: there were few or no basic amenities and services, such as schools and shops, and because the *casas barates* were located outside the metropolitan transport system, there were hidden social costs of habitation, as residents were forced to walk long distances on foot to reach tram or bus lines in order to travel to work or a shop.” Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 8–9.

155. The construction of the *casas barates* in Barcelona was closely tied to the building of the 1929 exposition. The municipality evicted residents to make way for the exposition and the corruption was apparently extensive. For a fictional description of the growth and corruption in the city between the 1888 and 1929 expositions, see the novel by Eduardo Mendoza Garriga, *La ciudad de los prodigios* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1986). Translated into English as *City of Marvels* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).

exclusive telephone concession that Primo de Rivera granted to the American company ITT, built new exchanges and offices. The CTNE headquarters in Madrid was the tallest building in Europe when it opened. The UGT established a presence in this company.<sup>156</sup> Thus in the cities the UGT gained the majority of the seats on the *Comités Paritarios*.<sup>157</sup>

It was clear that the socialists were able to operate in the dictatorship because Primo de Rivera approved of their withdrawal from politics and self-imposed restriction of union activity to the government's *Comités Paritarios*. Primo de Rivera made a distinction between good workers' organizations — the UGT and *Sindicatos libres* — and bad ones: the CNT. “Workers' associations? Yes; but only for cultural aims, for protection, mutualism, and even for sane politics, not for resistance and not by undermining production.”<sup>158</sup>

Criticism of the UGT's participation in the government's arbitration schemes came from two sides, the confessional *Sindicatos libres* and the syndicalists of the CNT. The *Sindicatos libres* supported the *Comités Paritarios* based in ideology, not only out of a desire to advance in the system. Resolutely opposed to the doctrine of class conflict, *Comités Paritarios* were an avowedly corporate solution to the social problem. The *Sindicatos libres* believed that the success of this corporatist system was a sign of the failure of

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156. For more details, see my 1991 master's thesis on the 1931 strike against the CTNE by the CNT. Andrew H. Lee, “La Niña Bonita, la Telefónica, and the C.N.T.” (Masters thesis, Columbia University, 1990).

157. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 293.

158. Primo de Rivera quoted in *Ibid.*, 283.



the individualism whose genesis was the French Revolution.<sup>159</sup> They resented the favoritism that Primo de Rivera showed the UGT and clearly believed it should have been theirs as the corporatist and Catholic trade union. This was especially true since the decisions of the *Comités Paritarios* generally favored UGT labor, further enhancing its prestige. A membership card in the organization brought clear financial benefits.<sup>160</sup> Regardless of the *Sindicato Libres*' feelings of neglect, they did grow during the dictatorship. Membership tripled, from 50,000 to 150,000, during the Primo de Rivera régime.<sup>161</sup>

Another source of criticism was the syndicalists. Long convinced that the UGT was a bureaucratic organization more interested in creating offices to be filled by its members, living off of the members' dues, and more concerned with the organization than its members — much less fomenting revolution, the syndicalists found confirmation in the UGT's actions during the dictatorship. Participating in the *Comités Paritarios* meant that UGT members of the committees received money from the government. Carr states that they became "state-paid bureaucrats."<sup>162</sup> Praise from the régime and its functionaries only furthered anarchist suspicions. A 1928 *Unión Patriótica* (the official régime party) statement that there was no more conservative

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159. *Ibid.*, 296. See my chapter 3 for more on the *Sindicatos libres* and their relationship with the Church.

160. *Ibid.*, 292–293.

161. *Ibid.*, 297.

162. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 571.

workers organization in Spain and that progress in Spain was due to the combined efforts of Primo de Rivera and Largo Caballero, sealed it.<sup>163</sup>

Primo de Rivera stayed in power for over six years as his support drifted away. First to go were the Catalans, followed by the monarchy, and then the UGT. He resigned when Martínez Anido quietly polled the Army and told Primo de Rivera there was no longer support for his remaining in power. During his six years, he put an end to the system that governed Spain for fifty years and laid the groundwork for the policies and personnel that created the Francoist state.<sup>164</sup> The second Republic came in sixteen months later in a popular celebration. Many of the same social conflicts persisted, hidden in the initial euphoria over the fall of the monarchy.

#### **GENDER, SCIENCE AND THE CONTROL OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

The description above by Primo de Rivera of what was wrong with Spain began with a quotation that mixed medicine and politics: the doctor curing the sick nation. Primo de Rivera stated five years earlier “the whole national body was sick of laxity and faintness.”<sup>165</sup> This combination of medicine and politics was particularly potent in Spain, especially in discussions of gender. As in the rest of Europe, this was a period when traditional gender roles in Spain came under increased scrutiny with the rise of organized feminism in Spain and the example of women’s consumer rebellions in the belligerent nations and Spain over the course of the First

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163. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 294–295.

164. *Ibid.*, x.

165. *Ibid.*, 50.

World War. For the scientists who came to dominate this debate, the example of an expanded role for women in World War I had made their position increasingly difficult to defend and by the thirties impossible.<sup>166</sup>

In the belligerent countries, women were increasingly performing very high-level tasks that men previously performed. These ranged from advanced and highly skilled metal work in factories to exemplary service in the military, especially in the medical services.<sup>167</sup> Spain, though neutral, participated in the debates and the postwar concerns about the transformation of gender roles. As Mary Vincent observes, “the post-war experience of the two sexes [in Spain] would have been recognizable to men and women in belligerent countries.”<sup>168</sup> What had previously been considered natural and fixed broke down and was being transformed... but to what?

The government, social reformers, and feminists of all types attempted to control this transformation and turned to medical models of society. The increasing dominance of a scientific rationale for the nature of women being firmly set in motherhood was especially important. The post-war period additionally saw the rise in Spain of social medicine. Social medicine wanted to correct the errors of the previous scientific doctrine of the physical and

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166. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 215.

167. Montseny reviewed one memoir by a woman in the military medical services: Helen Zenna Smith's 1930 *Not so Quiet*. Federica Montseny, “Revista de libros,” *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 322 (22 March 1935), 288. The Spanish title is *Hay novedad en el frente*, [Something New at the Front], which carried the contrast to *Remarques Sin novedad en el frente* [Nothing New at the Front], which she also read. The amount of World War I fiction she read and reviewed was extensive, including novels by Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Ernst Glaeser, and Upton Sinclair.

168. Mary Vincent, ‘Spain,’ in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, ed. Kevin Passmore (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 189.

intellectual inferiority of women. It also accounted for the change in roles brought on by the War, notably demands by women for greater rights and freedom. Social medicine sought to channel these demands in order to preserve women's principal role as mothers by supplanting the clearly erroneous doctrine of female inferiority with one of difference between the sexes based in science.

The simultaneous debate going on in science, especially medicine, about the nature of women, influenced the discussions in Spain. A biology based in the superiority of men consolidated during the nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, Spanish scientists, influenced by the theories of Paul Julius Möbius (1853–1907), Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), argued for the innate inferiority of women.<sup>169</sup> The translation of Spencer's work had a powerful impact in Spain. Some went through multiple editions with large print runs.<sup>170</sup> Other Social Darwinists such as Cesare

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169. Paul Julius Möbius was a German neurologist who argued that women were inferior because of the smaller size of their brains. For a biographical sketch, see H. Steinberg, "Paul Julius Möbius (1853–1907)," *Journal of Neurology* 252, no. 5 (2005), 624–625. The Spanish feminist Carmen de Burgos translated his work as a way to understand his ideas. Paul Julius Möbius, *La inferioridad mental de la mujer* (Valencia: Editorial Siempre, n.d.). Ernst Haeckel was a German biologist who promoted Darwin in Germany and rapidly in Spain there were translations and interpretations of his work. Herbert Spencer was a British sociologist who applied evolutionary concepts to society, becoming an early, if not the first, Social Darwinist. He was also the originator of the term "survival of the fittest."

170. Diego Núñez, "El impacto del naturalismo y del evolucionismo en el pensamiento liberal y socialista," *Anthropos*, nos. 16–17 (1982), 67. One of Spencer's translators was Miguel de Unamuno. Lily Litvak, *A Dream of Arcadia, 1895–1905: Anti-Industrialism in Spanish Literature, 1895–1905* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), 180. With illiteracy so high, this audience was obviously a middle and upper class audience but the left press also published Spencer in their journals and in inexpensive editions, usually small pamphlets, as well as purchasing the longer works for circulating libraries in the *ateneos*. The principal market would have been the bourgeoisie but the audience was much larger.

Lombroso (1835–1909) and William Bagehot (1826–1877) published in Spain, adding more support for the evolutionary inferiority of women.<sup>171</sup>

This was challenged by a biology that asserted the relationship between the sexual bodies was one of difference.<sup>172</sup> Difference had many varieties, but they agreed that women were different than men because they could bear children. Many believed that this sexual characteristic could be disturbed and a woman would lose her “natural” instinct for maternity. The shift to difference accelerated after the experience of the First World War as supporters of a women’s innate inferiority slowly lost support in both society and the scientific community. The tipping point was the 1919 publication in a Catholic magazine of an article refuting female intellectual inferiority by Spain’s Nobel Laureate, Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852–1934).<sup>173</sup> The war showed that women were capable, both physically and mentally, of performing tasks previously seen as exclusively male. Moreover, it simultaneously led to a series of vague fears about the breakdown of sexual difference as exemplified in traditional male and female roles, and the abandonment of motherhood by women.<sup>174</sup>

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171. Núñez, “El impacto del naturalismo y del evolucionismo en el pensamiento liberal y socialista,” 69–70. Walter Bagehot was a British writer and editor of *The Economist*. Lombroso and Bagehot also added to the perception that the lower classes were defective and/or degenerate.

172. Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 207.

173. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 216. Ramón y Cajal was a Spanish histologist and in 1906 won a Nobel Prize in Medicine. The article was republished eleven years later in an anarchist publication: Santiago Ramón y Cajal, “La capacidad de la mujer,” *Estudios*, no. 77 (January 1930), 23.

174. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 92.

Haeckel's work was the prime conduit for Darwinism in Spain because he wrote in a way that made it possible to apply his interpretation of Darwin to the social sciences.<sup>175</sup> His arguments on the narrow range of women's intellectual abilities and their presence at the lower ends of the intelligence scale were taken in Spain to indicate that women who did excel or were markedly intelligent were either sexual inverts or otherwise abnormal.<sup>176</sup> Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), a leading member of the Generation of 1914, reinforced this position.<sup>177</sup> He recommended the work of Georg Simmel (1858–1918), publishing Simmel's work in his journal *La Revista de Occidente*.<sup>178</sup> Simmel argued that women could only think in terms of their own sex, rather in the broader terms by which men thought. Consequently, their sexuality completely enclosed women.<sup>179</sup> Ortega y Gasset further argued that women do not progress by gaining access to existing culture (masculine) and need to immerse themselves in femininity (family, home, children). Ortega y Gasset conceived of women as a sex strictly and naturally dependent and removed from the world of reason.<sup>180</sup> In his theories,

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175. Thomas F. Glick, "Spain," in *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*, ed. Thomas F. Glick (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 311–312.

176. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 92.

177. José Ortega y Gasset was a major Spanish philosopher whose 1929 *La rebelión de las masas* (*The Revolt of the Masses*) received international recognition. He also founded the important intellectual review *Revista de Occidente* in 1923. He possibly met Simmel while studying in Germany.

178. Georg Simmel was a German sociologist who is well known for his work on money, the city, and his views on women.

179. Geraldine M. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1976), 188.

180. Aurora Morcillo Gómez, "Feminismo y lucha política durante la II república y la guerra civil," in *El feminismo en España: Dos siglos de historia*, ed. Pilar Folguera Crespo (Madrid:

men were more spiritual than women, who were closer to animals, and while men were able to separate physical and spiritual pleasure, women cannot.<sup>181</sup> At the time Ortega y Gasset was one of the leading intellectuals in Spain and at the forefront of those intellectuals opposed to the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and the monarchy.

In the 1920s, what Brigitte Magnien labels “a new type of intellectual” participated in these debates: legal scholars, doctors, engineers, professors, who as part of the regenerationist project elaborated reforms and published these in the press, especially in the liberal Madrid daily *El Sol*.<sup>182</sup> Doctor Gregorio Marañón is emblematic of Magnien’s new type. Another leading figure in the Generation of 1914 he was the most prominent practitioner of social medicine as it sought to stabilize gender identities and promote the preservation of sexual differences while allowing some changes in roles. Without the preservation of sexual difference, many believed there would be gender confusion and it would affect evolution. Marañón stressed the importance of the intervention of two professionals, the doctor and the teacher, as being the “most efficacious.”<sup>183</sup> The feminist Carmen de Burgos

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Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1988), 60. Ortega y Gasset would be one of the intellectuals elected to the Cortes in 1931. He would also vote against the extension of suffrage to women. Antonio Martínez Marín, *La representatividad municipal española* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1989), 90 n. 217.

181. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 190.

182. Magnien, “Crisis de la novela,” in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 260.

183. Gregorio Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932), 295. This is the 1932 translation of the 1930 Spanish second edition of *La evolución de la Sexualidad y los Estados Intersexuales*.

(1867–1932) literarily used entire paragraphs of Marañón’s *Ensayos sobre la vida sexual* in her novel *Quiero vivir mi vida*.<sup>184</sup>

Marañón published numerous editions in Spain and Latin America and he was widely reprinted in the press, thus many personal libraries contained his work.<sup>185</sup> This work was central to the medicalization of debates on social issues because of his immense popularity as a writer and because his work incorporated social issues after the First World War.<sup>186</sup> Montseny clearly read his work; as she referred to Marañón’s writings in her own essays, especially his social medical texts such as *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual* and his analysis of *donjuanismo*.<sup>187</sup> Three primary factors contributed to Marañón’s popularity. First, he was a very engaging writer and a very good stylist — even in translation, his works are interesting and engaging. Second, he was a distinguished doctor who was capable of explaining apparently complex medical topics in a clear and easy to follow manner. Third, he was writing

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184. Magnien, “Crisis de la novela,” in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 250.

185. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 116–117. His popularity was not limited to his medical works but he was also popular in other fields as well, such as a biography of Tiberius, and translated into the major European languages.

186. For example, the issue of short hair, which was such a debate in various countries, was merely a passing adolescent phase to Marañón. “It is true that the appearance of this fashion coincided with the great development of feminism in the course of the war and the first post-war years, and that it was allied with an ensemble of details of anatomy and clothing whose tendency was clearly inversive. But apart from the considerations of comfort and economy, which short hair represents for women, and which will have their influence upon the duration of this fashion, the real reason for this sexual mutilation is less a ‘viriloid’ tendency than a juvenile aspiration.” Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 41–42.

187. He appeared in Montseny’s journalism whereas very few other prominent contemporary Spanish intellectuals did, except women. See these articles by Montseny: “El ocaso del donjuanismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 46 (15 April 1925), 9–11; her review of Margarita Nelken’s *El torno de nosotros*, “Libros de mujeres,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 148; and “España y el problema de los sexos,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 139 (1 March 1929), 549–551.



about topics that were of great interest to a wide range of people and he clearly met this demand throughout Europe and North America. He benefitted from a prominent place in Spanish society as the king's physician combined with a reputation as a political and social progressive. Finally, others actively promoted him as well, such as Ramón Pérez de Ayala (1880–1962). Pérez de Ayala stated that Marañón's *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual* (*Three essays on Sexual Life*) should accompany the traditional gift to brides of *La perfecta casada* (*The Perfect Married Woman*) by Fray Luis de León (1527–1591).<sup>188</sup>

The acceptance of Darwinian theories of evolution in the Spanish medical faculties at the turn of the century had a major impact on Marañón who, in turn, contributed to the popularization of Darwinian evolution in the study of sexuality with his book *La evolución de la sexualidad*.<sup>189</sup> In this book he wrote that sex was not an evolutionary value and that it “develops in every human being in the same direction: from the ‘feminine’ towards the ‘masculine’.” In this schema, the adult male represented the culmination of the individual evolution.<sup>190</sup> This was because until old age women passed through an extended intermediate phase, “the female is an organism intermediate between the infantile and adolescent organism and the virile

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188. Aresti Esteban, “Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936),” 198. Pérez de Ayala was an important Spanish writer and close associate of Marañón, writing the introduction to the latter's *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual*. Ramón Pérez de Ayala, “Ensayo Liminar,” in Gregorio Marañón, *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual*, 5th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1929), 11–22.

189. Thomas F. Glick, “El darwinismo en España en la primera mitad del XX,” *Anthropos*, nos. 16–17 (1982), 78.

190. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 7. Marañón believed that the mature woman was at the same evolutionary stage as the juvenile male. Glick, “El darwinismo en España en la primera mitad del XX,” 78.

organism.”<sup>191</sup> On this later point he was in agreement with Möbius, Spencer, Haeckel and Ferri, who argued that women’s energies were expended in maternity, while not leaving enough energy for evolutionary progress — or at least not enough to progress at the same rate as men.<sup>192</sup> Marañón was fundamentally deterministic and conservative in his view of women, believing that women were different from men due to hormonal differences and maternity, consequently a woman’s proper role was bearing children. Taking a page from Simmel, Marañón believed a woman sees life through the “spectacles of her feelings” and not through reason, whereas a man (or more true to his thought, a masculine individual) does.<sup>193</sup> He argued that the masculine being possessed more capacities for reasoning and abstract thought. This was the argument that universities could not admit women because they lacked sufficient capabilities. Moreover, by this reasoning, women who showed intellectual capacity must be abnormal, which was widely accepted. In the twenties Marañón, along with Doctor Roberto Nóvoa Santos, (1885–1933), were the two leading interpreters of scientific theories about women.<sup>194</sup> These

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191. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 15.

192. *Ibid.*, 82. Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945*, 252. Enrico Ferri (1856–1929) was a student of Lombroso’s in Italy and as a socialist, had a important influence on the acceptance of evolutionary theories. Published in Italian in 1894, his major work is *Socialism and Positivist Science*. This book was translated into Spanish soon after its appearance in Italy and before its translation into French or English. Enrico Ferri, *Socialismo y ciencia positiva (Darwin, Spencer, Marx)* (Madrid: Imp. de J. Cruzado, 1895). The important radical publishing house Charles H. Kerr produced an English translation in the United States in 1900. In Britain, the Independent Labour Party published it in 1905.

193. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 84.

194. Nóvoa Santos was a Spanish pathologist, holding chairs at the Universities of Santiago de Compostela and Madrid. Like Ortega y Gasset and Marañón, he served as a member of the Cortes in 1931–1933. Nóvoa Santos believed that intelligent women were sexual inverts and

two doctors had different views on the social import of their studies, with Marañón arguing for civil rights for women while Nóvoa Santos adamantly opposed any extension of women's rights. Marañón argued that despite the fact that women were different from men; nonetheless, they should get all the same civil rights. Nóvoa Santos believed that women were not only inferior to men, moreover, they were prone to hysteria and thus they should not have the same civil rights. Marañón's position was contrary to that of Möbius, in that he asserted the positive value of the very same feminine traits that Möbius attacked. What Möbius (and Nóvoa Santos) derided, Marañón praised, using the same evidentiary framework.

It was Marañón's reputation as a progressive liberal that secured the status of his writings on gender.<sup>195</sup> His political activities, the wide dispersion of his ideas through books and press coverage, and his reputation as a scientist, all combined to make Marañón's ideas on gender roles appear progressive, certainly in the context of the period. His belief in an evolution of women's natures to a higher (i.e., male) level, gave reassurance to his audience that the transformations that were occurring were an evolutionary and progressive process towards a more stable and happy existence in an equality of difference for both sexes. He argued that, rather than differences being reduced, the evolutionary "perfection of humanity" must proceed to clear

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displayed male characteristics. Thomas F. Glick, "Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras," *Estudios de historia social*, nos. 16–17 (1981), 16.

195. Historians comment frequently in histories of the Second Republic on Marañón ostensibly progressive political opinions. They usually do not mention his views on women thereby preserving the exclusion of issues marked as belonging to women.

distinctions between the sexes, men becoming “more of a man” and women “more of a woman.”<sup>196</sup>

Marañón used the relatively new discipline of endocrinology to place arguments about the roles of women and men on a scientific basis.<sup>197</sup> This demonstrated that women were not inferior to men; they had simply developed differently. Marañón and his followers not only believed that people were marionettes at the mercy of their glands, moreover, they also believed that the sex glands dominated all the others and controlled development at crucial stages.<sup>198</sup> This theory offered a biological explanation for women who did not seek marriage and maternity — the so-called “third sex” — and for homosexuality, both of which were contemporary concerns.<sup>199</sup> Marañón drew from Spencer the notion that, if men spent their energies in external activities and women in internal activities (notably reproduction), then women’s expenditure of energy had not allowed them to evolve as much as men because men’s sexual activity was sporadic and infrequent, whereas a

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196. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 287.

197. Richard M. Cleminson & Francisco Vázquez García, “Breasts, Hair and Hormones: The Anatomy of Gender Difference in Spain, 1880–1940,” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 86, no. 5 (2009), 637.

198. Glick, “Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras,” 13–14. This is one of the arguments in Marañón’s *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*. Diana Long Hall and Thomas F. Glick, “Endocrinology: A Brief Introduction,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 9, no. 2 (1976), 229–33 and Thomas F. Glick, “On the Diffusion of a New Specialty: Marañón and the ‘Crisis’ of Endocrinology in Spain,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 9, no. 2 (1976), 287–300

199. The “Third Sex” did not appear to be applied to men. Furthermore, it did not inherently imply lesbianism. Federica Montseny, “Feminismo y humanismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 33 (1 October 1924), 12–14.

woman's was longer and more sustained.<sup>200</sup> He developed from endocrinology the idea that as embryos the glands are similar and over time develop specific sexual characteristics, either developing fully as male or changing into female glands, and that everyone carried the other sex in a dormant state.<sup>201</sup> Out of his studies he argued, "They are neither equal nor different. They are at one and the same time different and equal: equal because they are not antagonistic values, but phases of one and the same evolution; different because of their unalterable placing in a successive order."<sup>202</sup>

For Marañón this meant that child bearing was woman's fundamental nature. He argued against belief in the inferiority of women to men, maintaining that each sex had its appropriate functions and development based in biology.<sup>203</sup> Marañón's ideas about the stages of human evolution, with the similarity of adolescent and female stages culminating in the male apex, showed that despite his ideas being offered as a correction to traditional ideas of male superiority and female inferiority, there was still a strong element of male superiority.<sup>204</sup> He argued very clearly that the mature male is the pinnacle of the evolutionary process and that the female is still evolving until late in her life cycle when the female hormones and glands change and she

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200. Glick, "Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras," 14.

201. "[E]very human being carries within himself the two sexes, one developed and the other latent." Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 267.

202. *Ibid.*, 301. See also Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 241.

203. Glick, "Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras," 15.

204. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 126.

becomes asexual and virile. In his words, femininity was a transitional phase and virility was the terminal phase.<sup>205</sup>

His argument was not that far removed from that of the Church except that it replaced a sacred role for motherhood with a secular one, emphasizing responsibility towards the nation. Marañón's thesis was one that secular reformers, especially republicans, adopted yet sought to use in order to achieve a transformation of other social functions, such as work, along the same trajectory: from a religious view of divine intervention and fate to a secular one of a responsibility to society and the state.

Even within medicine, the construction of women as different rather than inferior was not universally accepted, as the case of NÓvoa Santos proves. Marañón's theories advanced a more dignified role for women and consequently came to be the accepted definition within almost all progressive forces seeking the regeneration of Spain. They offered an ostensibly scientific basis for dealing with gender transformation while still preserving women's principal role in society, that of mothers. The post-war transformation of the construction of women from one of inferiority or unfulfilled development to a conception of difference was not comprehensive. The ostensibly neutral and objective scientific basis of Marañón's conception of femininity was still one based solely in a maternal femininity. The secularization of maternity, work, and other social responsibilities necessitated a new definition of masculinity.

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205. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 239. Consequently, of what he termed the intersexual states, the effeminate male is regressive while the masculine female is slightly positive.

It made work, heretofore constructed as an activity associated with masculinity, the core of a new definition of masculinity.<sup>206</sup> This new emphasis on work equaling masculinity was very congenial to the regenerationist reformers and the Socialists because it enabled them to simultaneously attack *donjuanismo* and elevate a new productivist standard in its place. This ideology of work equaling masculinity became the basis of the new Republican state. The large number of medical professionals, including Marañón and Nóvoa Santos who entered the 1931 constituent Cortes greatly influenced the debates.<sup>207</sup> The resulting constitution declared in its first line that: “Spain is a democratic Republic of workers of every class, organized into a régime of Liberty and Justice.”<sup>208</sup>

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206. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 232.

207 Glick, “Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras” and searching the Cortes’ historical database of deputies.

208. “España es una República democrática de trabajadores de toda clase, que se organiza en régimen de Libertad y de Justicia.” While careful to place the phrase “of every class,” they neglected gender, and of course, in Spanish grammar the plural noun workers, *trabajadores*, are gendered male.

### CHAPTER 3: RESURRECCIÓN

As long as a woman is considered incapable of living without supervision, although she lives a moral life alone, with a priest or without one, with or without a judge, she will continue being enslaved to man...<sup>1</sup>

Federica Montseny was part of a well-established tradition in Spanish letters, that of literary anticlericalism. Early in the century Urales used the language of science to dismiss religion when he remarked, “religion and socialism are two different electronically charged clouds.”<sup>2</sup> At the end of the twenties *La Revista Blanca* published two almanacs, one for 1927 and one for 1928, each with a lay calendar that replaced saint’s names and wars with flowers and historical events.<sup>3</sup> The declared intention was to counter the numerous injustices committed in the name of the traditional almanac’s saints and wars.<sup>4</sup> It replaced religion with history, humanity’s violence with nature’s flowers.

Anticlericalism was a staple of nineteenth century popular fiction, the folletín.<sup>5</sup> An autodidact, Montseny frequently read novels. One of the frequent

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1. Federico Urales, “De la mujer y del amor,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no 102 (15 August 1927), 175.

2. Federico Urales, *La religión y la cuestión social* (Montevideo: Circulo Internacional de Estudios Sociales, 1902), 38.

3. *Almanaque de la «Novela Ideal» 1927* (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1926), 2, and *Almanaque de la «Novela Ideal» 1928* (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1927).

4. “Un tomo notabilísimo,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 83 (1 October 1926), I. An earlier announcement of the almanac also stated that would include scientific martyrs with their portraits, as well as those of “victims of modern reaction” (when they could acquire the image), and of women in the cause of human justice, also with portraits. “Almanaque de *La Novela Ideal*,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 79 (1 September 1926), 1.

5. This is from comments by Jo Labanyi on an earlier draft.



themes in her own fiction is anticlericalism.<sup>6</sup> She was particularly fond of Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920) and some of the major French anticlerical authors.<sup>7</sup> Translated into Spanish, these French authors were very popular in Spain. The anarchist press often published such works for didactic reasons.<sup>8</sup> Some of the most popular were famous writers such as Émile Zola (1840–1902), George Sand (pseudonym of Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, 1804–1876), Eugène Sue (1804–1857), and Victor Hugo (1802–1885).

The French author Michel Zevaco (1860–1918), an important writer of *feuilletons*, was another author mentioned by Montseny. Zevaco was initially a socialist and then an anarchist. A Dreyfusard, he served as editor of the journal of the Anticlerical League of France, wrote for Jean Jaurès' (1859–1914) paper as well as *Le Matin*.<sup>9</sup> *La Revista Blanca* serialized his novel *Le chevalier de La Barre* in a translation by Gustavo. It is the story of Jean-François de La Barre (1741–1766), who was condemned for blasphemy, tortured, beheaded, and burned alongside a copy of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*. The story *El Caballero de La Barre, o Los Misterios de la Inquisición* ran for forty-one issues in *La Revista Blanca*, from July 1, 1925–March 15, 1927.

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6. As discussed in this chapter the anticlericalism was not always overt. But it was central to several of her works, especially the ones mentioned in this chapter.

7. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 23. The importance of French anti-clerical novels is discussed in Dendle, *The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis, 1876–1936*, 14.

8. Montseny devoted an entire article to Georges Sand. Federica Montseny, "Georges Sand, o la amorosa," *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 171 (1 July 1930), 57–59. Esenwein states that Sue was particularly important. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 128.

9. Additionally, Zevaco was an early film producer.

Even when the Catholic faith itself was not under attack, priests were frequent objects of ridicule, so much so that Spanish collections of proverbs from the seventeenth century contained numerous negative examples of priests. This continued to be true in the Franco years, when National Catholicism was an official ideology, showing the profound roots of Spanish anticlericalism.<sup>10</sup> It was a common theme in fiction, from the scandalous and prurient “penny press,” to classics of Spanish literature.<sup>11</sup> Montseny also read other Spanish authors, including the anticlerical Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867–1928).<sup>12</sup> The works of both Pérez Galdós and Blasco Ibáñez featured priests as examples of political reaction.<sup>13</sup> Popular plays featured the stock character of the corrupt and corrupting cleric and plots of sexual escapades in convents and

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10. Shubert mentions one collection from 1627 contained almost 300 examples of hostility towards priests and a collection published during the Franco régime that contained over 200. Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain* (London: Routledge, 1992), 165. Frances Lannon defines National Catholicism as an ideology that looked back to the age of imperial greatness and whose central tenet was “an insistent equation of Spanish identity with Catholicism.”

11. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 166. Dendle argues that anticlericalism faded away to become a non-issue in literature. I disagree and it is still a theme in both fiction and cinema. Dendle, *The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis, 1876–1936*.

12. According to Magnien, the literary world in the twenties treated both Blasco Ibáñez and Pérez Galdós badly and rejected them. This reached “an indecent level at the time of their deaths.” Despite this, they were the preferred reading of the public. Magnien, “Crisis de la novela,” in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 251. Federica Montseny wrote a positive obituary for Blasco Ibáñez: “Ha muerto un novelista,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 114 (15 February 1928), 555–558.

13. Dendle, *The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis, 1876–1936*, 23. Some novels by Blasco Ibáñez and Pérez Galdós feature priests who run the domestic sphere in place of the husband, adding a gendered dimension to their anticlericalism. *Ibid.*, 53.

monasteries.<sup>14</sup> The 1901 premiere of Pérez Galdós' play, *Electra*, was the occasion for a massive anticlerical demonstration.<sup>15</sup>

Because the Church penetrated all aspects of society, religious ideas shaped anticlerical forces. It is important to see this dominance as an influence and a contributing factor to anticlericalism, rather than solely as having a negative impact on Montseny's thought. She, like others, used religious models and sources as vehicles for anticlerical arguments and messages. In Ricardo Macías Picavea's (1847–1899) *La tierra de Campos* (1888), a struggling revolutionary acquires the same attributes as Christ; similar characters existed in works by Blasco Ibáñez and Pérez Galdós.<sup>16</sup> In 1920, Concha Espina (María de la Concepción Jesusa Basilisa Espina, 1869–1955) published *El metal de los muertos*. This novel about a strike at the Rio Tinto mines created a parallel between the revolutionaries and Christianity.<sup>17</sup> Because the mine was British-owned, the novel featured a Catholic nationalism combating foreign exploiters. As part of the anticlerical forces in Spain, anarchists had long used religious terminology as a tool for education and symbolism.<sup>18</sup>

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14. Joan Connelly Ullman. "The Warp and Woof of Parliamentary Politics in Spain, 1808–1939: Anticlericalism Versus 'Neo-Catholicism,'" *European Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (1983), 155–156.

15. Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 38. The King's tutor and confessor had recently published an article denouncing liberalism as a sin.

16. Dendle, *The Spanish Novel of Religious Thesis, 1876–1936*, 58.

17. *Ibid.*, 83. Espina was a supporter of the Nationalists during the Civil War. Carolyn Galerstein, "The Spanish Civil War: The View of Women Novelists," *Letras Femeninas* 10, no. 2 (1984), 17.

18. Lida, "Literatura anarquista y anarquista literario," 370. In this article, Lida is also making the distinction between anarchist texts and "literary" anarchists, authors whose anarchism was temporary and not profound.

Montseny did not perceive any substantive difference between the Church and the state in Spain.<sup>19</sup> Following Bakunin's argument in his critique of Rousseau, she considered the two parallel: the church based on the "fictitious fact" of divine revelation and the state based on the "real fact" of force. "On the basis of this absurdity and this iniquity, both resort to the most rigorous logic to erect a theological system on the one hand and a juridical system on the other."<sup>20</sup> It was almost impossible in this period to separate the two institutions in Spain — since 1843 religious appointments were under state control.<sup>21</sup> It was a central component in Montseny's writing, and her fiction abounded in religious references that she used to convey a clear anti-clerical message.<sup>22</sup> Her novella *María de Magdala* not only adapted the Christ

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19. The classical anarchist statement on the state and church is Mikhail Bakunin's "God and the State," a fragment taken from a work originally published in 1871. Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, "God and the State," in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 2nd ed., ed. Sam Dolgoff (Montréal: Black Rose, 1980), 225–242.

20. Bakunin's note to his 1867 "Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism," in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 2nd ed., ed. Sam Dolgoff (Montréal: Black Rose, 1980), 441 n. 12.

21. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 177.

22. As Graham points out "Catholicism determined the culture, the mind sets and the actions not only of the faithful, but also of its opponents." Helen Graham, "Spain and Europe: The View from the Periphery," *Historical Journal* 35, no. 4 (1992), 970. Scientists, often themselves anticlerical, used an explicitly religious vocabulary to describe maternity and the eminent gynecologist, Vital Aza Díaz (1890–1961), stated that when a woman gave birth she became, like Mary, without sin. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 217. The use of religious forms in popular literature is common throughout Europe. For other Spanish examples, see Lida, "Literatura anarquista y anarquista literario." "In 1865 Bakunin had been preparing *Catechism for a Revolutionary* for his colleagues in the Secret Alliance. In Spain, the writer and republican politician Roque Barcia published in 1869 *El evangelio del pueblo*, with great success among his co-religionists. The anarchists adopted the same form, and three years later, Nicolás Alonso Marselau, the Andalusian internationalist with the greatest prestige, published from a Seville jail *El evangelio del obrero* in 1872." *Ibid.*, 373. Reprinted in 1898 and 1931, the *evangelio* was a popular document. Alonso Marselau edited a journal of the same name. The funding came from Protestants in the United States. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Alonso Marselau, Nicolás."

story, *La Revista Blanca* advertised it in explicitly Christian language.<sup>23</sup> The advertisement drew its language and characters from Christianity, but used these to attack it. “Christian mythology” followed the word “resurrection,” a direct questioning of the truth of the resurrection of Christ. It promised a new contemporary Sermon on the Mount.

*María de Magdala* is a resurrection of some of the figures of Christian mythology with the beliefs and sentiments of today. The possibility is that the passion of Jesus may have occurred, and is repeated, exactly, in our Christian prioritized societies, just as it was the pagan. In *María de Magdala* appear, updated and humanized, the principle personages of the passion of Christ: Maria Magdalena, María de Jesús, Martha, Mary, and Jesus himself, who today, with a greater concept of human dignity, rebels against the end of redemption and proclaims a Sermon on the Mount that is a song to life and to love.<sup>24</sup>

The story followed the life of Jesus of Rigabell, born to seventeen-year-old María five months after her marriage to a much older José. Before age fifteen, he traveled to Barcelona and there discovered the “frightening coldness” and “unfeeling cruelty” of official charity and religion.<sup>25</sup> Throughout her account of his life in Barcelona, Montseny compared Jesus of Rigabell and Jesus of Nazareth. She identified them as two suffering beings struggling against oppression. At the end of the novel, Jesus returned the love of three women (the exotic dancer María Magdalena and the sisters María and Marta). Montseny concluded the novel by observing that Jesus’ problem, the love of

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23. Federica Montseny, *María de Magdala*, La Novela Ideal 56 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1927). The cover has an alternate title, *María de Magda* that was an error. “La Novela Ideal,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), I.

24. This text is from the announcement of forthcoming novellas in the series. “La Novela Ideal,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 97 (1 June 1927), I. Persecution by the Church could also be an intellectual bonus and a sales point. See Federica Montseny, “Pi y Margall o una vida austera,” *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 180 (15 November 1930), 273–275 where she notes Pi y Margall’s *Historia de la pintura* was condemned by the Church and its sale forbidden by royal decree. This made it even more desirable to anticlericals.

25. Montseny, *María de Magdala*, 26.

three women, was itself more interesting than any solution. Montseny created a carnal Jesus of Rigabell who enjoyed the pleasures of sex in contrast to the Church's celibate Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, Montseny did not hesitate to use the form and even the substance of religion to aid in understanding her work.<sup>27</sup> Montseny used a popular understanding of religious practice to convey an anti-clerical message. The lead chapter of *La victoria*, her first published novel, was entitled "The Annunciation" and ended with Clara, the central protagonist, spending Sunday afternoon listening to an anarchist orator in a park. Annunciation may have indicated the specific day (March 25) but it was above all an intentional reference to the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary to tell her that she would bear the Christ child.<sup>28</sup> The speech, to which Clara listened "greedily," gave her a beatific vision of the future, where no one lacked anything and life was peaceful and serene. This consequently gave her a fresh outlook on life, and "opened new horizons." It was an annunciation because through the speech she learned about and adopted a new life, her "virgin"

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26. Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 49–52.

27. Nor did Isadora Duncan, whom Montseny admired, hesitate to use religion. "I had come to Europe to bring about a great renaissance of religion through the Dance, to bring the knowledge of the Beauty and Holiness of the human body through its expression of movements, and not to dance for the amusement of overfed bourgeoisie after dinner." Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Liveright, 1927), 85. Duncan's dance was for her and Montseny like a religion, harkening back to the ancient Greeks and the cult of the body. Montseny perceived this as nature and clearly in opposition to the Spanish Church's suppression of the natural and naked human form.

28. It also tied directly into what Clara states about giving her own life and her only son at the end of Montseny's novel *El hijo de Clara*. She is sacrificing her son for the good of humanity. It is clearly a mother's sacrifice paralleling that of Mary and Jesus. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 254.

dreams are now the basis of this new life, an “ideal revelation.”<sup>29</sup> Here again was a potentially ambiguous religious reference, what the character signified in this novel was a modern woman. She could be modern since she rejected religious influences and was open to anarchism. What constituted a modern woman was of great concern to Montseny and she devoted a great deal of attention to it (see chapters 7–9). For this chapter, it suffices to say a modern woman for Montseny was educated and secular (freed of “moral and religious slavery”), made her own decisions and did not obey others (like fathers, in both the religious and secular senses of the word).<sup>30</sup>

Almost all leftists stereotyped women by underestimating their independent judgment and viewing them as subordinate to priests.<sup>31</sup> So did the right, but they referred to it differently. Rather than subordination, they

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29. Montseny, *La victoria*, 13. Note again the mixed–use religious imagery in the chapter title, “Annunciation,” and the double use of ideal for ideal and anarchism, a common practice.

30. Federica Montseny, “La mujer nueva,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 65 (15 May 1926), 24.

31. The fear that women were under the control of their parish priests would lead to the contradiction of many on the left opposed to and those on the right in favor of the extension of suffrage to women in 1931. *La Revista Blanca* would encourage anarchist men to marry religious women, but not the reverse, as religious women were seen as appropriate for an anarchist because the women were subjected to the religious ambiance in Spain, and could not be held responsible for their lack of political ideas. “Exposure to anarchist ideas makes it possible for their lives to be altered, as a spiritual evolution would be easily realized.”

“Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 12, no. 278 (18 May 1934), 429. Similar beliefs in France influenced this persistent association of women and religion in Spain. Closely connected to republicanism, the French historian Jules Michelet made this argument in the nineteenth century. See Marilyn J. Boxer, “First Wave’ Feminism in Nineteenth–Century France: Class, Family and Religion,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 5, no. 6 (1982), 553 and Ernest H. Labrousse, “Observations on a New Modern History of France,” *New Left Review*, no. 86 (1974), 88–101. I disagree with his statement that the relationship between anticlericalism and republicanism is peculiarly French. The link between women and religious belief was prevalent in Cuba as well, which had close contacts with Spain. See Shaffer, “Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionary Mothers in Cuban Anarchism,” 8.

portrayed it as accepting the guidance of priests and other religious figures.<sup>32</sup> For the right, women were the guardians of tradition, a source of “social continuity.”<sup>33</sup> This chapter outlines the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain and anticlericalism. It concludes with an analysis of Montseny’s novella *Resurrección*. This novella is an excellent example of anarchist anti-clericalism and Montseny’s belief in the redemptive power of nature.

### **THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SPAIN**

The Spanish Church was one of the most powerful in post–World War I Europe. Rumored to have a great deal of financial power, the Church was perceived as a major landowner.<sup>34</sup> It controlled most schools and was a dominating factor in public life. The hierarchy was in a constant state of anxiety that its position was slipping.<sup>35</sup> Yet, its most active support came from a rising bourgeoisie that united with the historical aristocracy in defending the position of the Church.

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32. According to one American political scientist, it was the reason behind the setting aside of seats for women in Primo de Rivera’s National Assembly. “Women as well as men belong to the Assembly, this being an unprecedented provision in Spain. Their presence clearly reveals that the stabilizing influences of religious conservatism were sought for by the Directory in deciding on the composition of the Assembly.” Malbon W. Graham, “The Spanish Directory and the Constitution,” *American Political Science Review* 23, no. 1 (1929), 155. See also my chapter 7.

33. From *El Debate*, the most important Catholic daily newspaper. Quoted in Helen Graham, “Women and Social Change,” in *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction; The Struggle for Modernity*, eds. Jo Labanyi and Helen Graham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 104.

34. I use perceived because even as the Church’s actual holdings of land were reduced by the liberal reforms in the nineteenth century, the popular view of church landholding persisted. This is also attributable to the fact that it still owned substantial amounts of urban property in Church buildings such as churches, convents, monasteries, schools, as well similar structures in rural areas. A church is easily recognizable and its ownership is clear.

35. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 188.



A pronunciamiento restored the Bourbon monarchy to the throne after the failure of the First Republic (1873–1874). To stabilize its support the government ennobled members of the colonial and industrial elite.<sup>36</sup> Spain was not unique in its merging of the ancien régime aristocracy with the nouveau riche merchants and industrialists. Raymond Carr states that these new aristocrats “swamped” the older aristocracy and were the Restoration’s strongest social force.<sup>37</sup> Spanish Catholics accepted the Restoration régime in response to the attempts at secularization during the First Republic. The Restoration restored the terms of the Concordat of 1851 making Roman Catholicism the state religion, which had been abolished by the secularizing First Republic. The Constitution of 1876 established the expenditure of state funds for the support of Catholic worship, provided stipends for priests and bishops, required religious marriage, burial in sanctified ground, and gave bishops seats in the Senate. Non–Catholics could practice their faith, but only in private. The law prohibited non–Catholics from building houses of worship

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36. Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 9.

37. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 432. Spain is similar in this aspect to the nations discussed in Arno J. Meyer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Carr gives these specific figures: “After 1875, 214 marquises, 167 counts and 30 viscounts were created.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 452 n. 1. Ealham points out that there was a rash of ennoblements after the loss of the empire: “It became commonplace for Catalan entrepreneurs to take on Castilian feudal titles as a status symbol, either through intermarriage with Spaniards or, simply by purchasing them. Eusebi Güell, from the financial dynasty that patronised the work of Antoni Gaudi, became Count Güell after marrying into the Santander nobility. Ties between bourgeoisie and aristocracy were further cemented during the reign of Alfonso XIII, a period when the Crown openly feted Catalan capitalists and established hundreds of Counts, Barons, Dukes and Viscounts.” Chris Ealham, “Anarco–Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesia and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia,” *ACIS Journal* 7, no. 1 (1994), 53.

or erecting any symbols of their faith.<sup>38</sup> Practically, there was no distinction between civil and religious events as Catholic religious rites and symbolism were integral parts of state ceremonies.<sup>39</sup> The oligarchy viewed Catholicism as the glue that held the weak national state together. In turn, the hierarchy of the Church supported the state.

During the Restoration, there was a Catholic revival, as religious vocations grew, especially among women, who became a significant portion of the clergy.<sup>40</sup> In 1910 there were 42,000 nuns and 22,000 monks. At the end of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and just before the Second Republic, the nuns had significantly increased while the number of monks declined: 60,000 nuns and 20,000 monks.<sup>41</sup> Because the weak state provided few social services, the Church was the principal provider, including soup kitchens for nursing mothers and dormitories for working women.<sup>42</sup> Thus, in Spain, Catholic thought and practice dominated the social services that other states in Europe administered themselves. Furthermore, Spanish clergy punished non-believers by denying them services. The Church frequently denied help

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38. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 148–149. Frances Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 40. Reportedly, British royalty would not visit Spain because of it. Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 38. With the brief exception of the Second Republic, this official clerical–state relationship remained in effect until the post–Franco Constitution of 1978.

39. Julián Casanova Ruíz, “A vueltas con los símbolos religiosos,” *El País* (19 April 2008).

40. “Thirty–four new male orders appeared after 1875 and 115 monasteries were founded. ... The female orders actually led the revival of the regular clergy after 1875. Forty–one new orders were founded during the Restoration and by 1900 there were over 42,000 nuns, making up almost half of all the clergy.” Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 150.

41. Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 40. She refers to them as “male religious” and nuns, I assume monks, as later she discusses parish priests.

42. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 165.

to those who did not attend mass or confession. The priests in charge of a prison hospital denied the poet Miguel Hernández Gilabert (1910–1942) penicillin because he was an atheist.<sup>43</sup> The women staffing female prisons were nuns, as were most nurses. Their public image suffered among the working-class as shown in Montseny's unfavorable depiction of the hospital sisters in at least three novellas.<sup>44</sup> Convents sequestered pregnant prostitutes, often against their will.<sup>45</sup> Religious authorities could seize children from "unfit parents." Montseny's novella *El rescate de la cautiva* [*The Rescue of the Captive*] drew upon the real life example of the Church seizing a young girl and refusing to return her to her adoptive parents.<sup>46</sup> The couple had adopted

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43. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 197; Chris Ealham, "The Myth of the 'Maddened Crowd': Class, Culture and Space in the Revolutionary Urbanist Project of Barcelona, 1936–7," in *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939*, eds. Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 129; Chris Ealham, "Myths' and the Spanish Civil War: Some Old, Some Exploded, Some Clearly Borrowed and Some Almost 'Blue'," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 2 (2007), 372.

44. Montseny, *María de Magdala*, 23–25. See also Federica Montseny, *La vida que empieza*, La Novela Ideal 78 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1928) and its sequel *Sor Angélica*, La Novela Ideal 83 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1928), published a month or so later. In these novellas, Sister Angélica reaches her fulfillment only when she falls in love in *La vida que empieza* [*The Life that Begins*] and then leaves the order and truly becomes an angel for the man she loves in *Sor Angélica* [*Sister Angelica* (angelic)]. This man was a blind soldier, presumably blinded in Morocco. Nuns would be replaced as prison guards beginning in 1931 by the Republican Director of Prisons, Victoria Kent Siano (1898–1987), the first woman appointed to a high position in the government and a member of Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas (see my chapter 7). Kent established training schools for female prison guards. Kent radically changed the prison system, challenging all the traditions of Spanish criminology. The Franco régime returned nuns to prisons and other disciplinary institutions. Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 32.

45. The Patronage for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic worked with the Trinitarians, the Adoration, and the Oblates, whose convents took in prostitutes. Pedro Trinidad Fernández, "La infancia delincuente y abandonada," in *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, dir. José María Borrás Llop (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales. Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1996), 481.

46. Federica Montseny, *El rescate de la cautiva*, La Novela Ideal 62 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1927). An anarchist captivity narrative.

Josefina from the Church's *Inclusa* (a Church run institution that was a combination of a foundling hospital and an orphanage). When she wanted to marry Jenaro, an older man who was not religious, her parents sought the advice of the *Inclusa*'s priest. To prevent the marriage the Church did not allow Josefina to leave the *Inclusa*. The only way to "rescue the captive" was for Jenaro to confess, attend mass, and take communion. He follows the Church's demands due to his love of Josefina. Even secular people learned to defer to an unavoidable ecclesiastical authority.<sup>47</sup>

The veneer of a parliamentary system lent an apparent political stability to the Restoration. A turning point was the 1898 defeat and the loss of the majority of its colonies in the Spanish–American War. Critics began to argue that the Restoration had accomplished little except seemingly ending the numerous pronunciamientos.<sup>48</sup> This belief foundered with Primo de Rivera's September 1923 pronunciamiento.

The loss of the remnants of empire in the "Disaster of 1898" further strengthened ties between Church and state. The Church viewed military defeat by the United States as a punishment for sin and the state responded by identifying Roman Catholicism with the unity of the Spanish nation. In the absence of secular nationalism, the myth of a unified Catholic Spain

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47. Ullman, "The Warp and Woof of Parliamentary Politics in Spain, 1808–1939," 47. Ealham discusses the "repressive and draconian religious figures" and gives the example of nuns baptizing hospitalized children without parental consent as producing popular anticlericalism. Ealham, "Anarco–Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesía and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia," 54.

48. There were none between 1886 and Primo de Rivera's in 1923. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 558.

prevailed.<sup>49</sup> In 1909, several leading Catholic publicists founded Acción Católica Nacional de Propaganda. Its purpose was to protect the power and expand the influence of the Church. The Association flourished through its connections to hundreds of publications, including daily newspapers, in most of the provinces.<sup>50</sup> On October 12, 1917, King Alfonso XIII declared the day a national holiday celebrating *hispanidad* and Catholic unity.<sup>51</sup> Two years later, he dedicated the entire nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.<sup>52</sup>

In retrospect, it is clear that these were defensive reactions responding to the diminishing importance of religion in Spain. Historian of the Spanish Church, Frances Lannon, states it was notable for having perhaps the most retrograde and anachronistic Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in Europe.<sup>53</sup>

Catholic archaism, however, was not limited to nostalgia for the confessional uniformity of a former age and for political structures capable of enforcing such uniformity. It extended also to a thorough going rejection of what Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* of 1864 had called 'modern civilization,' as manifest in anything ranging from socialism through co-education to experimental art forms.<sup>54</sup>

The Church provided a constant criticism of public mores and demanded greater control of the press and education. In 1901, at the

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49. This is an argument of Shubert in *A Social History of Modern Spain*.

50. Lannon, "The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 44. Shubert gives the figure of 750 publications for 1913. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 154. Of course, this figure does not give any indication of the readership or influence of these newspapers. Given the low literacy rates, I suspect that the very members of Spanish society who were already supportive of the Church read these newspapers. However, the major Catholic newspaper, *El Debate*, was an important source to reveal what the Church hierarchy was thinking.

51. Casanova Ruíz, "A vueltas con los símbolos religiosos."

52. Lannon, "The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 44.

53. Frances Lannon, "A Basque Challenge to the Pre-Civil War Spanish Church," *European Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (1979), 30. Pope Pius IX (1792-1878, pope 1846-1878) issued the *Syllabus Errorum* [*Syllabus of Errors*] on December 8, 1864.

54. *Ibid.*, 29.

dedication of the basilica of Covadonga, the Bishop of Oviedo denounced modern publications — books, newspapers, pamphlets — as the weapons of the “new Moors,” seeking to destroy the nation and the faith, which were inseparable in this view.<sup>55</sup> The Church divided the world in two, and one had to take sides either with the faith of the Church or with liberalism.<sup>56</sup>

The Church saw liberalism as only one of the most recent fruits of a whole series of errors in a genealogy of problems. It began with the Renaissance and led to the Reformation. This gave birth to the French Revolution from which sprung liberalism.<sup>57</sup> For Montseny, however, the Renaissance was one of the three great ages when humanity made progress towards liberation and flourished in unfettered thought. The first was Greece with its “cult of beauty, philosophy of happiness and heroism”; then came the Italian Renaissance, which “awoke the world from the religious ignorance” of the Middle Ages; and finally the *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Jean le Rond d’Alembert (1713–1783), the “uplifting of the human spirit against the closed dogma of the Reformation.”<sup>58</sup>

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55. Quoted in Boyd, “The Second Battle of Covadonga,” 48.

56. Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 41.

57. Lannon, “A Basque Challenge to the Pre–Civil War Spanish Church,” 34 and Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 41–42. At the end of the Primo de Rivera régime the Bishop of Lerida complained “From where did the perdition of Spain stem if not from these damned liberties, the stepdaughters of the revolution?” Quoted in Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 353. See Peter Gowan, “A Spanish Singleton,” *New Left Review*, no. 6 (2000), 144–149 for a discussion of how the anti–liberal ideas of Juan Donoso Cortés influenced politicians and intellectuals across Europe, including Pius IX, Louis Napoleon, Bismarck, and Nicolas I.

58. Federica Montseny, “El retorno de la naturaleza,” *La Revista Blanca* 9, no. 192 (15 May 1931), 584. Undoubtedly the popularity in anarchist publications of reproductions of Greek

The Church embedded itself in politics. It closely identified with the Bourbon monarchy, and then enthusiastically supported the pronunciamiento of Primo de Rivera in September 1923.<sup>59</sup> The Church's lay organizations, *Acción Católica* (Catholic Action, founded 1881), and its women's branch, *Acción Católica de las Mujeres* (Women's Catholic Action, ACM, founded in 1919), spent enormous energies combating nudes in art, the length of skirts, and the cinema.<sup>60</sup> Following the instructions of Pius XI (1857–1939, pope 1922–1939) in the 1922 encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, *Acción Católica* conducted “the *holy battle* waged on so many fronts to vindicate for the family and the Church the natural and divinely given rights which they possess over education and the school.”<sup>61</sup> The lack of concern over economic issues and democracy only highlighted the growing gap between the official Church and both the urban working class and southern peasantry.<sup>62</sup> The parishes reflected

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sculpture and Italian Renaissance paintings with classical themes was the Spanish Church's condemnation of these very same works.

59. An “assault” on the Church was one of the reasons offered by Primo de Rivera to justify his pronunciamiento. This assault was a 1923 proposal to abolish religious education and to tax religious property. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 23–24.

60. Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 45. The founding date of *Acción Católica* is unclear. See Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*, 146–149. See Montseny's comment on a week *Acción Católica* devoted to combating “improper” beach attire. Federica Montseny, “Glosas: La moral en las playas,” *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 337 (5 July 1935), 648, and a newspaper account “La moralidad en las playas,” *La Vanguardia* (31 May 1935), 27. Art was another object of Church criticism. “To be truly real, art had to be related to religion and therefore heedful of moral criteria which, for example, made nude statues completely unacceptable.” Lannon, “A Basque Challenge to the Pre-Civil War Spanish Church,” 34.

61. Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_23121922\\_ubi-arcano-dei-consilio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_23121922_ubi-arcano-dei-consilio_en.html) paragraph 54 of the copy from the Vatican website, checked in July 2010. The italics are in the original.

62. Graham also links it to landholding patterns. In the northern parts of Spain, where smallholders predominated, the Church worked with local peasants through credit banks and

a similar distance from contemporary society with working–class parishes having extremely low ratios of priests to potential parishioners, while bourgeois parishes reversed this ratio. The diocesan boundaries had not substantially changed for centuries, so Madrid and Barcelona, the two largest and most important cities in Restoration Spain, with the largest working classes, were part of bishoprics located in smaller cities.<sup>63</sup> The Church did modify its teachings on labor, which became a task or responsibility similar to other obligations rather than a punishment for sin.<sup>64</sup> This was not a response to the *Rerum Novarum* or any attempt at social Catholicism, but rather a reflection of the Church’s recognition that outside of a few regions, such as Navarre, its most profound support came from the upper levels of society.<sup>65</sup> In most of the largely rural south, Church attendance consisted of only the upper classes and those who depended upon this élite for their livelihoods.<sup>66</sup> Even the bourgeoisie could be critical of the Church. In 1912, one of the officers of the major employers’ organization, the *Fomento del Trabajo Nacional*

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other services but in the south where there were large landed estates these services were absent. Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939*, 5.

63. Toledo and Tarragona, respectively, were the bishoprics for Madrid and Barcelona until the 1950s. See Frances Lannon, “An Élite of Grace: The Spanish Bishops in the Twentieth Century,” in *Élites and Power in Twentieth–Century Spain: Essays in Honor of Sir Raymond Carr*, eds. Frances Lannon and Paul Preston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 12.

64. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 156.

65. Isabel Oyarzábal Smith de Palencia (1878–1974) was a member of the haute bourgeoisie and a leader of the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas (see my chapter 7). Montseny viewed her attempts to establish a Catholic socialism as sincere but doomed to failure.

Federica Montseny, “La falta de idealidad en el feminismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 3. Curiously, the Spanish language text of *Rerum Novarum* on the Vatican website is addressed solely to workers, the English to “capital and labor.”

66. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*, 20–21. There was an anarchist reading circle of women in Casa Viejas before the infamous events of 1933. Letter from Ana Cabezas Valle to Federico Urales, June 3, 1932. AGGCE.



(Promotion of National Work, 1889–date), stated that Jesuits controlled a third of Spain’s capital.<sup>67</sup>

The Church was in steady decline in urban areas. The rates of baptism and last rites fell off after the turn of the century, with baptism in the first week after childbirth dropping from thirty percent in 1900 to 1935’s ten percent in Barcelona.<sup>68</sup> Even in the Basque region, perceived as intensely devoted to the Church, a study by local seminary students of a working–class area in Bilbao produced similar findings, with half of the survey’s subjects dying without last rites.<sup>69</sup> Some clerical investigators attributed this rapid decline to the Church’s lack of a social mission and the perception by the working class and the poor that the Church was solely a bourgeois institution, more concerned with the defense of the propertied than the poor.<sup>70</sup> The Church failed to address the changes in parishes, and unlike the Roman Catholic Church in Northern Europe, was unwilling to develop any true, much less effective, implementation of *Rerum Novarum*.

Confessional trade unions formed, but they included employers, as well. The founder of the confederation of confessional unions was Claudio López

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67. Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 47. Carr calls the Fomento the “most powerful pressure group in modern Spain.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 539.

68. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 162. He also states that Asturias and Madrid were not much different.

69. Lannon, “A Basque Challenge to the Pre–Civil War Spanish Church,” 39–40.

70. According to Lannon, a Father Peiró “detected a deep–rooted mistrust of Catholicism as an essentially bourgeois phenomenon, committed to the defence of property against workers’ revindications, and hypocritical in the social morality it preached.” Frances Lannon, “The Church’s Crusade against the Republic,” in Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939*, 49.

Bru (1853–1925), the second Marquis of Comillas.<sup>71</sup> The second Marquis was a leading lay Catholic and head of Acción Católica, a board member of the ITT–owned Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España, and a major businessman.<sup>72</sup> His sister married Eusebi Güell i Bacigalupi (1846–1918), the first Count of Güell, an equally religious and powerful family. Catholic trade unions were strongest in Catalonia, especially in the province of Barcelona.

Province	Number	Percentage of Total Members
Asturias	748	0.67%
Barcelona	105,486	94.82%
Guipúzcoa	707	0.64%
Lérida	130	0.12%
Madrid	1720	1.55%
Navarra	842	0.76%
Tarragona	91	0.08%
Vizcaya	1528	1.37%
	111,252	

Source: compiled from Antonio Elorza Domínguez, *La utopía anarquista bajo la segunda república: Precedido de otros trabajos* (Madrid: Ayuso, 1973), 291–294.

The Church emphasized reliance on paternalism and charity rather than acknowledge any possibility of social conflict. Employers used the Catholic labor organizations to discipline workers, controlling and restricting any

71. Ángel Smith, “Barcelona through the European Mirror: From Red and Black to Claret and Blue.” In *Red Barcelona: Social Protest and Labour Mobilisation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ángel Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 4–6. The Comillas family held multiple interests in Spain and the colonies. The basis of the family fortune was the Compañía Transatlántica Española, which began in Cuba. “It is a curious quirk of history, and an indication of the economic importance of Comillas, that Huysman’s hero, dos Esseintes, had a *Transatlántica* poster in his room.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 433 n. 1.

72. Comillas did not leave Primo de Rivera’s side the night of his pronunciamiento. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 46.

possibility of mass action, monitoring their lives, and firing those workers who did not attend mass. Employers reduced the work week or hours and opposed wage hikes, arguing that any additional free time and or money led to vice.<sup>73</sup> When priests in these organizations made a few attempts to promote the workers' interests over those of the employer, they were unsuccessful.<sup>74</sup> While the hierarchy acknowledged and made avowed obeisance towards *Rerum Novarum*, they knew their interests in Spain lay more with the bourgeoisie than with the working class.<sup>75</sup> Even in the ostensibly devout Basque region, socialism was the dominant ideology of the workers. Ironically, the time when a truly social Catholic trade union, the *Solidaridad de Obreros Vascos* (Basque Workers Solidarity, SOV, 1911–date), challenged this dominance was during the Second Republic.<sup>76</sup> It gained strength due to the reforms of the Socialist Minister of Labor, Francisco Largo Caballero.

These attempts at labor organizing did bear fruit with the peasantry of the central and northern regions of the country where a confessional peasants'

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73. Ealham, "Anarco–Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesía and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia," 53.

74. Scanlon, writing about female Catholic unions, argues that even when the organizers were sincere, they ended up aiding the owners and reaffirming the established hierarchy. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 100.

75. Lannon, "The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 44.

76. SOV was "a moderate, Christian inspired union movement with several priests prominent in its ranks and close links with the centre–right Nationalist party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV). Its membership was restricted to workers and employees of pure Basque descent; its unions rejected ideas of class struggle and advocated a conciliatory line in labour disputes. Finally, SOV shared the PNV's ideal vision of social harmony for the Basque Country based on 'national' (meaning Basque) solidarity between workers and employers." Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpúrua, "The Basque Question, 1931–7," in Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939*, 183. He does later go on to remark that there was a strong racist and corporatist view in both the SOV and PNV. *Ibid.*, 190.

organization, the *Confederación Nacional Católica Agraria* (National Catholic Agrarian Confederation, CNCA 1906/1917–1941), was successful for decades. Yet even here it was religion, rather than class, that provided the basis for a successful organization as class-based unions were condemned as organs of a “diseased” urban working class.<sup>77</sup> The CNCA campaigned to retain the tariff on imported grains, ostensibly to benefit small farmers, but even here, the property owners of the Southern *latifundia* benefitted more as the wheat tariff kept grain prices artificial high. It penalized urban workers due to the elevated cost of the major staple of their diet, bread.<sup>78</sup> In both the urban and rural organizations, the principal concern was to “immunize” the members against social contagion, the possible infection of radical ideas. While the CNCA did benefit its members through the provision of cooperatives and generous loans, opponents knew Catholic trade unions more for strike breaking and piety than for any economic benefits to their members.<sup>79</sup>

In Catalonia, employers supported the formation the confessional *Sindicatos libres* as a weapon against the working class, overwhelmingly organized in the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. To the syndicalists the *Sindicatos libres* were professional gunmen, hired by employers to eliminate the true representatives of the working-class. According to Chris Ealham, the

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77. Adrian Shubert, “Spanish Labour Historiography: 1979–1982,” *International Labor and Working Class History*, no. 23 (1983), 16.

78. *Ibid.*, 15.

79. Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 43 and Lannon, “The Church’s Crusade Against the Republic,” in Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939*, 45–46. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 159. Note the medical language of disease and immunization.

Sindicatos libres executed the task set by employers: “physically eliminating a generation of Catalan trade union militants.”<sup>80</sup> Approximately 152 people died in Barcelona between 1921 and 1923, from both sides of the dispute, including twenty-one union officials within forty-eight hours.<sup>81</sup> After the assassination of Seguí, anarchist militants murdered the Archbishop of Zaragoza, Juan Solvedilla y Romero (1843–1923) in revenge. Of course, it was not only physical elimination but also the fear of violence on both sides as well as the legal violence of the state that deterred labor militancy. It led to an increasing radicalization and rise to power of a generation of younger leaders in Spanish anarchism.<sup>82</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the everyday practice of religion became the responsibility of women and part of the private sphere, feminizing it. The expectation was that men would still be devout, but increasingly the division of life into spheres meant that religion and charitable works became the province of almost exclusively well-to-do women.<sup>83</sup> Religious practice became a dividing line between masculinity and femininity, as men wanted to be

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80. Ealham, “Anarco–Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesía and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia,” 53. For a vastly more favorable portrayal of the Libres, and correspondingly harsh on the CNT, see Colin M. Winston, “The Proletarian Carlist Road to Fascism: Sindicalismo Libre,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 4 (1982), 557–585 and Colin M. Winston, *Workers and the Right in Spain, 1900–1936* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

81. Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936–1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 15. His numbers are less than those in Ben–Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 332.

82. See Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*; Martin, *The Agony of Modernization*; Gerald H. Meaker, “Anarchists Versus Syndicalists: Conflicts Within the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, 1917–1923,” in *Politics and Society in Twentieth–Century Spain*, ed. Stanley G. Payne (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 29–72; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction*; and Winston, *Workers and the Right in Spain, 1900–1936*.

83. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 35.

independent of religious strictures.<sup>84</sup> Men, regardless of their class, viewed priests and other religious figures as lesser men. Additionally, especially among the working class and anticlericals, femininity and devotion were synonymous.<sup>85</sup> Literature reinforced this belief, pairing women with unparalleled religious devotion, for good or ill, depending on the beliefs of the author.<sup>86</sup>

There was a rapid growth of the Marian cults, with the simultaneous binary view of women as either Eve (fallen) or Mary (virtuous). The virtuous woman was either a virgin or a mother.<sup>87</sup> Domesticity became the goal, as the ideal woman was the *ángel del hogar*, angel of the hearth (or home).<sup>88</sup> This ideology drew on sixteenth century Catholic texts such as Juan Luis Vives' *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* and Fray Luis de Leon's *La perfecta casada*, which were standard wedding gifts.<sup>89</sup> Paradoxically, despite their greater moral authority, men perceived women as weak, physically and morally;

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84. Aresti Esteban argues that the gender differences in mass attendance and the growth rates of nuns versus monks reflect this gendering of religion. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 162.

85. Gendering the lesser other as female is tied to the history of religious intolerance in Spain. "One way of according infamy to Jews was precisely by attributing to them the category of 'imperfect males', that is, women." Cleminson and Vázquez García, "Breasts, Hair and Hormones," 635.

86. Authors could live private lives in contradiction to their public discourse. The distinction between public views and private actions is exemplified by the affair between two major Spanish novelists, the Catholic feminist Emilia Pardo Bazán and the anticlerical Benito Pérez Galdós.

87. Aurora Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 18.

88. Akiko Tsuchiya, "Discourses on Gender and the Question of 'Woman's' Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Spain," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000), 90. To make the *ángel del hogar* distinct as an ideology I am going to use the Spanish, rather than an English translation.

89. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 2. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 21.

consequently, they should be kept safe, at home, away from the perils of the public. The image of the *ángel del hogar* was an asexual one, which focused on care and softness rather than passion.<sup>90</sup> The duty of the *ángel del hogar* was to make men happy by giving them sanctuary from the pressures of the public sphere. These sixteenth century texts, still followed at the beginning of the twentieth century, were used to enforce the modern interpretation of a woman's duty: to guard the private sphere and allow men to act in the public sphere.<sup>91</sup>

At the same time, this was possible only for members of the upper classes, as women in the peasantry and working classes had to work to support the household. According to Pope Pius XI, Acción Católica was the ideal organization for Catholic women because it was apolitical and an appropriate organization for women as guardians of morality.<sup>92</sup> In 1930, the Church reiterated its ideals of womanhood in *Casti Connubii*: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.<sup>93</sup> A few prominent Catholics, such as Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo (1873–1946), a Catholic politician and lawyer, argued for equality or at least more rights for women before 1931. A firm believer in women's suffrage, he gave a 1928 talk in which he pointed out that in contrast

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90. Bridget Aldaraca, "The Revolution of 1868 and the Rebellion of Rosalía Bringas," *Anales Galdosianos*, no. 18 (1983), 60 n. 10.

91. Lou Charnon-Deutsch, "Concepción Arenal and the Nineteenth Century Spanish Debates About Women's Sphere and Education," in *Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition*, ed. Lisa Vollendorf (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2001), 200.

92. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 141.

93. *Ibid.*, 41.

to canon law, the Spanish civil law discriminated against women.<sup>94</sup> He argued for women's equality before the law. Another prominent Catholic advocate for women was the writer Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851–1921); however, Pardo Bazán's feminism was exactly the kind opposed by Montseny. She based her feminism on the needs of the well-to-do upper and middle-classes. She concerned herself more with power for the proper people, than with liberation for all.

Catholics, however, were in advance of the Socialists in attention to working-class women's issues. The *Sindicato Católica Femenina* (Female Catholic Union) and *Consejo Nacional de Corporaciones Obreras Católicas* (National Council of Catholic [Female] Workers' Corporations, CNCOC, a form of Catholic unions) having more female members than the Socialist UGT.<sup>95</sup> This was due in part to a masculinist industrial worker emphasis among the Socialists combined with their low level of organizing among peasants before the Second Republic. Since the majority of work in Spain was still agricultural, the Catholic peasants' cooperative movement was more successful in reaching women. Consequently, Catholic organizations were especially threatening to

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94. Glick, "Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras," 10. Glick refers to Ossorio y Gallardo as conservative, but compared to other Catholic politicians he was significantly more progressive. The discrimination was no different than that in Great Britain, France, or the United States according to María Isabel Cabrera Bosch, "Las mujeres que lucharon solas: Concepción Arenal y Emilia Pardo Bazán," in Folguera Cresp, *El feminismo en España*, 42.

95. Not until 1932 did the socialist UGT equal the CNCOC in female membership. Mary Nash "Ideals of Redemption: Socialism and Women on the Left in Spain," in Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, 355. Two important caveats: the working population was principally the rural peasantry, where the socialists made little effort until the Second Republic and the syndicalist CNT was a proscribed organization from 1923 until late in 1930, so there were no female members.



the socialist and anarchist movements that perceived feminism as dominated by religious and bourgeois women.<sup>96</sup> The Catholic Church was active in women's issues, and the assumption was that religious women would be passive, putty in the hands of the clergy, and accept subjugation in the hope of the afterlife.

An article by María Dolores Rodríguez in *La Revista Blanca* charged that Catholic women's movement, which referred to itself as feminist, wanted control of women in order to eradicate rebelliousness.<sup>97</sup> She was even more concerned that it restricted itself to women's issues alone. Those problems addressed by feminism were problems that the feminists sought to solve separately by sex as opposed to those seen as affecting humanity — i.e., both sexes, or those jointly faced by men — even going so far as to march against men.<sup>98</sup> This echoed Montseny's view that by focusing on sexual divisions, feminism — Catholic or not — divided women from men.<sup>99</sup> Anticlericals argued that Catholic women's organizations, clerical labor organizations, and the Church's charitable activities sought to prevent revolution by emphasizing religious activities. Anarchists believed that this prevented organizing and consciousness among the oppressed.

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96. *Ibid.*, 354.

97. There is no biographical information for María Dolores Rodríguez except she published this article. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Rodríguez, María Dolores." On the self-identification by Catholic women as feminists, see my chapter seven.

98. Feminists as used in this discourse applied to women who sought only the advancement of their own sex, rather than the advancement of both sexes. See my chapter 7.

99. María Dolores Rodríguez, "Algo acerca de las Asociaciones feministas," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 37 (1 December 1924), 20. Rodríguez also criticized the charitable activities of these women as being the "pastime of unoccupied women," serving the interests of their class. *Ibid.*, 21.

## ANTICLERICALISM

By the turn of the century, anticlericalism developed forms that were more organized. These included social movements such as the Partido Socialista Obrero de Español (Spanish Socialist Worker's Party, PSOE) and various anarchist groups. It was widespread among certain sectors in society, often lying dormant until something acted as a catalyst, as was the case in the nineteenth century.<sup>100</sup> What changed in the twentieth century was the combination of a series of trends that together served as a catalyst for an *organized* anticlericalism: increasingly wider diffusion of forms of mass communication of these social movements, growing levels of education and literacy, and accelerating rapid urbanization.<sup>101</sup>

Spaniards shared a common vocabulary and understanding due to the dominance of the Church, especially in education. Paradoxically, this gave the Spanish anarchists a vocabulary upon which to build their assault on the Church. The weakness of the state, the lack of penetration by a secular vocabulary, and the profound influence of the Church, gave religious culture a resonance that no other could match. Anarchists and other popular

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100. Ullman, "The Warp and Woof of Parliamentary Politics in Spain, 1808–1939," 157. Anticlericalism was widespread among anarchists, believing as they declared at the 1936 Zaragoza congress, "religion is for human beings purely subjective and consequently will be relegated to the sanctuary of individual consciousness, and not a matter of moral coercion or public ostentation." Notice the use of sanctuary, "*sagrario*" — from the same root as sacred. Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, "Concepto confederal del comunismo libertario (Conclusión)," *La Revista Blanca* 14, no. 384 (29 May 1936), 441.

101. Shubert argues that what was new in the twentieth century was urbanization. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 165. The work of anthropologist Susan Tax Freeman in her study of a Castilian village bears out the social function of Church attendance for communal solidarity only on feast day holidays, not regular Sunday attendance. Susan Tax Freeman, *Neighbors: The Social Contract in a Castilian Hamlet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

movements adapted this culture to attack the Church. This included popular forms of observance such as marches and local shrines, veneration of martyrs, publications, and pre-lapsarian myths.<sup>102</sup> Anti-clerical activists used religious culture to fill in for the lack of a common secular vocabulary of solidarity. This is not to agree with the millennial argument commonly associated with Eric Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels*. Rather, it is to argue that anarchists used what they had at hand not to fill a gap, but to create a new vision wrapped in the vocabulary of the old.

The structures and culture of an ancien régime Church heightened its archaism. Dominance by employers prevented its unions from protecting the economic interests of their worker members and become class organizations.<sup>103</sup> To dissent from established society and the Church that dominated it required moral courage because it opened the potential for isolation and alienation. Spiritualism, the belief in communication with the dead, was a popular anticlerical movement from the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth-century, centered in Barcelona. Significant battles occurred over civil burial and demands for non-religious cemeteries.<sup>104</sup> The conflict between the Spiritualists and the Church brought Spiritualists into Republican circles. Initially, Spiritualism was a predominantly middle class and artisanal movement, though by the end of the century workers dominated the

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102. The literature on this is vast, and I have only dipped into it. See Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*.

103. Lannon, "The Church's Crusade Against the Republic," in Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931-1939*, 45-46.

104. Lisa Abend, "Specters of the Secular: Spiritism in Nineteenth-Century Spain," *European History Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2004), 528-529.

Spiritualist circles with a corresponding shift from a Jacobin republicanism to more radical ideologies, including anarchism.<sup>105</sup>

### THE TRAGIC WEEK

The most serious eruption of anticlerical actions before the Civil War occurred from July 26 — August 1, 1909, known both in historiography and popular memory as *la semana trágica*, the Tragic Week.<sup>106</sup> A general strike against the calling up of troops to fight in the colonial conflict in Spanish Morocco quickly turned violent and crowds set fire to a third of the Church's property in Barcelona.<sup>107</sup> No priests or nuns were among the 112 killed, though twenty-one churches and thirty-one convents burned.<sup>108</sup>

The question of the deaths of clergy is important because in the Civil War there were nearly 7,000 clergy killed; 279 priests just in the province of Barcelona.<sup>109</sup> In his biography of Federica Montseny, Spanish revisionist

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105. *Ibid.*, 530. Montseny was not a spiritualist nor do her parents appear to have been, though all three would have been aware of the Spiritualist movement. Montseny writes that Gustavo believed in astrology. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 17.

106. The Montseny's were away from Barcelona because of the Montjuïc Trials. This international campaign was a continuation of the agitation around Dreyfus and part of a wider struggle against reaction. Smith, "Barcelona Through the European Mirror," in Smith, *Red Barcelona*, 7. The campaign also linked the trials to the Inquisition and the Black Legend. The English language pamphlets I have seen were often anti-Catholic. Max Nettlau, *Revival of the Inquisition: Details of the Tortures Inflicted on Spanish Political Prisoners*, London: Published for the Spanish Atrocities Committee by J. Perry, 1897. Edward Carpenter contributed the introduction to this pamphlet.

107. Lannon, "The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 43. Compare this figure with the Civil War when the destruction was only thirteen of 236 buildings. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 186.

108. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 166. Carr has a smaller total figure of forty-two for both churches and convents. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 484. The destruction in the Tragic Week far outweighs the destruction of the Church's Madrid and Malaga properties in May 1931 known as the *quemada de conventos*.

109. Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936–1939* (Madrid: Católica, 1961), 763. He gives an exact figure of 6,832 on page 762. Lannon rounds it

historian Pío Moa links her with violence and murder (including that of the religious), the accusation made by Francoist authorities during the Second World War when they unsuccessfully tried to have her deported from Vichy France.<sup>110</sup> Montseny never engaged in violence but rather sought to explain its causes and to understand its significance. Like many other anarchists, Montseny believed that “propaganda by the deed” — assassinations and murders — was a symptom of a society in conflict. While not advocating propaganda by the deed, she defended it through explanation. Her father wrote a pamphlet about an earlier act, the bomb thrown by Paulí Pallàs Latorre (1862–1893).<sup>111</sup> Montseny never wrote specifically on the Tragic Week, though she frequently invoked Francisco Ferrer as an anarchist martyr due to his trial and execution following the Tragic Week.<sup>112</sup>

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up to the 7,000 used above. Frances Lannon, “The Political Debate within Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 144. Both Lannon and Sánchez basically agree with these figures. José Mariano Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987). Lannon qualifies that the majority of deaths occurred in the first months of the war.

110. Moa is a revisionist in that he attacks the current standard interpretations of the origins of the Civil War and refuses to condemn Franco. Moa is a best-selling author in Spain, and some historians have lauded his work, though most have ignored it or been extremely critical. For pro-Moa perspectives, see Stanley G. Payne, “Mitos y tópicos de la Guerra Civil,” *Revista de libros*, nos. 79–80 (2003), 3–5 and Robert A. Stradling, “Maoist Revolution and the Spanish Civil War: ‘Revisionist’ History and Historical Politics,” *English Historical Review* 122, no. 496 (2007), 442–457.” For critical views, see Helen Graham, “New Myths for Old,” *Times Literary Supplement* (11 July 2003), 7 and Santos Juliá Díez, “Últimas noticias de la guerra civil,” *Revista de libros*, no. 81 (2003), 6–8.

111. Federico Urales writing as Juan Montseny y Carret, *Consideraciones sobre el hecho y la muerte de Pallàs* (La Coruña: La Gutenberg, 1893). Urales examined the arguments about whether criminals are formed or born in the three essays collected in this pamphlet. He believes that society makes criminals, a rejection of the arguments of Lombroso. Paulí Pallàs i Latorre was a Catalan anarchist executed for a failed attempt to assassinate the Military Governor of Catalonia, General Arsenio Martínez Campos Antón (1831–1900). The attempt was in protest against the persecution of anarchists in Jerez de la Frontera. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Pallas Latorre, Paulino.”

112. I examine Francisco Ferrer in my chapter 4.

The high death rate in the colonial wars, particularly among lower-class conscripts, fuelled the Tragic Week protests.<sup>113</sup> An additional circumstance was the fact that the colonial wars directly and indirectly benefitted two leading, intermarried, and devoutly religious businessmen, the Count of Güell and the Marquis of Comillas. They benefitted indirectly due to their business holdings in Morocco and directly as the Comillas shipping firm, the Compañía Transatlántica Española, transported the troops under a state contract.<sup>114</sup>

The destruction of the religious buildings was an unorganized and spontaneous reaction against the structures and symbols of oppression. This was a revolutionary iconoclasm. Smashing hated images and artifacts of the past can serve as a surrogate for, as well as a stimulus to, angry violence against human representatives of the old order. It can help erase reminders of previous holders of power and majesty. It makes way for the fashioning of new symbols and emblems of the revolutionary order.<sup>115</sup> As Ealham points out, the anarchists adopted the language of pathology against the problem of religion, arguing that it was necessary to “purify” society of the “plague of religion.”<sup>116</sup>

### **MONTSENY’S *RESURRECCIÓN***

The anarchist view of the Church is straightforwardly simple. Urales was quite clear on this in his 1902 tract. “Religion is bad, compared with the

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113. Military service was universal, but the well-to-do could pay to avoid it.

114. Smith, “Barcelona Through the European Mirror,” in Smith, *Red Barcelona*, 6.

115. Richard Stites, “Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past,” in Gleason, Kenez, and Stites, *Bolshevik Culture*, 2.

116. Ealham, “The Myth of the ‘Maddened Crowd’,” in Ealham and Richards, *The Splintering of Spain*, 128; The anarchists were not immune from the medicalization of public discourse.

morality and science of socialism.”<sup>117</sup> He argued that Christ’s charity was very different from that of the Church’s charitable deeds, when they did occur. Instead, charity served to justify and legalize misery.<sup>118</sup> Anarchism offered the worker or those in subordinate positions — including the criminal and unemployed — a better prospect, one that did not wait for an afterlife or the act of an abstract God. It taught that they could effect change themselves through their own action. They were not outcasts and were superior morally to the bourgeoisie. If society itself was corrupt and crooked, if the clergy was impure, then those who were the enemies or victims of the hypocritical bourgeois society were more morally pure.<sup>119</sup>

Montseny’s literary anticlericalism was part of an established and widespread literary tradition — the thesis novel (*novela de tesis*).<sup>120</sup> The thesis drives everything in the novel, rather than stylistic considerations such as the narrative, language, character, or place, inasmuch as they are not part of the thesis. Classic examples of thesis novels in the United States are Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and almost every novel by Upton Sinclair (1878–1968).<sup>121</sup> Montseny used religious themes and texts not only to convey anticlerical messages, but also to widen the audience for her fiction.

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117. Urales, *La religión y la cuestión social*, 38.

118. *Ibid.* The Socialist and feminist Margarita Nelken (1896–1968) repeated this charge in reference to single mothers: “Here we can see the so-called charity associations closing their doors to the mother having a child outside the established conventions; instead of gaining respect, the abandoned mother encounters contempt and cruelty.” Quoted in Aresti Esteban, “Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936),” 214.

119. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 39.

120. Of course, the *novela de tesis* is not of specifically of the left or right.

121. As noted earlier Montseny read Sinclair’s novels.

She drew upon familiar themes as a way to provide her audience with an understandable social message.

Montseny wrote an account of the life of María Silva Cruz (n.d.–1936), one of the Casas Viejas anarchists, martyred at the beginning of the Civil War. What is notable in Montseny’s presentation is how much religious vocabulary she used. “The figure of María Silva, victim of Francoist terror, represents a Spanish woman’s exalted and glorified martyrdom and sacrifice.” Montseny described Silva using the traditional imagery and vocabulary often used to describe Spanish women. These same religious metaphors others used to describe women as the “priestess of the family/matrimony,” the family as a temple, and marriage was an altar Montseny used to depict an anti-clerical martyr.<sup>122</sup> Montseny made extensive use of crucifixion imagery such as the Via Dolorosa and *las estaciones del Calvario* (Stations of the Cross – *calvario* is literally suffering). She used the figure of Christ as an unadorned martyr who struggled against the powerful as she switched the gender.<sup>123</sup>

Montseny’s novella *Resurrección* embodies these themes. It centers on three characters: a young priest, the woman who was his childhood love, and the local anarchist. *Resurrección* was a 1926 novella – the forty-third in the *Novela Ideal* series – the central thesis of which was anticlericalism: the conflict between nature and the Church. Its protagonist was Jacinto Balaguer, a young seminarian visiting his native village while having a crisis of faith.

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122. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 59.

123. Federica Montseny, *María Silva, la libertaria*, *El mundo al día* 39 (Toulouse: Universo, 1951).



How his crisis was played out in the thirty–two pages brings together many of Montseny’s arguments about the Church, love, and nature in a quintessential melodrama of good and evil — even down to the symbolic details of clothing.

The three central characters are Jacinto and Carmela, who both grew up in the village of Rubiñá as childhood playmates, and Pedro, an anarchist who came to Rubiñá from the capital.<sup>124</sup> As the second son, Jacinto left the village to go to the seminary. He has returned to visit his family. Jacinto is desperately in love with Carmela, who lives with Pedro and their daughter Paz (Peace) outside the village on a farm known as La Rocosa (the Rocky) at a height above the village. Pedro and Carmela live together in free love, not needing the “blessing of God or the devil” outside the sacrament of marriage.<sup>125</sup> Pedro’s independence — he lives outside the boundaries of convention — cause the village’s mayor, priest, and cacique (political boss) — the “blessed [*beatos*] and reactionary” residents of the town — to seek the couple’s destruction. The local landowner, a marquis, who holds the lease to La Rocosa, sets things into motion by refusing to accept the rent payment in order to put Pedro and Carmela into arrears.<sup>126</sup> When Pedro enters the town to deposit the rent, local authorities attempt to arrest him and a mob, led by Carmela’s father, kills him as he tries to escape. Carmela enters the town the next day in search of Pedro and is grief stricken to find him dead, taking his body back to La Rocosa for

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124. It is not clear if the capital is Barcelona, referring to provincial capital, or Madrid, referring to the national capital.

125. Federica Montseny, *Resurrección*, *Novela Ideal* 43 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1926]), 6.

126. *Ibid.*, 19.

burial. On her way back to La Rocosa, she meets Jacinto, who assists her in taking the body back. He buries Pedro, and spends all his time visiting her, eventually moving in, and joining her on the farm. Consequently, his family, his village, and his Church ostracize Jacinto. Eventually, the villagers ignore the couple as the years pass. At the end of the novella, Carmela announces to Jacinto she now loves him, and he replaces Pedro.

The novella uses several devices to press its anticlericalism and put nature in the place of the Church. The first is Montseny's choice of names: Carmela, Pedro, and Jacinto. Carmela is another name for the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.<sup>127</sup> While Carmela removes herself from the village by living high above it on a promontory (La Rocosa), her life is anything but virginal or cloistered. Pedro (Peter, rock in Greek) carries the clear connotation of Saint Peter. Like St. Peter, Pedro is steadfast and unmovable in his ideals, his mission of spreading the Ideal in the speeches he gives, and his martyrdom.<sup>128</sup> Montseny describes these as a "new Sermon on the Mount," delivered with the "voice of an apostle."<sup>129</sup>

Jacinto (Hyacinth) is also a saint's name; more significantly, it is a classical allusion to the beautiful youth whom Apollo, god of the sun, loved. Classical allusions were endemic in anarchist writing. Adopting pseudonyms based on specific classical names was common, as in Espartaco and Diogenes,

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127. This also ties into the Carmelite order and a *Carmelo* is a Carmelite convent. This order was not one of the ones that took in prostitutes to "reform" them. Trinidad Fernández, "La infancia delincuente y abandonada," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 481.

128. Again, Ideal in these texts is synonymous with anarchism.

129. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 8 for voice of an apostle and 9 for new Sermon on the Mount.

names of two *La Revista Blanca* contributors. Anarchists also promoted classical literature, history, and art. In only the fifth issue of *La Revista Blanca*, there was an article on ancient Greece in Catalonia. Montseny herself wrote about the Greek city Empúries on the Catalan coast.<sup>130</sup> This classical presence was due to the anarchist perception that the Greeks were closer to a natural state, before the impositions of the Church. Montseny saw ancient Greece as the first of three great ages when humanity made progress towards liberation and unfettered thought. She lauded what she called as the Greek “cult of beauty, philosophy of happiness, and heroism.”<sup>131</sup> Forgotten in this was the reliance on slavery, the bellicose culture of Sparta, and other aspects contrary to anarchist beliefs. What made the myth of classical Greece attractive was its presumed opposition to Christianity, especially in its veneration of the human body.

There are numerous references in *Resurrección* to the contrast between nature and religion. One of the most direct is light of the sun (Apollo) illuminating the golden color of the grain as it threshed in the open fields. Montseny contrasts the absence of light and resulting darkness of the seminary’s closed space with the golden light and open spaces of the fields. Not only is the seminary dark in contrast to nature, it is slowly removing the

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130. Juan Mas Cabré, “Grecia en Cataluña,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 5 (1 August 1923), 2–4. Federica Montseny “La ciudad muerta: Ruinas de Ampuries,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 76 (15 July 1926), 108–110. She also used the Greek goddess of love in the title of another article: “Bajo el signo de Afrodita,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 145 (1 June 1929), 18–21.

131. Federica Montseny, “El retorno de la naturaleza,” *La Revista Blanca* 9, no. 192 (15 May 1931), 584. Undoubtedly the popularity in anarchist publications of reproductions of Greek sculpture and Italian Renaissance paintings with classical themes was the Spanish Church’s condemnation of these very same works.

color from Jacinto cheeks, dulling his eyes, and causing him to waste away.<sup>132</sup> For most of novella, the stark contrast of Jacinto's blonde hair with the black of his cassock symbolizes his internal conflict. Montseny creates the contrast between the Church (dark) and nature (light) by explicitly contrasting natural occurrences with the religious cloth of the young priest. The dust of wheat on the threshing floor rises around Jacinto, highlighting the black of his garments, which gives him a golden halo in the light of the sun, as he breathes in the air, expanding his lungs and chest. Nature restores him, gives him a sparkle to his eyes, and increases his physical size. When Jacinto watches the threshers harvest the wheat and listens to their joking — “at times crude and bawdy” — he “abandons” himself to this “natural, instinctive, and primitive happiness.”<sup>133</sup> Montseny used the verb to abandon, to let oneself go, alongside the word natural in relation to laughter and joy. The language of natural desires which produce happiness and joy against the suppression and darkness of religion.

Montseny plays out this contrast between the Church and nature not just in metaphors of light and dark, but also in the death and burial of Pedro. Carmela refuses to consider a burial in the village and buries him instead at La Rocosa. Presumably, the official cemetery was not yet secularized. As

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132. There are repeated comments about how much thinner he is on each visit by several characters, and there is an extended discussion of his mother's fears for his health due to the seminary life. The village priest dismisses these.

133. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 6–7.

sanctified ground, the Church would not have allowed Pedro there.<sup>134</sup> Her choice for his burial is at their farm, among the trees Pedro planted: Church-sanctified ground versus ground sanctified by nature working with humanity. Because Pedro is a “heretic” and Carmela lives with him without the benefit of religious sanction, Jacinto’s mother tells him that Pedro and Carmela “live like dogs.”<sup>135</sup> The dogs that live with Carmela and Pedro are better and truer companions than the villagers. One dog, named Noble, plays an important role in discovering Pedro’s body while the other dog remains at the farm guarding the couple’s daughter Paz.<sup>136</sup> Nature, in the form of the dogs, is loyal, harmonious, and protective, and the dogs are equally as distraught at Pedro’s death. Montseny describes Pedro as a good man because what occurred when he was visited the village. He was welcomed as he entered by the town’s dogs, their tails wagging. Moreover, he played and was popular with the village’s children.

In a confrontation just before Pedro’s death, the well-to-do delegate the town’s priest to try and bring the couple to the Church. He waylays Carmela alone on the path to the village, because he fears Pedro. In the ensuing exchange he tells Carmela they must return to the church, be married, and baptize Paz. Carmela’s response is an affirmation of the natural life in which they live, a happiness created by her and Pedro alone, rather than God

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134. Carmela cries out that there is no room in the cemetery for Pedro, a comment that cannot be literal but only figurative. The sanctified ground would have had no room for a heretic. Pedro would not want to be buried there. This is also an allusion to the Nativity story — no space for the wanderers.

135. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 8 and 11.

136. The names have didactic purposes: Noble and Paz (Peace). Montseny is not subtle.

or man. Enraged by her response, the priest finally threatens that they will drive Pedro away and force her to her parent's home or sequester her in a convent — a traditional punishment for unwed mothers.<sup>137</sup>

Carmela's response is that she is an adult and that the time of sequestrations in convents is past. Furthermore, she has a gun, and she will defend herself and her child if they are threatened.<sup>138</sup> Carmela is like most of Montseny female protagonists: fierce, independent, and willing to defend herself verbally and with weapons — she carries a shotgun. Jacinto's mother is a complete contrast: simple, incapable of true understanding, devout, and blindly obedient to the authority of her husband and the Church. While Carmela is Montseny's new leonine woman, Jacinto's nameless mother remains crippled by her husband, the Church, and the tradition they represent.<sup>139</sup>

There is an implied critique of Catalan rural tradition in *Resurrección*. One of those traditions was the system of inheritance. Upon marriage, the eldest child, regardless of sex, gained legal control over fixed property.<sup>140</sup> The remaining children divided the rest upon the death of the parents.<sup>141</sup> As the

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137. She could be seen as a prostitute, a traditional view of unwed mothers. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 54.

138. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 18–19.

139. Montseny describes Carmela as like a lion when she defends herself against the harassment of a group of young men. *La leona* (The Lioness) would become one of Montseny's many nicknames.

140. The stem family predominates in Galicia, the Basque region, and Catalonia. Josette Birderues–Guereña, "Niños y niñas en familia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 24.

141. William A. Douglass, "Iberian Family History," *Journal of Family History* 13, no. 1 (1988), 4.

second son, Jacinto is destined for the priesthood and his older brother will inherit, whereas his sister will be allowed to choose between marriage and the convent.<sup>142</sup> If there were two daughters one would definitely become a nun. Jacinto did not want to become a priest; he became one because of tradition. In a work written in Castilian, Montseny use of the Catalan word *hereu*, rather than the Castilian *heredero*, for the son who will inherit the family property, stands out. The heir is dissolute, a drunk, a man who is clearly unfit to manage the farm. Jacinto is prevented by tradition and his father's authority from his natural destiny, farming.

Montseny's critique was not limited to Catalan rural traditions, because she was implicitly criticizing Catalan nationalism as well. Associated with the rural peasantry and the industrial elite in Barcelona, Catalan nationalism claims that its base is the peasant's common sense, *seny*.<sup>143</sup> It was rooted in the traditions of the strong patriarchal rural family and in paternal authority as a metaphor for the Catalan nation.<sup>144</sup> Montseny's criticism of the rural family is also a criticism of the myth of Catalan nationalism. She adds a

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142. Reher states that in northern Catalonia tradition still favored the male child over any female offspring. David Sven Reher, "Marriage Patterns in Spain, 1887–1930," *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 1 (1991), 23.

143. Montseny's surname is both the name of a peak in Catalonia and of a local noble family, possibly distantly related. It is a compound of *mont* (mountain) and *seny* (like the Scots *canny*). The Count of Montseny was the first Francoist chairman of the provincial council. "Reorganization in Barcelona," *The Times* (February 8, 1939).

144. Susan M. DiGiacomo, "'La Caseta i l'Hortet': Rural Imagery in Catalan Urban Politics," *Anthropological Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (1987), 160.

further indirect criticism by using the *Somentent* (Spanish *Somatén*), along with the hated Guardia Civil, to hunt Pedro.<sup>145</sup>

The critique of Catalan nationalism and rural traditions were, however, secondary to the anticlericalism. Pedro's love for Carmela is his torment, a moral torment that is more desirable than religious penances.<sup>146</sup> Montseny's novella used Pedro's life in the same way that the Church used the lives of the saints, for moral guidance and instruction.<sup>147</sup> They instruct and provide guidance to readers by giving concrete examples of exemplary lives. In her narrative, however, she reversed the roles. Rather than a Christian martyrdom, his life given for religion, Pedro's is an anarchist martyrdom, his life given for freedom and a return to nature. Pedro points out to Carmela that the demons are fallen angels that revolted against God's "tyranny," making Lucifer the first rebel.<sup>148</sup> In a further critique of religiosity, as Marian cults

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145. Originally, the *Somentent* was an exclusively rural militia established centuries earlier. The government brought the *Somentent* into Barcelona in 1902 to help suppress a general strike, violating its charter, which restricted it to the countryside. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 20. In 1923, Primo de Rivera expanded it beyond Catalonia to the entire country. Clive Beadman, "Official Nationalism of the Primo de Rivera Regime: Some Findings from the Pages of *Unión Patriótica* and *Somatén*," *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 11, no. 2 (1999), 70. However, Ben-Ami states that it was an "organization of vigilantes that the regime thought had to be strictly watched lest it became a danger to its creator." Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 73. The *Somentent* searched workers for CNT membership cards. If they found one, they beat up the workers and reported them for blacklisting and dismissal. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 48. Associated with support for rural elites, the Second Republic abolished it, Franco resurrected it during the Civil War, and the government finally disbanded it in 1978.

146. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 13.

147. The Russian revolutionaries similarly used religious models. See Nina Tumarkin, "The Myth of Lenin During the Civil War Years," in Gleason, Kenez, and Stites, *Bolshevik Culture*, 77–92.

148. Montseny, *Resurrección*, 15.



grew in the first third of the twentieth century, Jacinto has his own: “He believed in the Virgin, because he imagined her with Carmela’s face.”<sup>149</sup>

Pedro’s martyrdom leads Jacinto out of the priesthood and into nature. Initially Carmela rejects Jacinto’s offers of assistance, denying that he is still the friend of their shared youth. He is no longer Jacinto the man but a priest. Jacinto refutes this, telling her that he is not a priest but the saddest and the most wretched of men. Through the final portion of the novel, Jacinto transforms from a priest, and, as a consequence a wretched man, to a happy outcast, as the resurrection of Pedro and finally worthy the love of Carmela. Initially, the belief in the village is that Jacinto is spending time at La Rocosa to bring Carmela back to the Church. The local priest (“more malicious than others”) suspects the truth and informs on Jacinto to the bishop.<sup>150</sup> Jacinto rejects the instructions of the Church and moves into La Rocosa at Carmela’s invitation. She insists that he remove his priest’s robes and gives him Pedro’s clothes to wear. To those in the village, Jacinto now appears to be Pedro: “Dumbfounded, the peasants saw Pedro, a man dressed like him and as energetic a worker as he, who looked after the land of La Rocosa.”<sup>151</sup> The Balaguers consider Jacinto dead, as does the rest of the village. But leaving the Church is his rebirth. His “death as a priest and as a son is his resurrection as

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149. *Ibid.*, 14. Because Pedro and Carmela lived together in a partnership based in free love, she is not a wife, which would have implied subordination to Pedro and then to Jacinto, but an equal in her relationships with the two men.

150. *Ibid.*, 28–29.

151. *Ibid.*, 30.

a man, his return to Nature and to Life.”<sup>152</sup> The faith that Pedro died for, and that Jacinto adopts, is a faith in nature with humanity as its supreme creation. Montseny broadened the audience for her work and for its message, by using the symbolism of the Church, with overt anticlericalism and subtle arguments for the strength of women.

To read this narrative solely as a work independent of time and place is to misread it, to ignore the meaning of this thesis novella. Symbols are not empty vessels nor are they static. In Montseny’s version of the thesis novella the argument is against the corruption and degradation of the current society. Even though this is the story of Jacinto’s maturation, it is not truly a *Bildungsroman* as the focus is on the three characters and we share their thoughts equally. Montseny has followed the trope of symbolic death and rebirth, the old self is dark (the priest’s cassock), a shell covering the new self, which lies beneath.<sup>153</sup>

Montseny’s works are very similar to early Soviet novels that she read and reviewed for *La Revista Blanca*; however, there are important differences.<sup>154</sup> First, and most obviously, Montseny’s characters do not adhere to a version of Marxist–Leninism, much less Marxism. Second, unlike the Soviet hero, the death, symbolic or otherwise, of a protagonist in a Montseny novella is not for the benefit of the collective but rather for the benefit of an

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152. *Ibid.*, 31. Montseny’s capitalization.

153. Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 174.

154. Soviet Marxism and anarchism do share a strong drive to cultural revolution, especially in the absolute elimination of religion. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Cultural Revolution Revisited,” *Russian Review* 58, no. 2 (1991), 207 and Michael David–Fox, “What Is Cultural Revolution?” *Russian Review* 58, no. 2 (1991), 181–201.

individual.<sup>155</sup> In *Resurrección*, neither Pedro's literal death nor Jacinto's symbolic one benefit the collective. It only aids in the individual transformation of Jacinto. The martyrdom of Pedro, the love triangle, the political and religious symbolism, are all elements of melodrama. The melodramatic form allows Montseny to assert a morality based in nature, rather than in Church doctrine or patriarchal systems of property.<sup>156</sup>

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155. The exception to this is when Clara offers Nardo to humanity, a mother's sacrifice for the collective good. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 254.

156. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 44.

## CHAPTER 4: “ANARCHISTS, EDUCATORS OF THE PEOPLE”

The [working–class] students drank in basic notions, enabling them to expand their radius of activity; she spoke sentences of brotherhood in other languages for them to hear, vehicles of progress and the intensity of internationalism. Her deviation from [traditional] teaching was designed to do more than solely instruct, but rather to educate spiritually, she only allowed this break with routine in the workers’ class, which was the most enjoyable for her. She taught the exemplary lives, ideas of the different tendencies, facts and narratives of moral consequence to the students thus exposing them to a little each night, as they unconsciously discovered how things were, through the effect of their own suggestion, and the students themselves discovered their identities and the evolution of their thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

Anarchists were fierce advocates for education. For Federica Montseny and other late nineteenth and early twentieth–century Spanish libertarians, education included a vastly broader conception of learning than what the state taught in the formal system of its schools.<sup>2</sup> This included learning a trade or skill, as well as about one’s environment, and the relationship between humanity and the world. It was a continuous engagement with others and with the environment one lived in. Education was an unceasing process of exploration and discovery that enabled the individual to enjoy a fulfilling life. The field of pedagogy is the one area where Iberians contributed significantly to anarchist theory, and was central to Federica Montseny’s family.<sup>3</sup> Her parents met as educational activists and were teachers in lay schools. The discussions of education in Montseny’s writing reflected the concern not just

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1. Montseny, *La victoria*, 18–19.

2. See the discussion in my first chapter section on key concepts.

3. “Spanish libertarian theory remained weak. In response to the relative poverty of indigenous anarchist theory, Spanish libertarians borrowed heavily from wider European intellectual trends, both from anarchist sources and the radicalized middle class.” Ealham, “From the Summit to the Abyss,” in Preston and McKenzie, *The Republic Besieged*, 137.

of the anarchists, but also other Spaniards, and her ideas on this topic were part of a national discussion.

Members of the intelligentsia were concerned with modernizing Spain, especially after the 1898 defeat. They argued about why and offered up proposals on how to achieve modernization. This project of regeneration, as it was widely known in Spain, was itself an effort to control and remold the population.<sup>4</sup> In regeneration, Spaniards sought the rebirth of Spain as a modern state. A Spain that was able to defend itself and which was economically and politically on par with the rest of Europe.<sup>5</sup> After the First World War, Montseny's contemporaries emphasized control of the population through the instruments of the state and the consequent submission by the masses to the state and its elites. A passive population would accept changes without trying to be active agents in the process. Montseny's ideas differed from those of her contemporaries, for she wanted to smash these instruments of control, especially hierarchy.

Montseny and other anarchists implicitly believed that all hierarchies are inherently oppressive and destructive, preventing individuals from reaching their fullest potential. Instead, they sought freely established lateral

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4. The broad appeal of regenerationist arguments to elites also ensured that their publications used the vocabulary of rebirth. For most on the left and a few on the right, education included sexual matters — or at least scientific awareness— and eugenics was a part of this program. One group founded the journal *Sexualidad* to disseminate this knowledge, and it called on scientists and literary figures to participate in the “business of regeneration.” Richard M. Cleminson, “The Review *Sexualidad* (1925–28), Social Hygiene and the Pathologisation of Male Homosexuality in Spain,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin–American Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000), 121.

5. However, there was no consensus on what this meant.

and parallel relationships between autonomous individuals. Such relationships enabled greater equality. Anarchists argued these were liberatory. The successful characters in Montseny's novels transcend established hierarchies to establish new and free relationships between the sexes based on mutual respect, free will, and understanding. Like many progressive groups, there was the implicit assumption that education would provide students with both the ability and the desire to smash hierarchies, as well as the will to do so. Anarchists believed this education would inevitably lead to such changes occurring. Jon Zimmerman pointed out this fallacy — the assumption that a radical education will lead ineluctably to a radical change.<sup>6</sup> Montseny's vision of education suffered, albeit unconsciously, from the central paradox of libertarian education, as it contained elements of hierarchy and power. Yet, these different approaches were cut from the same cloth as those of other Spaniards. The cultural debates over the regeneration of the nation through attempted transformations of gender, religion, and education, using the vocabulary of science, helped to give Montseny's novels their power and popular appeal. Correspondingly, their power and appeal belonged to a specific time and place.<sup>7</sup>

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6. I am indebted to the comments of the participants of the History of Education Writing Group at NYU, chaired by Professor Jon Zimmerman.

7. This was the judgment of Montseny herself in the 1960s when she decided not to reprint the novellas; see Lozano, *Federica Montseny*, 363.

This chapter centers on debates and theories about the poor state of Spanish education, especially the place of gender in education, that profoundly affected anarchism, and thus, influenced Montseny's thoughts and actions.

### **EDUCATION IN SPAIN**

The 1857 Moyano Law structured Spanish education into three parts: primary, funded by the municipalities; secondary, which was funded principally by the provinces; and universities, which were funded by the central state.<sup>8</sup> Every town with a population of at least 500 was required to have two primary schools (one for each sex), with two more schools for each 2,000 inhabitant increase in the population.<sup>9</sup> Primary education was compulsory from ages six to nine.<sup>10</sup> Despite the law, cultural levels were low — even amongst the clergy by the Church's own internal assessment — and illiteracy was high.<sup>11</sup> “From 1860 to 1920, while total population grew only by 36%, the number of literates increased by 216%, six times the rate.”<sup>12</sup> Teacher salaries were so low that there was an adage “hungrier than a schoolteacher.”<sup>13</sup>

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8. José Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 46.

9. Carolyn P. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” *Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 4 supplement (1976), 135. Small towns could have one school building, but must keep the sexes separated. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 17.

10. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47. Jean Louis Guereña, “Infancia y escolarización,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 347.

11. The Church was concerned by the problem of the low cultural level of clergy, but its financial reliance on the upper levels of society meant that the lower ranks still had less cultured priests.

12. Guereña, “Infancia y escolarización,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 353.

13. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47.

Approximately twenty percent of all children attended private, usually Catholic, schools and only twelve percent attended the state schools. The remainder presumably did not attend any school, including the numbers who studied independently.<sup>14</sup> Underfunded, underpaid, and under pressure from the Church for both students and in curriculum content, state schools taught little more than the basics and religion, with the focus on the latter.<sup>15</sup> In 1887 the central state took over the responsibility for paying secondary school teachers' salaries.<sup>16</sup> The level of education was still poor, especially for girls, and individuals such as Gustavo and Urales' foundation of their own schools met the need for independent schools. In its first period of publication, 1898–1905, *La Revista Blanca* published numerous articles on education, some by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (1839–1915), one of Spain's leading Krausist reformers.<sup>17</sup>

### **KRAUSISM**

Kantians and neo-Kantians had great impact on educational reform throughout Europe; however, none of them wielded the power over educational and civic reform that Krausists did in Spain. Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) was an early nineteenth century German

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14. Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 9. She gives the figure of 68 percent of all children not in school in 1895 and “almost twenty percent in private schools” by 1900.

15. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 13.

16. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47.

17. He not only contributed articles but the cover of the journal listed him as a collaborator, along with other important intellectuals Manuel B. Cossío (1857–1935), Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936), and Leopoldo García-Alas y Ureña (1852–1901). Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 145.



philosopher and contemporary of Hegel. He sought to integrate opposing elements, such as science and faith, and emphasized the essential goodness of mankind.<sup>18</sup> Julián Sanz del Río (1814–1869), the first professor of philosophy at the University of Madrid, introduced Krause’s ideas to Spain in the 1840s.<sup>19</sup> Krausism became the dominant philosophy amongst Spanish liberal reformers in the last third of the nineteenth century, bringing contemporary modern methods of scientific research to Spain.<sup>20</sup> Two Spanish Krausists especially stand out as the leading reformers and had a major impact in their fields: Francisco Giner de los Ríos in pedagogy and Gumersindo de Azcárate Menéndez–Morán (1840–1917) in jurisprudence.<sup>21</sup> The list of their students and disciples was practically a who’s who of the Spanish intelligentsia and leading political figures, including Urales, who attended the classes of Giner de los Ríos at the University of Madrid.<sup>22</sup>

The influence of Krausism spread and was firmly established in universities. Emphasizing intellectual freedom and secularism, especially in science, Krausists viewed education as an exceptionally important activity and they quickly came into conflict with the Church.<sup>23</sup> Krausists saw secular state education as the way to solve two main problems, the “social question” and the

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18. Krausism influenced both the Puerto Rican Eugenio María de Hostos (1839–1903) and the Cuban José Julián Martí Péré (1853–1895) when they studied in Spain.

19. Enrique Montero, “Reform Idealized: The Intellectual and Ideological Origins of the Second Republic,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 124.

20. *Ibid.*, 125.

21. *Ibid.* Azcárate also contributed to *La Revista Blanca*.

22. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 54. No date is given but from the context I believe it was in the 1890s.

23. One of the goals of Krausism was a reconciliation or accommodation between science and religion.

“woman question.” For Krausists, the family was the intermediary between the public and the private spheres.<sup>24</sup>

In 1875, Giner de los Ríos lost his University of Madrid chair in law due to his support of Krausism. The next year, Krausists founded the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Institution of Instruction, ILE) under the leadership of Giner de los Ríos. The goal was improving the level of education in Spain, and consciously including both women and workers. The ILE promoted educational advances, particularly in pedagogy and science. In addition, it provided scholarships for Spanish students to broaden their perspectives by studying abroad.<sup>25</sup>

Giner de los Ríos believed that women’s contribution to society was through their role as the educators of the family. This was part of their responsibility for the stability of the family. Giner de los Ríos argued that the education of mothers was fundamental for society and it became a focus of Krausist activity. Krausists also advocated co-education, arguing that it was an essential principle of education. This placed them in direct conflict with the Church, which opposed it.<sup>26</sup> However, while the Krausists established schools to train women for what were perceived as gender appropriate employment — such as telegraphers and school teachers — women were expected to cease

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24. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 99.

25. The ILE was the principal institution of educational reform in Spain from its founding until the defeat of the Republic in the Civil War. The ILE’s impact was profound, including the founding of the famous *Residencia de Estudios*, the *Residencia de Señoritas*, the National Pedagogical Museum, and the Junta for the Amplification of Studies, the predecessor of today’s National Research Council.

26. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 53.

working upon marriage. Krausism embraced the idea that women were different from men because of maternity. The purpose of education for the Krausists was to enable women to better perform their “natural” functions as mothers and educators —their greatest contribution to society.<sup>27</sup>

This simultaneously promised an improvement in the status of women and made them scapegoats for social problems.<sup>28</sup> Women were constrained by the domestic ideal of the *ángel del hogar*.<sup>29</sup> Because the education of Spanish women, regardless of age, was universally poor, it was a focus of activists. The Krausist desire to improve education across the board for both sexes meant that it had an important influence on Spanish feminism, as the majority of Spanish feminists sought to improve educational opportunities for women, rather than campaigning for greater civil or political rights. This emphasis on educational opportunities was one of the marked features of Spanish feminism.<sup>30</sup> The arrival of a few North American institutions, such as the International Institute for Girls, at the end of the nineteenth century made some limited improvements in the educational opportunities available, yet the

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27. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 82. Marañón, who argued that mothers are to blame for the problems of the children, continues this idea in the interwar period. “It is the mother, the master–modeler of the souls of her children, who is — as I have no hesitation in affirming — almost always responsible for homosexuality and in general for all the other disturbances of the instinct of the man. He, in his turn, has in his hands the sexual conduct of the woman.” Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 320.

28. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 215.

29. Mary Nash, “The Rise of the Women’s Movement in Nineteenth–Century Spain,” in *Women’s Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*, eds. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow–Ennker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 256.

30. *Ibid.*, 253–255.

education was still horrible.<sup>31</sup> In 1892 according to Emilia Pardo Bazán “[t]he present–day education of women, in truth, cannot be called education as such. Rather must it be called breaking in [as in a horse], as its proposed objective is obedience, passivity, and submission.”<sup>32</sup> In Montseny’s view the evolutionary progress of each generation was being stymied by the poor education they received.<sup>33</sup> Her efforts to restart *La Revista Blanca* were a significant part of the efforts made by Gustavo, Urales, and Montseny to provide alternative sources of reading and educational materials as part of a broader campaign to spread anarchism and advance the educational level of Spaniards. The subtitle of *La Revista Blanca* was “Science, Sociology, and Art.”

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31. Part of the problem was the International Institute’s founder, Alice Gordon Gulick (1847–1903), was a Protestant missionary. But she quickly established a close relationship with the founders of the ILE and eventually its creation, the Residencia de Estudiantes. María de Maeztu (1881–1948) was an instructor at the International Institute and the relationship lead directly to the founding of the Residencia de Señoritas by Maeztu.

32. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 29. Jo Labanyi suggestss that Pardo Bazan’s word “doma” is better rendered in English by “breaking in,” rather than the term “taming” used by Nash. See Nash, “The Rise of the Women’s Movement in Nineteenth–Century Spain,” in Paletschek and Pietrow–Ennker, *Women’s Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, 257.

33. Shirley Fay Fredricks, “Feminism: The Essential Ingredient in Federica Montseny’s Anarchist Theory,” in *European Women on the Left: Socialism, Feminism, and the Problems Faced by Political Women, 1880 to the Present*, eds. Jane Slaughter and Robert W. Kern (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 128.

## GENDER AND CLASS DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

After the 1898 defeat of Spain by the United States, there was an almost universal demand for a regeneration of Spain as evidenced by calls for a purification of the metaphorical body of the nation, which was seen as diseased or degenerated due to its fall from power (and grace for Catholics).<sup>34</sup> Regeneration became the catchword for reformers. Feminists not only agreed, they also argued that expanding the roles of women would aid in that regeneration. In 1894 one feminist argued for the merits of lay schools in achieving the transformation of women and hence of Spain.<sup>35</sup>

The consensus among the regenerationists was that education was the key.<sup>36</sup> The first Ministry of Public Instruction, through which the central state took responsibility for primary teachers' salaries, was established in 1900.<sup>37</sup> Over the last half of the nineteenth century conditions had not substantially improved. Just over one third of children attended school; one third of the schools that were recorded did not really exist; and 30,000 towns had not met the school building requirements.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, while compulsory attendance was the letter of the law, it was not enforced, nor could it be since

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34. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 16.

35. María del Carmen Simón Palmer, "Progresismo, heterodoxia y utopía en algunas escritoras durante la Restauración," in *Las mujeres escritoras en la historia de la literatura española*, eds. Lucía Montejo Gurruchaga and Nieves Baranda Leturio (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2002), 138.

36. Aresti Esteban includes eugenics as a key part. "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 171.

37. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 46. Carr argues this was a measure by the Liberals to against the power and influence of priests at the local level, not to assist teachers. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 491 n. 1.

38. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47.

there were not enough places for the students.<sup>39</sup> The educational level was low and, while figures vary, the illiteracy rate was high, between sixty and seventy percent in 1900.<sup>40</sup> Girls were rarely in school and, as a consequence, their illiteracy rate could have been as great as ninety percent.<sup>41</sup> The central state did make efforts after 1900 to improve the situation. It raised the age for compulsory school attendance from nine to twelve in 1908, and undertook a series of construction projects to build new schools from 1900 until 1930.<sup>42</sup> Further, the ministry began to place greater emphasis on technical education than had previous governments, though attempts to create an exclusively vocational track remained unfunded.<sup>43</sup> Despite the state's efforts, the situation did not improve that much in the ensuing thirty years. In 1931, one working class neighborhood in a Barcelona barrio had places for less than five percent of the school age children.<sup>44</sup>

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39. Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909," 136.

40. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47. Capel Martínez has 71.4 percent for 1900. Rosa María Capel Martínez, "La enseñanza primaria femenina en España," in *Infancia y sociedad en España*, ed. José Luis L. Aranguren (Jaén: Hesperia, 1983), 115.

41. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47. Capel Martínez, "La enseñanza primaria femenina en España," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 115. Morcillo breaks these out as 55.8 percent for male and 71.5 percent for female illiteracy in 1900. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 16.

42. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 50 and 51.

43. *Ibid.*, 48.

44. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 86.

Table 4. Public and Private Primary Education in Spain, 1909–1929					
Academic Year	Boys				Absolute total
	Total	% Grade	% Sex	% PEM	
1909/10	806,751	52.9	51	91.5	1,526,183
1916/17	873,496	51	53	89	1,712,260
1928/29	943,162	51.4	54.3	87.9	2,292,486
Academic Year	Girls				Absolute total
	Total	% Grade	% Sex	% PEF	
1909/10	719,432	47.1	45.8	98.6	1,526,183
1916/17	838,764	49	51.4	97.2	1,712,260
1928/29	893,558	48.6	52.6	95.6	2,292,486

% Sex: extracted from the total population of each sex of school age (6–12).

% PEM / PEF : Male Student Population/Female Student Population: the total number of students enrolled in all levels of education in the relevant courses.

Drawn and translated from Rosa María Capel Martínez, “La enseñanza primaria femenina en España,” in *Infancia y sociedad en España*, edited by José Luis L. Aranguren (Jaén: Hesperia, 1983), 106 Table I.

The 12,000 students in public secondary education at the turn of the century were less than half those in private, usually parochial, schools.<sup>45</sup> The figures for female students were dreadful: in 1900 in all the secondary schools, there were fewer than six thousand women or girls, only 0.3 percent of total enrollment.<sup>46</sup> At the end of the 1920s, the number of female students was around 37,500–38,000 in public secondary education. This was an improvement, however, it still represented a miniscule 1.8 percent of the students at that level.<sup>47</sup> Counting both public and private secondary schools,

45. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47.

46. Capel Martínez, “La enseñanza primaria femenina en España,” in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 115.

47. *Ibid.* Capel Martínez gives nineteen percent as the likely figure for female students enrolled in secondary private schools at the end of the twenties. *Ibid.*, 107. However, in primary schools the figures were almost equal. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 37.

only one in eight students were female.<sup>48</sup> Even if Spanish state authorities saw education in Spain as a crucial battleground, it was not reflected in the state's budgetary allocation, which was only ten percent of what was spent on defense at a time when Spain had no enemies except its Riffian opponents in the Morocco colonial war.<sup>49</sup>

The Church was adamantly opposed to co-education. Pius XI's 1929 encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* reinforced its opposition to co-education and reiterated that the objectives of Catholic education were to prepare women for domesticity and motherhood.<sup>50</sup> This segregation by sex influenced what was taught. Women were to prepare for a life of obedience and piety, submissive to the wishes of both their husbands and the Church — and only forsake the former when he was in conflict with the latter. This led to girls learning the rudiments of reading, writing, the basics of mathematics, a little history, and the teachings of the Church. More emphasis was placed on teaching domestic cleanliness and childcare. Needlework was the subject that occupied the greatest amount of time — some three to four hours, more than half of the school day.<sup>51</sup> It was thought that having boys and girls in the same classroom would lead to problems as children were unable to make informed judgments

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48. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 37.

49. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 48. The bloat of the defense budget was in large part due to an oversized officer corps. However, paying off the debt after the Spanish-American War consumed sixty percent of the entire budget. Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, 479.

50. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 41.

51. Capel Martínez, "La enseñanza primaria femenina en España," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 103-104.



and “natural” instincts would lead to a promiscuous society.<sup>52</sup> It affected the education of teachers since female teachers were not allowed to teach “masculine subjects.” These included industry, commerce, natural history or the physical sciences, and well as agriculture. This in a country where the majority of the labor force was agricultural and women worked in the fields alongside men.<sup>53</sup>

It was not only the difference in subjects and emphasis or the fear of promiscuity that required that education be segregated. Even more important was the threat to masculinity that young girls posed, at least after nursery school or seven years of age. The journal of the Catholic Institución Teresiana argued that co-education was bad for both sexes and against nature: “it is a naturalist effort to deny the original sin. By keeping both sexes together since childhood, women become unnatural, a man loses his courage and virility, differences are diminished, both losing essential characteristics and come to be complementary and lose their moral physiognomy.”<sup>54</sup> Differences between the sexes would be diminished and a sex-segregated education would prevent this.<sup>55</sup> This was countered by Dr. Gregorio Marañón, one of the leading liberal physicians, who argued that it was not a case of losing these “essential female characteristics,” rather of a failure to develop them appropriately.

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52. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 41.

53. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 42.

54. Naturalist in this passage refers to those who sought spiritual and/or cultural regeneration in nature, often nudists. From the *Boletín de la Institución Teresiana*, no. 187, June 1930. Quoted in Capel Martínez, “La enseñanza primaria femenina en España,” in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 109.

55. Cleminson and Vázquez García, “Breasts, Hair and Hormones,” 648–649. Obviously, the belief in and fear of sexual ambiguity was widespread.

Even the September 1923 pronunciamiento of Primo de Rivera would not have any substantive effect on the quality of education, although the numbers of schools increased, the upper limit of the mandatory age for attendance increased from twelve to fourteen, and the illiteracy rate declined.<sup>56</sup> In the decade of the twenties, state expenditures on education increased 58 percent as it built 8,000 new primary schools. School attendance increased by 22.9%.<sup>57</sup> After increasing at the beginning of the century, the illiteracy rate remained stable despite population increases during most of the decade before Primo de Rivera.<sup>58</sup> Illiteracy remained a serious problem as the 1930 illiteracy rates — while lower than those rates thirty years earlier — were still high: 47.5 percent for females and 36.9 percent for males.<sup>59</sup>

The figures are admittedly inexact, and various sources give varying figures. However, a significant decline in illiteracy occurred in the first third of the twentieth century with the percentage of illiterates dropping from 1900's 52.6 percent to 32.4 percent by 1930.<sup>60</sup> Most of the decline occurred during

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56. Guereña, "Infancia y escolarización," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 347.

57. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 286. Later he gives the figure of 23 percent for the increase in primary school attendance between 1924 and 1930." *Ibid.*, 313.

58. Guereña, "Infancia y escolarización," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 365.

59. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 17 and Nash, "The Rise of the Women's Movement in Nineteenth-Century Spain," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, 255. Bussy Genevois has a slightly lower figure of 44.4 percent for women. Danièle Bussy Genevois, "The Women of Spain from the Republic to Franco," in *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Françoise Thébaud (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1994), 177. Scanlon has substantially higher numbers for both sexes: 38.7 percent for men and 58.2 percent for women. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 50.

60. Guereña, "Infancia y escolarización," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 364.

the twenties, when Primo de Rivera presented himself as the regenerationist ideal — Joaquín Costa Martínez's (1846–1911) “iron surgeon,” who would carve out the diseased parts of Spain and speed regeneration.<sup>61</sup> The Primo de Rivera régime continued to build schools as part of his massive public works program, and the government mandated the use of only state sanctioned texts.<sup>62</sup>

Judging from the lower illiteracy rate in Barcelona of nearly fifteen percent in 1930, literacy efforts in Barcelona had some effect. At the beginning of the century it was between 46% and 56.83 % in the working–class and artisanal neighborhoods in Barcelona.<sup>63</sup> Like many statistics, providing averages obscured as much as it showed. The 1930 Barcelona survey gave the overall city median illiteracy rate as 14.26 percent.<sup>64</sup> Working–class neighborhoods generally had significantly higher rates, especially in the south and northeast of the city, while in the Barceloneta neighborhood the adult literacy rate was less than fifty percent.<sup>65</sup> Despite the clear need for educational efforts, libertarian attempts to improve working–class education and associated cultural activities were opposed by the Church, the bourgeoisie, and the state. The anti–clerical education in anarchist schools, the emphasis on natural as opposed to divine law, and the competition with Church schools

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61. Beadman, “Official Nationalism of the Primo de Rivera Regime,” 71. Again following Costa this included a massive investment in dams and other infrastructure projects.

62. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 51.

63. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 75.

64. José Luis Oyón Bañales, José Maldonado, and Eulàlia Griful, *Barcelona 1930: Un atlas social* (Barcelona: Edicions UPC 2001), 42–43.

65. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 86.

were the bases for the Church's opposition. For the bourgeoisie and the authorities, these objections were compounded by the use of cultural and educational activities as modes of organizing and hence sources of subversion.

Education was the principal battleground upon which Church and state clashed throughout the twentieth century in Spain. Traditionally, historians have presented this as a conflict between tradition and modernity. Since the Bourbon Restoration in 1875, the Church accentuated its alienation and withdrew deeper into reaction when faced with new ideologies and fashions, including those that did not specifically threaten the Church.<sup>66</sup> The intransigent hierarchy was hemmed in by its devotion to the *Syllabus Errorum* and its consequent failure to adjust, even a modicum, to contemporary society.<sup>67</sup> Its strident defense of a retrograde vision of the world empowered its opponents to attack the Church as a significant factor in Spain's problems, especially in education.

State universities were free of clerical control and admitted very few women. It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that the idea of an educated woman of the upper and middle classes found acceptance.<sup>68</sup> The Church's concern with dogma had led to the expulsion of several professors at the University of Madrid in the late 1870s. In 1881 the state restored these

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66. Lannon, "The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 44.

67. Lest this seem an exaggeration, the Primate of Spain declared that a secular state and its implied freedom of thought were contrary to Church teaching. Lannon, "The Political Debate within Catholicism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 141.

68. Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 18.

faculty members, including Giner de los Ríos, to their positions. After this date, the Church was excluded from the state universities, establishing academic freedom. Additionally, the state did not recognize degrees from the two major Catholic universities, Deusto and El Escorial, and reciprocally, current law excluded the state from any oversight of the Catholic universities.<sup>69</sup> Liberals and conservatives agreed on university policy, which was one of the few topics in education upon which they did so. Thus, members of the liberal Krausist ILE found themselves sharing meetings with the most reactionary sectors of Catholic education in the name of the autonomy of education in the universities.<sup>70</sup> Until the Primo de Rivera régime, university faculty and students were more concerned with defending corporate privileges and university autonomy than with the quality of the education.<sup>71</sup> The clergy sought state recognition for degrees from the two Catholic universities and were finally successful as state recognition was granted by Primo de Rivera.<sup>72</sup> This recognition by Primo de Rivera was the catalyst for a growing involvement by university students in politics and led to the eventual alienation of the students from the régime.<sup>73</sup> Students and faculty dissented

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69. Apparently there were arrangements between the Catholic schools and some of the state universities to allow students to sit for the state *bachillerato* examinations, necessary for continuing on in the education system.

70. Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 50.

71. *Ibid.*, 48.

72. *Ibid.*, 51.

73. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 349–354; Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 583–584; Álvarez Junco, "Education and the Limits of Liberalism," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 47.

unanimously against the decision as an erosion of the status of state universities.

Universities were a small factor in Spanish education. In 1900, there were only 15,000 university students in the entire nation (and just one was a woman), versus 18,000 seminary students.<sup>74</sup> Women still needed permission from the authorities to attend a university.<sup>75</sup> It was not until 1910 that the state permitted women to enroll at university without advance permission from the authorities.<sup>76</sup> The numbers went up, by the end of the twenties 1,724 women were students; however, they still were a small part of the 33,600 total.<sup>77</sup> While middle class feminists demanded greater access to the education needed for entering the liberal professions, Montseny was more concerned with the lack of education for all women, and was dismissive of the need for women to be in the same position as middle-class men.

Primary education is a profession that in modern times has been gendered as feminine, as are most professions that are seen as custodial, maternal, or charitable. It is this association with women that provides a partial explanation for both the state's failure to allocate adequate resources to

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74. The figure of only one woman at university in the academic year 1900/1901 is from Capel Martínez, "La enseñanza primaria femenina en España," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 115. The following decade saw just a small improvement; just two percent of the student population in the decade from 1910–1920 were women. Mangini, *Memories of Resistance*, 5.

75. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 87.

76. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 56. By the 1919–1920 school year women were only two percent of the university population. *Ibid.*

77. Capel Martínez, "La enseñanza primaria femenina en España," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 115 for female students. The total number of university students is from Brian R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics Europe, 1750–2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 898.

education (and the vast difference in spending on war), as well as its willingness to allow the Catholic Church to dominate even the public schools. Additionally, Spain had a weak central state, and there was not enough tax revenue to fund necessary projects. The weakness of the state educational system, the 1851 Concordant with the Vatican, and a general disinclination to make education a top priority enabled the Church to dominate education, except at the university level.<sup>78</sup> Catholic schools were found in almost every town, and Catholic influence was felt through the extensive network of private schools and, indirectly, in the public state schools.<sup>79</sup> Parochial schools, as well as many public schools, used Catholic texts that stressed Church teachings and a view of the world drawn from the *Syllabus of Errors*. Students used a catechism that stated, “liberalism was a ‘very serious sin against the faith’ and that it was a ‘mortal sin’ to vote for liberal candidates.”<sup>80</sup> In order to maintain its influence in primary and secondary school education while preserving the autonomy of their own schools, the Church relied on the 1851 Concordat to use *carte blanche* in monitoring other private schools for doctrinal intransigence and to act against these schools. At the same time, the Church asserted educational freedom to avert state inspection of the parochial schools,

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78. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 48.

79. Lannon, “The Social Praxis and Cultural Practice of Spanish Catholicism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 41.

80. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 157.

apparently oblivious to any irony.<sup>81</sup> Any attempts by the state to regulate and inspect parochial schools led the Church to accuse the state of Jacobinism and thwart the efforts.<sup>82</sup> In the battle over accreditation at the turn of the century, even anarchists supported the Church in the name of freedom.<sup>83</sup> Connected to the charge of Jacobinism were the educational reforms of Jules Ferry (1832–1893) and the Third Republic in France. Because of the secularization there, a group of French clerics found refuge in Spain. They aided efforts to bring the Spanish nation back to the faith arguing that Spain had strayed and blaming sin for the 1898 defeat against the United States.<sup>84</sup> These ultramontane clerics only reinforced the archaism of the Spanish hierarchy.

The late–nineteenth and early twentieth century anarchists’ counter–hegemonic educational program proposed a system of pedagogy not dissimilar to the programs John Dewey was introducing in the United States. This included teaching students to work with their hands as well as their minds and draw conclusions from their activities. By having students learn from their actions rather than from an authority, both Dewey and the anarchists hoped to instill students with a sense of autonomy and independence, leading to more fulfilling individual lives. Anarchists also believed students would learn to be self–sufficient and recognize the state as an intrusive force into their lives.

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81. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 50.

82. *Ibid.*, 49.

83. At a meeting in Madrid’s Ateneo, Urales declared, “Liberty must come first” in 1904. Quoted in Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 137.

84. Álvarez Junco, “Education and the Limits of Liberalism,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 49.



## ANARCHISM AND EDUCATION

The debates in Spanish society are frequently described as a conflict between two opposing forces: continuity and tradition versus progress and change. Implicitly in this perspective the Church represents conservative authority while the state represents the possibilities of individual freedom. Rarely though is gender considered a part of this binary struggle. Historian Aurora Morcillo argues that battles over deference to authority and individual choice in education, frequently seen as struggles between authority and freedom, often were expressed in gendered terms.<sup>85</sup> Viewing the state as an impediment to individual freedom, Montseny believed education should be independent of the state. Anarchists like Montseny refused to allow the state to educate children and thereby control them. Anarchists wanted to replace the clerically dominated educational system of Spain with a more open network of free schools, one that was independent of state control. Therefore, libertarians opposed liberal hegemony as well as religious authority.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries republicans, socialists, and anarchists all saw the need for a substantial improvement in the educational level as necessary for the progress of Spaniards. Education was a way to spread doctrines from the cities to rural areas and the Spanish Section of the First International viewed education as a key to the evolutionary process

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85. Morcillo Gómez, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 9.

towards the eventual revolution.<sup>86</sup> Other than the importance of the independence of schools, the anarchists disagreed with the Church on every aspect of education. Anarchists knew that education was the necessary preparation for the social revolution; for them the clerical culture of Spanish society had to be replaced with a secular and scientific society for the revolution to be successful. In the nineteenth century, anarchists viewed education as crucial for the success of labor's social revolution — the worker must be educated in order to know who he (and it was usually seen as a he) was, and what needed to be done.<sup>87</sup> Thus for anarchists, education was a crucial component of liberation, especially individual liberation. Drawing on the teachings of Fourier and Proudhon (especially as interpreted through the work of Francisco Pi i Margall, 1824–1901, a president of the First Spanish Republic), the anarchists advocated what they referred to as an “integral education.”<sup>88</sup> This meant an education that included the basics needed for work as well as a broad cultural knowledge, what is known in the United States as a liberal education. Anarchists viewed this general education as an essential part of learning. A wide range of writers influenced anarchist pedagogy, including Fourier, Proudhon, Bakunin, John Ruskin (1819–1900), and William Morris (1834–1896), as well as the efforts of the ILE. Anarchists wanted an education that not only made possible earning a living, but one that

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86. Clara E. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” *Revista de Occidente*, no. 97 (1971), 37.

87. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 28.

88. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 129–130.

included an understanding of nature, history, and the arts. The goal was for humanity to evolve towards a society where work was both a useful and a rewarding task, a pleasure — as Morris argued in his 1885 essay “Useful Work Versus Mindless Toil.”<sup>89</sup>

Integral education combined the vocational knowledge needed to earn a livelihood with intellectual courses to expand one’s moral horizons, and would be a liberating experience. Anarchists such as Montseny believed that education served as an organizing tool by highlighting the contradictions of capitalism. They believed that as students learned about their environment and the world, they would realize that contrary to the teachings of the Church and in the state schools, their place in the world was not preordained. Awakening an awareness would lead to a growing realization of the inequalities and concurrently, a desire to change the present through revolutionary action.

Anarchists established schools that adopted Fourier’s school–workshop model, where alongside a broad general education, instruction in a specific trade was included.<sup>90</sup> The emphasis on a broad general education was important to the anarchist and labor movement in Spain. In 1872, the Federation of Workers of the Spanish Region (the Spanish branch of the

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89. William Morris, “Useful Work Versus Mindless Toil,” in *Political Writings of William Morris*, ed. A. L. Morton (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1973), 86–108. The Montseny family’s cultural ethos is very reminiscent of that of Morris, whom they had published in the first series of *La Revista Blanca*. He was also cited in support of their shared vision of work versus toil. See Pablo Gourmand, “Sociología: La educación integral,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 34 (15 December 1901), 353–357.

90. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” 33–34.

International Workingmen's Association, IWA, and the main anarchist workers' organization), proposed a curriculum that emphasized the arts (music, architecture, literature, and painting); sciences (including mathematics, mechanics, physics, chemistry, physics, and psychology), and finally, as students advanced, history and more sciences.<sup>91</sup>

The model curriculum of the 1872 Congress included studying a number of scientists whose works were banned by the Church. The curriculum included works by a number of eminent European scientists whose work had challenged divine creation and formed the basis of a materialist conception of life. Among the scientists were Charles Darwin (1809–1882), Thomas Huxley (1825–1895), Karl Vogt (1817–1895), Charles Lyell (1797–1875), and Jacob Moleschott (1822–1893). The anarchist press printed and sold popularizations of their work, along with translations of Herbert Spencer, and the anarchist geographers Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus.<sup>92</sup> Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Vogt were prominent writers on evolution. Lyell was a lawyer (and friend of Darwin) who popularized the idea that the earth was formed by a series of slow processes which continued to operate and the Dutch physiologist Moleschott made similar arguments for the origins of animal life. All these men made arguments that offered materialist explanations rather than divine origins for the world. This formed a crucial component of

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91. Reproduced in *Ibid.*, 44–47 and in Anselmo Lorenzo Asperilla, *El proletariado militante 1901–1923*, (Madrid: Editorial Alianza, 1974), 259–262.

92. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” 46. This is from the Segundo Congreso de la Federación Regional Española in April 1872. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 126.

scientific education that was anti-clerical. The popularization of science became the replacement for religious faith. An anti-clericalism based in science was more palatable than a crude atheism.<sup>93</sup> Darwinian thought was an important element in this, especially in its conception of evolutionary change.<sup>94</sup>

In September 1872, the local section of the IWA started a girl's school in Barcelona. The classes were held in the *Ateneo Catalán de la Clase Obrera* (Catalan Athenaeum of the Working Class) at 42 Mercaders Street in the Sant Pere neighborhood, a center for textile manufacture. Based on the proposed model curriculum of the 1872 Congress, girls learned geometry and drawing as well as other aspects of a general education. Additionally, the curriculum expected girls to master traditional needlework and domestic skills, such as ironing, perceived to be of practical use for women of the working class.<sup>95</sup> Many anarchists rejected teaching domestic skills. In his 1900 *La femme esclave*, René Chaughi (pseudonym of Henri Gauche, 1870–1926), a well-known and widely read French anarchist, complained that women were taught domesticity and possibly some other topics and kept away from the sciences because these would “open their eyes to the religious and social lies.”<sup>96</sup>

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93. Fitzpatrick, “Cultural Revolution Revisited,” 207.

94. Thomas F. Glick and Mark G. Henderson, “The Scientific and Popular Receptions of Darwin, Freud, and Einstein: Toward an Analytical History of the Diffusion of Scientific Ideas,” in *Darwinismo en España e Iberoamérica: The Reception of Darwinism in the Iberian World, Spain, Spanish America, and Brazil*, eds. Thomas F. Glick, Miguel Ángel Puig-Samper, and Rosaura Ruiz (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 237.

95. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” 41.

96. René Chaughi, “La mujer esclava,” in René Chaughi and Paul Robin, *La mujer: mujer privada — mujer pública*, trans. Anselmo Lorenzo, Biblioteca de “Tierra y Libertad” 2 (Barcelona: Germinal, 1920). Widely translated and read, especially in the Spanish speaking world, Chaughi was well known as an anarchist activist on women's rights. The Spanish

Chaughí argued against the theory that women are inferior because of a lack of physical strength. He claimed that because physical strength was no longer important as technology increasingly rendered it irrelevant. Women were freer to develop their intellectual capacities than was possible earlier.<sup>97</sup> In fact, turning the domesticity argument to his advantage, Chaughí argued that women needed natural science in order to be better caregivers.<sup>98</sup>

Anarchists favored independent schools. Montseny herself featured a private school teacher as the protagonist in her first two novels, as well as in several novellas. Private schools often catered to working adults and children. Given the minimal wages for adults, there was a need for children to work to supplement the family income. Furthermore, Montseny recognized that activist parents were frequently unemployed and blacklisted, and they depended on their children to provide the family's income. This meant that these children were often unable to attend school during regular hours. Consequently, anarchists created or supported schools that met basic instructional needs at irregular hours.<sup>99</sup> Various dissident movements, most notably anarchists and anti-clericals, organized their own schools and ateneos (athenaeums).<sup>100</sup> These had a dual purpose: they served as centers for

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anarchist doctor Avelino Luis Bulffi de Quintana (1867–191?), a founder of the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular, translated the original 1900 pamphlet into Spanish as early as 1907. I read the 1920 printing of the Spanish translation by Anselmo Lorenzo.

97. Chaughí, "La mujer esclava," in Chaughí and Robin, *La mujer*, 2–3.

98. *Ibid.*, 6. Chaughí wanted youth of both sexes to work in hospitals to better understand care giving as well as suffering.

99. Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909," 138.

100. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 45. Libraries were special points of pride.

education and as spaces for the socialization and politicization of the worker.<sup>101</sup> Ateneos, cultural groups, choirs, and excursion clubs organized and provided opportunities for anarchists (and others) to gather together for conversation and mutual education.<sup>102</sup>

Here the student/worker would be exposed to ideologically appropriate reading materials, such as newspapers, pamphlets and literature; moreover, almost everything would be available in inexpensive editions, as well.<sup>103</sup> Classes were organized for both young children and workers, with the former in the day and the latter in the evenings.<sup>104</sup> There were usually concerts, plays, lectures, and a café — again part of an effort to educate and radicalize the working class. Montseny, like other Spanish anarchists of the first third of the twentieth century, agreed with French syndicalist, Pelloutier. He believed that the working class could not wait until the revolution to begin its transformation. Rather, the working class needed to start now to fight the attempts to suppress them through an inferior education, arguing that workers' education had to be undertaken by itself apart from, and specifically

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101. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 24.

102. These types of groups became the basis for the organizational structure of the FAI, founded in 1929 at the end of the Primo de Rivera régime. Faista (groups or individuals associated with the FAI) affinity groups, *grupos de afinidad*, became the operating base for several well-known anarchist activists, including Abad de Santillán, José Peirats i Valls (1908–1989), and Peiró.

103. I examined a number of fiction series in the collection of Barcelona's Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular, one such center founded in 1902.

104. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 46.

against, capitalist society.<sup>105</sup> This led Montseny and other anarchist intellectuals to support various educational programs, notably so-called “rational education” and the Modern School movement.

Repression was partially responsible for the anarchist turn towards culture in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, it was the recognition of the need for a major educational effort.<sup>106</sup> By working on culture and not overtly on revolution, anarchists would avoid a great deal of direct repression. Anarchists published journals and other publications to meet the growing desire for reading material, which in turn, spawned more associations and yet more demand for literature. Publications would often organize readers’ groups in local areas, creating imaginary communities and sociability: participants would not be isolated.<sup>107</sup>

Even if only one person in a community was literate, the message would still get out through the practice of reading aloud at meetings, workplaces, and cafés. This anarchism became part of everyday working-class culture throughout the country and these imaginary communities enhanced a shared ethos and reinforced class-consciousness.<sup>108</sup> The imagined community thus created was increasingly in competition with dancing halls, football, and

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105. See Alan B. Spitzer, “Anarchy and Culture: Fernand Pelloutier and the Dilemma of Revolutionary Syndicalism,” *International Review of Social History* 8, no. 3 (1963), 379–388.”

106. In 1848 José Anselmo Clavé organized the first choral society formed by workers. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” 36.

107. A contemporary North American equivalent is the reading groups of subscribers to *The Nation*.

108. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 124.



cinema.<sup>109</sup> Ateneos offered an alternative to rote education and opportunities for socialization between the sexes that departed from norms. Female activists often found the ateneos important for educational and cultural activities. Additionally, they were the only place that they could establish relationships across sex, an important socialization for both genders.<sup>110</sup> Mary Nash argues that while ateneos responded to a real demand from the working class, they still maintained gender boundaries by not systematically developing popular education specifically for women. Traditional gender prejudices and habits combined with high levels of female illiteracy made it difficult for working class women to make use of the few opportunities that were offered.<sup>111</sup>

As in the case of Germany's alternative socialist culture, the Spanish bourgeoisie and the Church perceived workers' cultural centers as a threat to the established order because it was a combination of politics, culture, and inter-sex friendships.<sup>112</sup> In 1871 anarchists called for co-education at all levels in order to eliminate intellectual inequalities, arguing that the supposed organic basis for women's inferiority was fictitious and arose from the inequalities of society.<sup>113</sup> Anarchists fervently believed in co-education, exploration, and observation as educational tools. By knowing one's position in evolutionary progress and understanding how it evolved over time, one would better understand society. This understanding would in turn create

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109. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937*, 47.

110. Ackelsberg, "Anarchist Revolution and Women's Liberation," 30.

111. Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 20.

112. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture*, 9.

113. Lida, "Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos" 38.

rational human beings who sought freedom. The focus of anarchist education was liberation of humanity and the creation of individuals who were self-directed and who made their own decisions and acted in life with freedom rather than restrained by dogma.

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“Rational education,” the term late nineteenth and early twentieth-century anarchists used for secular studies, helped like-minded individual liberals, masons, free thinkers, and anarchists join an imagined community. Urales and Gustavo met through their participation in the activities and meetings of rationalist teachers, and Montseny’s parents were her teachers. She wrote in her memoirs about Gustavo’s secular pedagogy being strongly influenced by Jean–Jacques Rousseau’s (1712–1778) belief in developing children’s intellectual curiosity through exposure to nature. Montseny presented Gustavo’s belief in astrology as irrational.<sup>114</sup> After being blacklisted for union activity, Montseny’s partner, Germinal Esgleas i Jaume (1903–1981), worked as a teacher at a rationalist school in Mataró run for the glassworkers’ union.<sup>115</sup> Even when they were not standing before a class of students, Montseny, her family, and her close associates all believed that they were educators in almost everything they did. Publishing a journal, a newspaper, hundreds of novellas, pamphlets, and propaganda were all significant efforts

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114. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 17. She remarks later that her mother was distant and cold with her, more a teacher than a mother. *Ibid.*, 74.

115. *Ibid.*, 52.

of a counter–hegemonic educational campaign: “our [publishing] work was never a business but rather a tireless labor of culture and propaganda.”<sup>116</sup>

### THE MODERN SCHOOL

Perhaps the most important anarchist educational effort came with the Modern School movement of Francisco Ferrer. Ferrer was executed for alleged involvement in one of the most important outbursts of anti–clericalism, the Tragic Week of 1909.<sup>117</sup> In September 1901 Ferrer, a rationalist educator and contributor to *La Revista Blanca*, opened the “Modern Scientific and Rational School” in Barcelona.<sup>118</sup> Its initial enrollment was thirty students, eighteen boys and twelve girls.<sup>119</sup> As Carolyn Boyd points out, the 15 pesetas monthly tuition largely excluded the working class from sending their children to the Modern School.<sup>120</sup> Eventually, it was divided into three sections (kindergarten, elementary, and upper elementary), with modern teaching materials (including collections of mineralogy and a projector) and an emphasis on the natural sciences and health.<sup>121</sup> The Modern School emphasized observation and experience, a system of education that was in itself revolutionary in contrast to the narrowly bound ways of teaching that

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116. *Ibid.*, 52. This was also to counter persistent charges stemming in the twenties that the family was getting rich from its publications. See for example Comité Nacional, “Carta abierta,” *Prismas*, No. 19 (1 November 1928), 2–3. I am grateful to Kees Rodenburg of the IISG for both alerting me to this exchange and sending me a copy of this newspaper of Spaniards exiled in France. Juan Reverter Nolla, *Prismas’* principal supporter, also reviewed Montseny’s 1927 novel *El hijo de Clara*. This is discussed in more detail in my chapter 9.

117. See my chapter 3.

118. Avrich, *The Modern School Movement*, 3–33.

119. *Ibid.*, 20. Also Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 148.

120. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 151.

121. Guereña, “Infancia y escolarización,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 374–375.

were common in the period, where textbooks were for memorization rather than enjoyment.<sup>122</sup> Excluded were systems of rewards, punishments, and examinations, all seen as essential by the educational standards of the day. The contemporary adage was “letters enter with blood” (*la letra con sangre entra*), which says a great deal about the educational system.<sup>123</sup>

In the Modern School, the practice was to visit museums, laboratories, factories, the seaside, and woods — anywhere where the child’s natural curiosity could be encouraged. For Ferrer, such learning would be organic. Each child learned based on his or her own interests and pace. These excursions tended to the physical health of the child, as did programs of gymnastics. The pedagogical system emphasized self-directed learning (even attendance and punctuality would not be enforced, at least not by the school). For Ferrer and those he influenced, education was an ongoing process throughout life. Parents were encouraged to be involved and to attend the evening and Sunday lectures that the school gave. The Modern School sought to eliminate or prove false those divisions in life that prevented individual liberation, adult-child, mind-body, male-female, and education/culture-daily life.<sup>124</sup>

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122. *Ibid.*, 399.

123. Usually translated as being the Spanish equivalent to “spare the rod, spoil the child.” Anarchist and socialist Spaniards often referred to the Church schools as prison schools due to the amount of corporal discipline. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 5.

124. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 146.

During the short life of the Modern School, Montseny's parents lived in Madrid and were unable to be directly involved in the school's activities. They contributed in other ways, however, Urales being already well known as a writer. His most famous novel, *Sembrando flores (Sowing Flowers)*, was just one of his books printed and used by Ferrer's Modern School movement.<sup>125</sup> The hero of *Sembrando flores* is Floreal (Flowering), his partner is Armonia (Harmony), and they have four children: Sol, Vida, Placer, and Amor (Sun, Life, Pleasure and Love) all of whom receive a libertarian education.<sup>126</sup> This novel was part of Ferrer's effort to publish a series of textbooks to be used as alternatives to the clerical ones used in public and private schools.<sup>127</sup> Among the other textbooks/publications of the Modern School were Darwin's *The Origin of Man* and the classic French anarcho-syndicalist novel *How We Made the Revolution*.<sup>128</sup>

The goal of an education was not only to free children from repression. These were exemplified in the stereotypes of clerical education graphically depicted in many of the covers of anarchist publications. It was also to give the child a sense of self-worth, a thirst for knowledge, and a spirit of adventure.

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125. *Ibid.*, 148.

126. *Ibid.*, 153. Montseny tells the story that when police searched militants' homes and offices the collection of stories *Dinamita cerebral (Mental Dynamite)* would be confiscated while her father's novel they left under the assumption it was a gardening book. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 40.

127. Ullman, "The Warp and Woof of Parliamentary Politics in Spain, 1808-1939," 157.

128. Carolyn P. Boyd, "Appendix: Publications of the Modern School," *Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 4, supplement (1976), 171-172.

Anarchist educators did not hesitate to use anything that might advance these goals, including soccer.<sup>129</sup>

Ferrer had attracted the unfavorable attention of Catholic educators when he organized a demonstration for secular education on April 12, 1906, Good Friday. Mateo Morral Roca (1880–1906), the librarian of the Modern School, attempted to assassinate King Alfonso a month later and committed suicide when he failed. In the resulting repression the state arrested Ferrer and later released him for lack of evidence. However, the school closed during his imprisonment and failed to reopen.<sup>130</sup> In 1909, after the Tragic Week, Ferrer was arrested and tried as an organizer of the Barcelona demonstrations.<sup>131</sup> Despite an international campaign to save Ferrer, with leading European intellectuals campaigning alongside anarchists, he was executed in the courtyard of Barcelona's Montjuïc Prison.<sup>132</sup> In the minds of conservatives, the Modern School was inseparable from revolution. Henceforth, any attempts to remove the Church from education or to open private secular schools invariably caused opponents to invoke the Modern School as an example of revolutionary teaching. Some even argued that

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129. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 149.

130. Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909," 155.

131. The July 26–August 1, 1909 general strike in Barcelona against conscription for the colonial war in Spanish Morocco, known in Spain as *La semana trágica*. It quickly escalated into the torching of Church property in the city. I discuss it in more detail in my chapter 3. Ferrer left Barcelona for his farm fifteen miles away just before the strike began and went into hiding before being discovered, arrested, tried and executed.

132. Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930), George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), H.G. Wells (1866–1946), and Anatole France (1844–1924) were among those campaigning for Ferrer.

educating the poor was dangerous.<sup>133</sup> For anarchists and other free-thinkers, Ferrer was a martyr, a sentiment that is still invoked today.<sup>134</sup>

The anarchist veneration of education was especially focused on scientific education, which promised to accelerate the progress of mankind through inventions and technological advances as well as through an understanding of biology and other sciences. Montseny wrote about the constant changes in science in her article on doubt and mystery. This article was a paean to science, yet included a bit of caution, as well, in recognizing the potential for misuse and destruction in technology. She feared that the military application of scientific advances would end the world before anarchism was achieved. “We happen to think that perhaps there will never be any realizable ideal [the reality of an anarchist society], because the ideals are all for social transformation and science is quicker, discovering the means to annihilate the world faster than the human mind will conceive [and realize] ideas of freedom and universal happiness.”<sup>135</sup>

### **AUTODIDACTS**

Education was displaced as a central activity by other concerns after the repression of the movement in the period after the Tragic Week, especially after the founding, in 1911, of the CNT. Even as anarcho-syndicalism became

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133. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 160.

134. The Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular regularly commemorates Ferrer and posters of him decorate the library. In 2009, as part of the Catalan regional government’s pavilion at the Venice Biennial, the Tragic Week was commemorated and a neighborhood barricade recreated.

135. Federica Montseny, “La duda y el misterio,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 29 (1 July 1924), 13.

the most important form of organization in the Spanish libertarian movement, education continued to be a crucial tool.<sup>136</sup> Along with public meetings, publications maintained their position as the principal method of reaching out to workers. These were always for sale at meetings and rallies to spread the message or protest against an injustice. Men would gather at bars and cafés where the patrons would read aloud from the anarchist press. Education, in the broad sense of the Spanish libertarian movement, is a repeated refrain in the memoirs and testimonies of Spaniards from the working class, as well as a number of female members of the élite such as Constanca de la Mora Maura (1906–1950).<sup>137</sup> In most cases, the discussion of education in these memoirs emphasized the lack of formal schooling and consequently a sense of continuous striving.<sup>138</sup> Rather than the Horatio Alger “by the bootstrap” type of narratives, these working–class memoirs emphasized the social conditions

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136. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 159–160.

137. Constanca de la Mora Maura was the granddaughter of Antonio Maura y Montaner (1853–1925), the preeminent leader of the Conservative Party. Her uncles Gabriel (1879–1963) and Miguel Maura Gamazo (1887–1971) were ministers in the monarchy and Republic respectively, and she was the cousin of Jorge (1923–2011) and Carlos Semprún Maura (1926–2009), and related to other notable figures in twentieth–century Spain. Constanca de la Mora was the first woman in Spain to get a civil divorce when the Second Republic legalized divorce and she later joined the Communist Party. In 1939 she published her memoirs: *In Place of Splendor: The Autobiography of a Spanish Woman* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939). She was active in anti–fascist causes in the United States and died in Guatemala in an automobile accident. See “Senorita de la Mora killed in Guatemala,” *The New York Times* (January 29, 1950), 22.

138. A striving that the anarchist presses encouraged and supported. See the announcement of opening up a section for getting a *bachillerato* at the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular. “Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 141 (1 April 1929), V.



that mandated that children left school at an early age to work, or simply the lack of opportunity caused by the need to work.<sup>139</sup>

Federica Montseny was homeschooled because her parents wanted to teach her themselves in order to ensure she got the type of rational education advocated by anarchists. Montseny actually got a better education than most other leading anarchists. They were generally autodidacts. Almost no leaders of the labor movement, or of Spanish anarchism, received a university education. They were educated in the home, on the streets, workplace or picked up their education at the ateneos or beside fellow union members.<sup>140</sup> Montseny's partner, Esgleas, was also an autodidact. Montseny wrote to Max Nettlau that Esgleas had never attended school and his intelligence was a combination of an iron will and a natural aptitude — she noted this was not uncommon amongst the working class of Catalonia.<sup>141</sup>

Joan Peiró, a glassworker, leading syndicalist organizer, and future cabinet minister, was taught by his co-workers to read at age sixteen and

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139. Francisco Largo Caballero, José Peirats, Ángel Pestaña, Dolores Ibárruri Gómez (1895–1989) are just a few examples from the working class. In the case of de la Mora, her education suffered due to her class origins and social constructions of femininity, notably the belief that elite women needed “finishing” rather than an education. Two important memoirs of elite women on the left are de la Mora's *In Place of Splendor* and Isabel Oyarzábal Smith de Palencia, *I Must Have Liberty* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1940). See also Mangini, *Memories of Resistance*. I discuss Montseny comments on de Palencia's version of feminism in my chapter 7.

140. Esenwein notes that the nineteenth century leaders of the labor movement, both anarchists and socialists, appear to have been self-educated. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, 221. Anselmo Lorenzo attended a workers' school. Lida, “Educación anarquista en la España de ochocientos,” 35. The leadership of the PSOE, though, did include a number of notable university-educated intellectuals. The only university-educated anarchist I know of in this period was Abad de Santillán. The Herodotus of the anarchist movement, José Peirats, learned to read at a neighborhood ateneo.

141. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, August 20, 1930. Max Nettlau Papers, IISG.

began writing for publication at twenty-two.<sup>142</sup> His publications included articles in *La Revista Blanca*. One massive publishing series, “Cuadernos de Cultura” (Notebooks of Culture), had articles by a wide range of Spanish authors with a sprinkling of foreign ones. The Spanish authors were almost always on the left politically.<sup>143</sup> The anarchists included the physician Isaac Puente Amestoy (1896–1936) and Sebastián Faure (1852–1948, France). The dissident communist Andrés Nin Pérez (1892–1937) wrote two pamphlets, while among the Socialist authors were Julián Zugazagoitia Mendieta (1899–1940) and Hildegart Rodríguez Carballeira (1914–1933). Another socialist contributor to the series was Rodolfo Llopis Ferrándiz (1895–1983), the founder of the UGT’s teachers’ union and the first director of Primary Education for the Second Republic. William J. Fielding (1886–1973), an American writer on sexual questions, contributed two works, one on sex education for children and the other an historical study of sexuality.<sup>144</sup> The series specifically marketed itself to meet the needs of the autodidact:

Cuadernos de Cultura are mainly directed at the self-taught: the man who wants culture through his own effort, the man who does not have adequate time and facilities for the systematic cultivation of his intelligence, and sees that life is a panorama full of questions, the man who wants to enter the

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142. Chris Ealham, “Anarco–Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesía and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia,” 55.

143. This notice for the series first appeared on number 6. See the webpage <http://www.filosofia.org/ave/001/a047.htm>, which lists all the issues published and the different series. Cuadernos de Cultura were initially published in Valencia by people connected to *Estudios*, a major anarchist journal. At the time of publication it was at the same address as *Orto*, another radical journal, but one that included a number of non-anarchist authors such as Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935). Manuel Monleón Burgos (1904–1976) and Josep Renau Berenguer (1907–1982) were the two young radical artists, both of who became communists, who created many of the *Estudios* covers as well as for the Cuadernos.

144. Fielding worked for Tiffany’s from 1909 until 1963. See the finding aid for his papers at [http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingsaids/html/tamwag/fielding\\_william\\_john.htm](http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingsaids/html/tamwag/fielding_william_john.htm).

knowledge of the world and human thought and wants to form his education based exclusively in reading.<sup>145</sup>

Montseny often used rationalist or free thinking male and female teachers who ran their own schools as protagonists in her novellas. Montseny's full length novels *La victoria* and *El hijo de Clara* — discussed in detail in chapters 8 and 9 — centered on the life of Clara Delval, a rationalist educator. In the novels, Clara is concerned with introducing children to a broad and self-conscious educational experience. The novel featured discussions about libertarian methods to educate children such as allowing the children to direct the pace of education, co-education, combinations of mental and physical exercises, and the use of close observation of the local environment through excursions, and referred back to *Sembrando flores*. In *La victoria*, the first novel, Clara created a special evening class that included grammar and mathematics lessons, “as she favors the oppressed.”<sup>146</sup>

Federica Montseny believed that education was liberatory and that it would lead to a better society and eventually to a society restored to harmony with nature and operating with complete equality. This lapsarian vision of the past is not limited to anarchists, or even radicals. It reflected a deep desire to improve the conditions in which they found themselves and to do so through their own efforts. As Carolyn Boyd notes, the anarchist efforts reflected the

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145. Advertisement on the inside front cover of Eduardo González Blanco, *La familia: En el pasado, en el presente y en el porvenir*, Cuadernos de cultura no. 15, Sociología general no. 1 (Valencia: Gonzalo Julián, 1930).

146. The novel also states that the majority of her students are middle class. The added hours are late because presumably the working-class children were employed, either in the home or in shops and factories. Montseny, *La victoria*, 17–18.

real or perceived needs of Spanish workers and contributed to the success of anarchism in Iberia.<sup>147</sup> What I have tried to lay out in the previous two chapters is how this vision of an anti-clerical secularism and education was put into effect by publishing a journal, pamphlets, and books. All these came together and informed the fiction of an exceptional young woman, one who produced an impressive collection of engaged fiction and journalism before she was twenty-three years old.

In *La Revista Blanca*, Camillo Berneri (1897–1937), an Italian anarchist exile living in Barcelona, argued that sexual segregation led to masturbation and homosexuality, which were then regarded as deviant behaviors.<sup>148</sup> Anarchists firmly believed that sexuality was natural and consequently any efforts to stifle it led to problems. For anarchists, co-education was important for the advancement of both sexes, yet gendered norms persisted. Because anarchists saw women principally as mothers and natural nurturers, anarchist education focused on women and their roles as educators of children. While some, such as Gustavo, became educators out of a desire for the liberation of women; others pursued education out of concern for the children. It was assumed that women were religious and were passing on that religious feeling

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147. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909,” 125.

148. Camillo Berneri, “La degeneración sexual en las escuelas,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 118 (15 April 1928), 695–697. Earlier Urales wrote that the father exclusively should be responsible for education. Given the importance of teaching to Soledad Gustavo and the insistence on co-education, I am not sure why Urales would argue this. Federico Urales, “Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 12.

to their children. By educating the women, anarchists would free both women and their children.<sup>149</sup>

Montseny would write several novellas focusing on children. In my next chapter I focus on one such novella, one focused on two orphans. They not only practiced learning and studying together, they also lived together. This novella illustrated the positive and natural experiences of a self-directed and coeducational learning experience.

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149. Shaffer, "Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionary Mothers in Cuban Anarchism," 8–9.

## CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN OF THE STREET

“What of the unfortunate proletarian child who has lost its parents, what remains for the child? The orphanage, prison, hospital... Such a child is flesh to be exploited, it is cannon fodder!” “La lucha por la vida,” *Bandera Social* (17 September 1885)<sup>1</sup>

In the next two chapters, I examine how Montseny used youth to illustrate and draw attention to the problems facing the entire working class during the inter-war period. Montseny frequently evoked Youth (*juventud*) as a conception of a certain spirit and attitude rather than a strictly chronological definition. This was associated with the traditional sense of spring as the time of new life and of transformative change. “The generous elders, who are perennially young, understand, love, and excuse the immodesty of spring, this courageous boldness that is home to all heroes. For all the heroes are young. It is impossible to imagine a scowling, bearded hero. Heroism will forever be the laughter of Apollo under the helmet of Achilles.”<sup>2</sup>

Montseny sought to invoke the possibility and desirability of these transformative changes by using youth as a positive description of individuals and movements that sought change in the structures of the contemporary society. In an essay on the Turkish women’s movement, she referred to Turkey as a young country. She argued it was young in its spirit and rapid

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1. Quoted in Lily Litvak, “Crimen y castigo,” *Revista Internacional de Sociología* 39, no. 37 (1981), 91.

2. Federica Montseny, “Han Ryner o la filosofía de la sonrisa,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 91 (1 March 1927), 582.

transformation, not solely in terms of the short time of existence.<sup>3</sup> However, youth could be incomplete, a description of the state of belief that had energy and the drive for change yet lacked the maturity to complete that change. In 1923, for the first issue of the resurrected *La Revista Blanca*, she published a critique of Futurism. She saw it as a movement of young intellectuals who are unable to recognize the next step. She argues that “moral cowardice” prevents these youths from making the logical leap to anarchism. It is moral cowardice caused by the “old prejudices of education” and the “morbid influence” of contemporary society, those who would “castrate youth’s natural generosity, making it stingy and calculating.”<sup>4</sup> As in English, youth could be a negative characteristic; however, then the word used was “juvenile.” She pejoratively described the actions of José María Vargas Vila (1860–1933), the popular Colombian writer who lived in Barcelona, as juvenile anarchy (*su anarquizamiento juvenil*).<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, generally youth was a positive trait, a trait that carried the energy to make changes.

Youth enabled Montseny to simultaneously point out and call into question specific conditions affecting the Barcelona working classes during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. These problems included child labor, sexual exploitation, and poor living conditions. Many of her readers would be

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3. Federica Montseny, “El despertar de la mujer turca,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 11 (1 November 1923), 5–8. The article was published just one month after the founding of the Turkish Republic. I examine this article in detail in my chapter 7.

4. Federica Montseny, “El futurismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 1 (15 June 1923), 9.

5. Federica Montseny, “Comentando a un hombre,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 22 (15 April 1924), 15.

intimately familiar with all these. For the purposes of these chapters, youth were people under forty who constituted a generational cohort that came of age in Spain between the Tragic Week of 1909 and the Barcelona International Exposition of 1929. The focus of this chapter's examination of youth is her journalism and her 1926 novella, *Los hijos de la calle*, featuring two Barcelona orphans.<sup>6</sup>

Montseny shifted this novella's setting from a rural to an urban environment. Yet, as in *Resurrección*, gender and social conflict continue to be central to her fiction.<sup>7</sup> *Los hijos de la calle* celebrated the revolutionary potential of youth to shape the future.<sup>8</sup> The novella used its setting in Barcelona to draw attention to several of the consequences of the city's rapid yet uneven industrialization and urbanization. Focusing on this novella in depth reveals the connection between Montseny's own personal struggle

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6. The previous novella in the series, *Novela Ideal 23*, was Rogelio Arnau's *iMadres!* This featured an *Inclusa* (orphanage), the portrayal of which was "so sad that it must have been lived by the author." "La Novela Ideal," *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 64 (15 January 1926), 1. There was also the short story by Bajatierra featuring a girl from an *Inclusa*. Mauro Bajatierra, "Cuentos para niños: La incluserita," *La Revista Blanca* 9, no. 197 (1 August 1931), 368–372. The orphans of *El hijo de la calle* avoided institutionalization, but undoubtedly this novel built upon the widely shared view of the horrors of the Church run *Inclusas*.

7. The anticlericalism in this work is the notable absence of religion and clerics and Montseny's secularization of religious symbolism.

8. See Annie Kriegel, "Generational Differences: The History of an Idea," *Daedalus* 197, no. 4 (1978), 23–38 and Sandra Souto Kustrín, "Juventud, teoría e historia: La formación de un sujeto social y de un objeto de análisis," *Historia Actual On-Line*, no. 13 (2007), 171–192 for comparative assessments of youth and generation as theoretical conceptions for history. Montseny used generation sparingly. The jurist Cuello Calón (1879–1963) provided a contemporary analysis of juveniles as a problem and a comparison of Spain's system and those of several European and American nations, and sometimes Japan. Interestingly, he never mentions the Soviet Union. Eugenio Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil Criminalidad infantil y juvenil (sus causas, régimen jurídico, tribunales para menores, libertad vigilada, colocación en familia, internamiento en instituciones, etc.)* (Barcelona: Bosch, 1934).



against the patriarchal family and against the tendency to attribute Spain's problems to the failures of the family, especially the working-class mother.

In this novella, Montseny differs from many writers of proletarian fiction insofar as she focuses on the employment and sexual exploitation of young women. She proposes empowerment (*capacitación*), particularly female empowerment, as a means of raising the consciousness of the society that oppressed the entire working class. In Montseny's fiction, groups that were apparently powerless achieved empowerment and the capacity to simultaneously resist and oppose those with power through knowledge, understanding, and action. These stories drew upon her own personal experiences and reflected her interpretation of anarchist individualism as an appropriate response to the lack of moral standards in contemporary society.

#### **DESTABILIZING THE GENDER ORDER**

Montseny used a wide range of characters and situations in her novels and shorter works of fiction in order to show the transformation of female characters into strong, independent, and determined women. This was a theme that Montseny would return to again and again in her writing and life, whether in full-length novels like *La victoria*, in journalism such as the six-part series "La mujer, problema del hombre," or by travelling alone as a single woman on her propaganda campaigns.<sup>9</sup> Her novels presented images of a

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9. Montseny published "La mujer, problema del hombre" in *La Revista Blanca* from December 1926 to June 1927 and then a final installment in November 1927. She republished these in Barcelona as a pamphlet in 1932 with the same title (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1932) and twice in Toulouse while in exile as *El problema de los sexos* (Toulouse: Universo, 1950). For Montseny discussing being a curiosity because she travelled without a chaperone on

better life. She argued consistently that it was imperative for women to achieve consciousness, to make their own decisions, and to act as independent human beings.<sup>10</sup> She made certain presumptions about the meaning of feminism and claimed to be promoting a different path for women and society to follow. She rejected feminism as bourgeois. In her view, feminists were middle-class and only interested in sharing power with middle-class men. However, Montseny argued that the social revolution would not be truly successful without a revolution in the relations between the sexes as well. This revolution in the sexes would require changes in men more than in women.<sup>11</sup> Montseny created melodramas to advocate her positions on gender, anticlericalism, and politics and used romance fiction to destabilize the patriarchal family.<sup>12</sup>

### **PATRIARCHY**

In his classic novel, *Sembrando Flores*, Urales, Montseny's father, wrote about the importance of presenting images of liberated families, such as

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her speaking tours, see Federica Montseny, "Impresiones por un viaje a Galicia V," *La Revista Blanca* 14, no. 367 (31 January 1936), 1307.

<sup>10</sup>. This is a more expansive definition than that given by Roberta Johnson for whom "consciousness is paramount to women's avoidance of the traps of patriarchy." Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 235.

<sup>11</sup>. Her rejection of feminism was set in the specifically Spanish context where the feminist organizations were entirely bourgeois in origin, close to the Church, and on the right until late in the 1920s. See Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*. I deal with this at greater length in my chapter 7.

<sup>12</sup>. For Montseny the patriarchal family would be bourgeois and thus indistinguishable as well as inseparable — even proletarian families have bourgeois relationships and she had read Engels and Bebel.

he and other anarchists tried to promote.<sup>13</sup> Montseny hailed her father's novel as a powerful anarchist work, despite its omission of any reference to anarchism.<sup>14</sup> She followed his example in her novels by emphasizing freedom, nature, and life instead of trying to promote anarchist ideology.

By dividing society into two "opposing realms," by the creation of the private sphere, attention ostensibly focused on the public as the site of action, where things happened and are gendered male.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the private would be calm and tranquil, and, even while gendered female, the male would still rule. This was the site of the patriarchal family and the basis of society. Alongside this was the view that while the private sphere represented safety, honor, and legitimacy, the public sphere and its streets represented danger, dishonor, and illegitimacy.<sup>16</sup> The basis of the concept of patriarchy is this ideal of the household and family unit as the bastion of the private sphere and the source of civic values, whose security necessitates male dominance.

Within both spheres, the standard view of patriarchy does not account for why women would accept an ideology that gives them no role. Furthermore, it does not account for how power is accrued with age, leading to shifting alliances both within and between sexes. To account for these, I am

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13. Federico Urales, "Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 11.

14. Federica Montseny, "A manera de prólogo," in Federico Urales, *Sembrando Flores* (Paris: Fomento de la Cultura Libertaria, 1974).

15. Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 10–11.

16. Peter M. Beattie, "Measures of Manhood: Honor, Enlisted Army Service, and Slavery's Decline in Brazil, 1850–90," in *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America*, ed. Matthew C. Gutmann (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 245.

adopting Steven Stern's definition of patriarchy, one that encompasses both sex and age:

Patriarchy is the system by which males exert superior power over female sexuality, reproductive roles, and labor power; such dominance confers both specific services and superior status upon males in their relationship with females, authority in family networks is commonly vested in elders and fathers, thereby imparting a generational as well as a sex based dynamic to social relations; and authority in familial cells serves as a fundamental metaphorical model for social authority more generally. In such a social system the gendered rewards of service and status not only differentiate men from women but also serve as a basis for alliance, subordination, and ranking among men and among women.<sup>17</sup>

Stern's definition leaves the male head of the family at the center and allows for Pateman's argument that the power as a father comes from exercising domination within the family.<sup>18</sup> It accounts for political power that comes from the family as the model for the bourgeois state in the classic model of Friedrich Engels (1820–1895).

This is especially useful in examining Montseny's work because she lived in what was undoubtedly a patriarchal household; moreover, one that relied and survived on the domestic and outside labor of its female members, and the work they did on *La Revista Blanca* and its related publications. Tavera describes it as being similar to an anarchist affinity group or to a phalanstery, French utopian socialist Fourier's model of living arrangements.<sup>19</sup>

The household shifted as family members died but was always heavily female in number, if not in power. This arrangement preserved the power

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<sup>17</sup>. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender*, 21.

<sup>18</sup>. "A man's power as a father comes after he has exercised the patriarchal right of a man (or a husband) over a woman (a wife)." Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 3.

<sup>19</sup>. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 66.

dynamic of the patriarchal family, where the male head of the household “supervised” the work of its junior members. Despite his proclaimed affection for it, Urales does not appear to have done any of the agricultural work, much less domestic chores.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, from 1923 when *La Revista Blanca* resumed publication, the women of the family did most of the work putting out the journal. Urales appears to have contributed the bulk of the articles in the second run of *La Revista Blanca*. Apart this contribution from Urales, Montseny, her mother, her paternal grandmother, and her maternal aunt Carmen Mañé did most of the work.<sup>21</sup> In 1926, two more women joined the household — the wife and daughter of Urales’ friend Isidor Anguera, Teodora and her daughter María Anguera (or Batet), moved in — and the household remained six women and one man.<sup>22</sup> According to Montseny, María Anguera was like a sister to her.<sup>23</sup> Gustavo did translations for publishers, and the rest helped by going to the post office to mail packages. To help the family’s finances, they all worked raising rabbits, chickens, and growing strawberries.<sup>24</sup>

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20. In a 1915 letter to the board of the Biblioteca Pública Arús, Urales wrote that he had an “afición a la agricultura.” Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 65.

21. Carmen’s husband had already died of tuberculosis and her daughter Elisa would die from typhoid fever in the summer of 1912 when Montseny was seven. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 19. When Carmen died, she warranted an obituary in *La Revista Blanca*, “Una baja en nuestras filas,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 94 (15 April 1927), V–VI.

22. After the death of Carmen and the grandmother, there were still the four grown women and Urales.

23. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 12 and 43. María likewise refers to herself as Federica’s half sister, raised by Soledad Gustavo and given the same education and care “equal to that of Federica.” Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 116.

24. They raised rabbits and chickens to sell along with eggs and strawberries in Barcelona. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 23. They must have sold quite a few because apparently Carmen could flay a rabbit in record time. Montseny was always fond of animals and they had two dogs and three cats. *Ibid.*, 44. The rabbit skin industry was important

Gustavo's increasing translation work changed the pattern of Montseny and María's education and household work. With her mother no longer free to instruct her, Montseny spent the mornings cleaning the house and doing the necessary shopping while her grandmother cooked the meals.<sup>25</sup> Montseny experienced the labor attendant in this household economy. This included selling the family's fruit, eggs, and meat, most likely on the street — the initial jobs of the two orphans in *Los hijos de la calle*.<sup>26</sup>

Montseny would continue to live in the parental home even after she began her relationship with Germinal Esgleas and through the birth of her children. Until she became a minister and moved to Valencia, she never had a residence outside of the family home (and then it was a hotel room), while her husband and children continued to live with her parents.<sup>27</sup> When she returned to Barcelona in 1937, the family household was again her home. It took the Republic's defeat and exile for her to leave it, never to return.

The arrangement was not unique and was emblematic of the relationship between family and ideology. In radical fiction, there is often the supplanting of the family based in blood with a new family based in ideology.<sup>28</sup> Both Urales and Gustavo had broken with family members for ideological reasons. Urales broke with his beloved sister María, severing all contact

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enough for to have its own economic regulatory body during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship by a government committee. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 580.

<sup>25</sup>. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 26.

<sup>26</sup>. Though the children in the novella sold sweets and newspapers.

<sup>27</sup>. This is the traditional stem family structure centered on the parental home known in Catalonia as the *casa pairal*.

<sup>28</sup>. Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 49.

because she baptized her children and enrolled her son in a Jesuit school. Many of Gustavo's relatives did not approve of her politics and her relationship with Urales. Gustavo had two brothers with whom she had no relationship except a rare letter. Montseny wrote that "[e]xcept for Carmen, the family did not remain very tight with its relations, more important were friendships and affinities."<sup>29</sup>

Montseny was only in her twenties when the overwhelming majority of her fiction was published, while her parents were in their sixties. Familial generational conflict was often an element in her novels, such as the conflict between Jacinto and his parents as well as the father of Carmela disowning her. It was not a simple conflict between parents and children, or solely an emblematic one of the new and the old. Montseny would have argued that the conflict between youth and age in her novels was also a struggle over evolution or stagnation. At age twenty-three, Montseny had already been in conflict with several other anarchists much more senior in age and reputation over her ideals of love and womanhood. Anarchists in Europe and the Americas criticized her ideas on love and motherhood in the longer novels.<sup>30</sup> It was the support of other anarchists, notably Maria de Lacerda de Moura (1887–1944) and Max Nettlau, which enabled her not only to continue, but to accelerate her struggle: "Oh, if nobody had understood me! If everyone considered me

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<sup>29</sup>. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 26. According to Montseny, María's son rebelled in the Jesuit school and died, the implication being due to his rebellion and the oppression in the school.

<sup>30</sup>. This conflict was over her novels *La Victoria* and *El hijo de Clara*. I examine this conflict in detail in my chapter 9.

afflicted or crazy, or stupid, or suffering an attack of selfishness, or sick with petulance and vanity, and everyone walked away from me, laughed at me, pitied me, or despised me! So, I know what to do with my strength and my youth.”<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, she was in conflict with her parents. In Montseny’s memoirs, she remarks that she was closer to her father and that she had conflicts with her mother, as when her mother wanted her to learn piano and take voice lessons.<sup>32</sup> Her father had an exceptionally low opinion of Spanish youth of the period. He reportedly said to Emma Goldman (1869–1940) that there “wasn’t any [Spanish anarchist] movement because the young people had no ideals but were interested only in dancing and going to the movies.”<sup>33</sup> Urales wrote to Montseny on April 1, 1937 to break off relations.<sup>34</sup> He denounced her over six pages, mentioning personality conflicts, selfishness, and accusing Montseny turning Gustavo against him. Urales ultimately claimed — and in no less than an anarchist critique of his own daughter — that she sought to dominate him and he refused to allow her to do so. Importantly, he asserted that she lacked tenderness and cast a dark cloud over the

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31. Federica Montseny, “El placer de la lucha,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 132 (15 November 1928), 330.

32. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 21. Montseny wrote that she resisted because of the expense of the lessons.

33. Gabriel Javicas (1906–1982) to Paul Avrich, New York City, May 27, 1980, in Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 68. Javicas accompanied Emma Goldman on her 1928 trip to Spain to meet the Montsenys.

34. Federico Urales to “Compañera Federica Montseny,” April 1, 1937, six pages. AGGCE. This is one of the few letters to her from her parents preserved in the collection. Urales also wrote a letter to María Anguera Batet relating his decision.



household while failing to show enough love and kindness towards her mother, despite turning her against him. He told Montseny that he was perfectly capable of completely breaking all relations with her and gave the example of his sister María as proof. Reading this, one is struck by the inherent conflict between two strong personalities, Urales at seventy-three and Montseny less than half his age at thirty-two, a conflict that appears to have simmered and probably was never truly resolved before she again lived at home in May 1937.<sup>35</sup>

In attacking the patriarchal family, Montseny was attacking the state. Routinely, the Spanish state was presented as a family, with the King as its head. Montseny took the language of political economy and used it for her own ends, subverting it through fictional treatments of the domestic sphere in the gendered literature *par excellence*, the romance novel. Montseny's version of the sexual contract empowers her characters not only to decide whether or not to give themselves to men. Most importantly, they decide when to end that agreement on their own terms.<sup>36</sup> Montseny's female characters are agent of their own destinies, not passive figures who are acted upon by others. They resist when others try to control or manipulate them, as in *Resurrección* or

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35. Montseny's acceptance of the ministerial post was ostensibly the final straw. If so, then why had he waited five months? The text of the letter shows a great deal of resentment and anger yet does not reveal what the catalyst was that led to the break between them. Very possibly, it was her refusal to allow him to visit her in Valencia, which he also mentioned.

36. Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 109–110.

*Los hijos de la calle*. In Montseny's work the female characters take action.<sup>37</sup> This is Brooks' "primal scene" with its resulting resolution of tensions "through articulation and a final acting out of conflicts. Desire achieves full satisfaction in enunciation of the integral psychic condition."<sup>38</sup> The result was, in Montseny words "the union of a woman and man, not simply a union or the mutual satisfaction of a desire. It is the moral communion of souls, united by the analysis and affinity of character."<sup>39</sup>

Montseny combined a devotion to gender issues with melodrama, anticlericalism, and politics, and used these themes in her fiction to destabilize the bourgeois patriarchal family. This was her adherence to the anarchist argument that it was in the family that children learned oppression and obedience.<sup>40</sup> Both the *Novela Ideal* and *Novela Libre* addressed themselves not to women but to "the youth of both sexes," a further distinguishing aspect which is often forgotten.<sup>41</sup> Montseny remarked in her memoirs that her father, "a man of ceaseless initiatives," sought to spread propaganda amongst the young and started the *La Novela Ideal* series with an initial print run of

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37. This is in contrast to the female characters discussed by Sieburth, *Inventing High and Low*, 54.

38. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 54.

39. Federica Montseny, *FloreCIMIENTO*, *La Novela Ideal* 2 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1925]), 30.

40. Shaffer, "Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionary Mothers in Cuban Anarchism," 5. See also María Suelves, "La familia," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 21 (1 April 1924) *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 21 (1 April 1924), inside back cover. Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* heavily influenced this essay. Nothing more is known about Suelves. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Suelves, María."

41. "La Novela Ideal," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 35 (1 November 1924), 4. Six years later, they refer to the series as a "continuing educational labor on the sentiments of youth." "La Novela Ideal," *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 181 (1 December 1930), XI.

10,000 to be sold at only fifteen céntimos apiece.<sup>42</sup> Montseny used the romance genre to advocate empowerment, free love, and mutually–agreed–upon unions outside the sanction of the church and law. Montseny’s two children of *Los hijos de la calle* advance the same arguments while expanding her targets as well.

### ***LOS HIJOS DE LA CALLE***

Montseny’s characters retain their innocence and moral character (if not their naiveté) even as they transgress the boundaries of private and public spheres. *Los hijos de la calle* uses several of the tropes of melodramatic fiction: orphans are the featured protagonists, whose “cradles were the sidewalk or the gutter.” There is an assault on female virtue by the evil man in a position of power; in this case, the factory owner, but virtue and true love are rewarded and evil lies dead at the end. After much travail, the orphans received their rightful inheritance, though it was not a financial one. Instead, it is one of individual power and identity. Even as Montseny frequently copied bourgeois forms, she altered the expected moral and the outcome.<sup>43</sup>

*Los hijos de la calle* was published early in 1926 as the twenty–fourth title in *La Novela Ideal*.<sup>44</sup> The protagonists, Jaime and Nina, two young

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42. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 42. She also acknowledges that few contemporary men would accept her ideas. Presumably, this was another reason for the appeal to youth, to begin remaking the future in the present.

43. “In the working class fiction and much of the popular verse of the time, poets and novelists quite closely associated with the working class political movement carry out an extraordinary reproduction of bourgeois forms, though sometimes with the moral turned the other way.” Raymond Williams, “Forms of English Fiction in 1848,” in *Writing in Society*, 153.

44. Federica Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, *La Novela Ideal* 24 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1926]).

children, draw together out of a common existence as orphaned street vendors: they are literally the children of the street.<sup>45</sup> He is ten, she is eight; he works for himself selling sweets, while she works selling newspapers for an older woman, “*La Coja*,” or “The Grasp.” Jaime sells sweetness and the Nina sells the word. Implicitly, the first sells pleasure and the latter knowledge, another of Montseny’s inversions. Jaime is part of a larger organization and makes money, while Nina hands over her money to La Coja. La Coja beats Nina with rope and the text stresses that La Coja is not Nina’s mother. Nina did not know her mother but she believes that her mother was not like La Coja.<sup>46</sup> Jaime helps Nina by using his savings to purchase the papers she needs to sell. He takes her to his home, a natural hole/cave on the slopes of Barcelona’s Montjuïc where they live as siblings.<sup>47</sup> The other street urchins and others know Jaime as “*El Espartaco*” (Spartacus), a reference to classical and revolutionary traditions. The two children spend their free time learning to read, write, and exploring nature.<sup>48</sup> They discover the world of ideas, which in this context implied anarchism.<sup>49</sup> Jaime begins to work in factories, as does

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45. *Hijos* is the plural of *hijo*, son, and the implication and message in the text is that the protagonists are indeed the son and daughter of the street in the sense of descendants rather than just age. If their age alone were the issue, Montseny would more likely have used *niños*.

46. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, 4.

47. Part of the plan for the construction for Barcelona’s *casas barates* was to move (cleanse, *netejar*, is the Catalan word used in the original text) the squatters off Montjuïc. This was to build the faculties in which to hold the Exposition. *De les cases barates als grans polígons: El Patronat Municipal de l’Habitatge de Barcelona entre 1929 i 1979* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2003), 27.

48. Note here the role of nature as a model for life and the innate affinity of the orphans for it and for self-driven education.

49. This is during the dictatorship, which censored the novellas, so positive references to anarchism used code words and allusions.

Nina when she becomes sixteen.<sup>50</sup> Eventually the pair earns enough to move into an apartment as their relationship changes, from fraternal siblings to romantic lovers.

Roure, the owner of the factory, runs Nina's workplace like a harem. Roure, a "good Catalan and bourgeois," makes his sexual conquests amongst the textile operatives.<sup>51</sup> Nina's beauty draws his attention. In another classical reference, Nina's "head of Minerva and body of Venus" attracts Roure.<sup>52</sup> Nina's status as an orphan led Roure to believe no one will defend Nina, despite her reputation as the "sister" of El Espartaco. He propositions her prompting Nina to quit. She does not tell Jaime what occurred. She worries about telling him, because he is unemployed again. Active in protecting his fellow workers' interests, his employers dismissed him. In a contemporary reference to the suppression of the CNT, Montseny writes that the employees had no organization to defend them.<sup>53</sup> When Nina returns to the factory to collect her daily pay packet, Roure apologizes and convinces her to return to work. She agrees for a variety of reasons, including the financial burden of Jaime's unemployment. To protect herself in the future, she keeps a flick knife in the pocket of her work apron. After being at the job for a while, the owner

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50. Montseny does not tell the reader Jaime's trade. Moreover, it is not surprising Nina works in a textile factory. This was the largest industrial employer of women in Barcelona. This job, rather than age, marks the first steps of her entry into adulthood.

51. Presumably, from this description of Roure as a good Catalan bourgeois, he is a member of the Lliga.

52. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, 19. Notice the combination of the goddess of wisdom (Minerva) with that of beauty (Venus).

53. The CNT was banned and underground while the UGT, under the leadership of Largo Caballero, collaborated with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.

again engineers a situation where he is alone with her in the factory. Nina and Jaime need money because of his blacklisting. She agrees to work in addition to her regular shift at night, cleaning the windows. Roure attempts to assault Nina and chases her through the factory. Finally, trapped in a corner, she “rediscovers” the flick knife in her pocket, slashes Roure’s throat and escapes.<sup>54</sup> Together, she and Jaime flee across the border to Marseilles where they seek a boat to America, to a new world.<sup>55</sup>

Montseny here again uses names to evoke character traits and to provide hints at possible fates. Jaime is a Spanish version of James and like his namesake, Saint James, Montseny’s Jaime is zealous and impetuous. He is committed to anarchism and is presumably willing to use violence against Roure if he knew of Nina’s problems. *Nina* is doll in Catalan while evoking *niña*, the Spanish word for girl.<sup>56</sup> The “doll” is a potent symbol for any woman who is beautiful yet lacks consciousness and an independent will. At one point in her life, Nina lived in a brothel as the plaything of the prostitutes. Montseny states that in the brothel, the others treated her like a doll, wanted and

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54. This scene is what Brooks pointed to as the resolution of conflicts and the liberation of the characters.

55. Here is the summary published in *La Revista Blanca*: “On the 23rd the 24 volume of *La Novela Ideal* was published. It is by our editorial partner Federica Montseny and in it she deals with the lives of two children of both sexes who are abandoned to a life on the street that obligates them to earn their own living at an early age. The children make a life in common, mutually aiding each other, living in a cave, afterwards learning a trade, come to love each other, and when she becomes a woman, she encounters the lust of her employer and survives the tragedy. This is all narrated with the simultaneous verve and tender style of the author of *La Victoria*.” “*La Novela Ideal*,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 65 (1 February 1926), 1.

56. As many of Montseny’s readers outside of Catalonia would not be Catalan speakers and hence miss the symbolism of Nina/doll, she specifically points it out — verifying that in melodrama there is no ambiguity. Roure’s name means oak in Catalan, however, I am unaware of any larger meaning. Being Catalan would be sufficient to imply cheap and mean. His social position as a factory owner implied his absolute control over his employees.

commanded by all, a plaything of those who housed her and of life itself. Montseny foreshadows her limited possibilities and likely fate: “the whores of the brothel curled and perfumed her, her unconsciousness preparation, for the sordid and shameful future of this poor unfortunate child, that maybe vice had brought forth and perhaps, to that vice she would have to return.”<sup>57</sup> One of the principal fears of the well-to-do and reformers was that street children working as street vendors were introduced to criminality. “Girls begged less, being used in prostitution very early and beginning the ‘low life’ by selling newspapers at night, trinkets and flowers at the doors of theaters or dance halls.”<sup>58</sup> La Coja not only has Nina in her grasp, Montseny refers to La Coja as a *Celestina*, a name that is synonymous with a procuress. This is a further allusion to what Nina’s eventual fate would be if she herself does nothing to control her own destiny. Repeatedly, Montseny evoked the condition of being a doll, this combination of beauty and a lack of an independent will, as fatal for women. Without sufficient development of *capacitación*, what would now be called subjectivity or empowerment, these women easily fall victim to others. Especially men like Roure, who engage in *donjuanismo*. In Montseny’s work, *donjuanismo* has a clear class dimension. It is the socially acceptable practice

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57. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, 8.

58. Birderues-Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 44.

of upper class men seducing lower class women.<sup>59</sup> Nerea Aresti has provided this definition of the Don Juan:

Typically, Don Juan was idle. In most literary and popular representations of him, he belonged to a rich family, and lived off rent or a paternal allowance. He might have some sort of job, as a front, practice sports, or go off to war. In his case, to seduce and trick women was such an exhausting and time consuming job that he could not carry out any other daily activity. As a social type, he was consequently closer to the traditional aristocratic señorito than to the bourgeois ideal. Besides, he was usually sterile, and, when he did spawn children, he neglected them. Don Juan stood as a paradigm of paternal irresponsibility, laziness, uncontrolled sexuality, and disrespect towards women.<sup>60</sup>

Aresti's *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas* quotes Marañón's original article directly: Don Juan is rich, idle, and lives off his wealth.<sup>61</sup> Even if the class dimension of these versions of the character is merely descriptive and not political, Montseny made political use of it.

As contemporary male authors were using the Don Juan legend as a positive national myth, many female authors used it as a symbol of the failure of modernity, as emblematic of a series of social problems.<sup>62</sup> Montseny herself wrote an article attacking *donjuanismo* and asserting that it was in decline.<sup>63</sup> She argued that for a long time Spain suffered under this masculine archetype, and that while writers such as Marañón attacked it, it was still powerful. She contrasts the romantic notion of the gallantry of a Don Juan with its cruel

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59. Labanyi points out that this is not the standard definition of donjuanismo. Nevertheless, in my reading of Nerea Aresti's work, Montseny, and less directly Roberta Johnson, I see stark descriptions of politics and class.

60. Aresti Esteban, "Changes in Gender Expectations in Spain (1900–1936)," 226.

61. Marañón, "Notas para la biología de Don Juan," quoted in Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 132.

62. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 22.

63. Federica Montseny, "El ocaso del donjuanismo," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 46 (15 April 1925), 9–11.



realities. She uses the figure of Don Juan and subtly attached a vocabulary of class: “señoritos” and “poder económico.”<sup>64</sup> She propounds that they are the destroyers of hope, the deceivers of innocent women. Their sexual conquest through cynical manipulation, falsehood, or rape, followed by abandonment and the subsequent murder of the “innocent fruit.”

Montseny condemned society’s classification of these women as dishonored even as it simultaneously lauded the conquests of the Don Juan.<sup>65</sup> She calls the women who resist or kill their seducers “modern Amazons, humanized Valkyries.”<sup>66</sup> She found it particularly galling that certain writers (apparently all male from her text) argued that this decline and loss of *donjuanismo* in literature was a “removal of the poetry” (*despoetización*) of man’s love of women as a group.<sup>67</sup> She highlighted the class element by asserting that there is more poetry in the hands of a woman laborer, “pitted by [pin] pricks, dirty with factory grease, noble signs of work and ignoble signs of proletarian enslavement.”<sup>68</sup>

Montseny fictionalized the attack on *donjuanismo* in *Los hijos de la calle* through the Catalan bourgeois Roure. Here is a man that most reformers would consider a model bourgeois. He works, albeit through the labor of others, so he is not idle. Yet, he still preys on women, again highlighting her

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64. *Ibid.*, 11.

65. *Ibid.*, 10.

66. *Ibid.*, 11.

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*

class angle. Highlighting Roure's previous successful conquests of other, weaker women, Montseny contrasted this with the emotional innocence and growing wisdom and intelligence of Nina. Nina's morals would be suspect in the traditional domestic narrative because she violates the domestic ideology — she is not staying in the apartment she shares with Jaime and performing the role of the *ángel del hogar*. Rather, due to Jaime's unemployment, due to his illegal union activity, she goes out and earns income as he stays home.<sup>69</sup> Montseny's positive portrayal broke with the boundaries of domesticity and undercut the division of life into public and private.<sup>70</sup> Even after they move into an apartment, Nina does not remain indoors. Instead, she goes out, a symbolic leaving of the private sphere for the public one. Nina does so in order to find employment in a factory and this action in turn ends up putting her in harm's way. However, in Montseny's work Nina successfully escapes harm by her own decisive action. Montseny read the canonical Spanish novels that made no distinction between public or private for the working class. Work was part of the working class home, even as the women brought in

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69. In this story readers are presented with an ideologically conscious worker who is punished for this consciousness and deprived of work and hence masculinity, and is forced to rely on the wages of a woman, who also transcends gender boundaries. Little studied in the anarchist movement is the machismo of the movement or the lack of it among some of the fiercest and most feared anarchists. Apparently, Buenaventura Durruti Dumange (1896–1936) did “domestic” chores when blacklisted or on the lam. He did not feel it threatened his masculinity. In fact, he critiqued those who did suffer from machismo: “In a movement that was marked by a far from insignificant degree of machismo, Durruti periodically rebuked the sexism of his comrades. Blacklisted, it often fell to his partner to find paid work, while he occupied himself with domestic work, cleaning and cooking, and looking after the children.” Chris Ealham, Review of *Durruti in the Spanish Revolution*, by Abel Paz, *Anarchist Studies*, 17, no. 1 (2008), 115.

70. Sieburth, *Inventing High and Low*, 119.

piecework.<sup>71</sup> Nina is armed (flick knife) like so many of Montseny's heroines; *Resurrección's* Carmela carried a shotgun and *La Victoria's* Clara has a revolver, but unlike these two, she uses her weapon.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, the responsibility for Roure's death does not lie with Nina. Rather, Roure causes his death through his own actions, his immoral desire to possess a woman who does not want to be possessed, a woman who resists all his promises of security and wealth.

Montseny's intent was to arouse the empathy of her readers for Nina and her difficult situation. In part, she does this by giving Nina a life history that was either shared or familiar to her readers. Nina was born in a Barcelona barrio named Pekín (Beijing) on the city's northeast Mediterranean coast. Pekín was an area of shanties (*barranques*) that rented for exorbitant amounts.<sup>73</sup> Her parents disappeared in a police raid when she was three. Initially saved by a group of fishermen, after a year she ended up in a brothel. While "the good people" portrayed prostitution as the worst of all outcomes for a girl, in Montseny's writing the prostitutes are not the source of contagion or disease working against a clean society.<sup>74</sup> They are victims of capitalism, and, just like every worker, oppressed. In the brothel, Nina is well treated and

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71. Nash, "En torno a las consecuencias sociales de la primera guerra mundial," 133–134; Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 202.

72. Whereas a sword beheads Saint James, Nina figuratively beheads Roure, another reversal of a saint's life.

73. The neighborhood no longer exists. The name apparently originated from a group of Filipino fishermen who settled there.

74. Montseny never raises the issue of venereal disease. There was an article in *La Revista Blanca* that linked syphilis to smoking tobacco rather than to sexual activity. A.G., "Estudios biológicos," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 46 (15 April 1925), 38.

cared for. A police raid on the brothel forces her back on the street. Eventually, she ends up with La Coja. The living quarters of La Coja are a garret; Montseny also described it as a den or lair. When Nina flees La Coja with Jaime, the pair initially are vagrants, having no real fixed abode and live in a Montjuïc cave. Montjuïc contains a cemetery, the location providing a contrast of life against death. While the road on the mountain is one of “sorrow and age,” Montseny wrote that to the two street children it was a road of “flowers and youth.” Symbolic of their natural lives, it was not an unusual living situation in 1920s Barcelona where a “slum city” (*baracòpoli*) grew up on Montjuïc.<sup>75</sup>

In naming specific locations, Montseny reached and called upon her readers in two ways. First, by naming specific places in her fiction and known locations Montseny transformed the narrative texts into recognizable memories. She calls upon the historical memory and shared experience of her readers.<sup>76</sup> She called upon her readers’ solidarities by placing Nina’s origins and the two orphans living quarters in well-known and decidedly proletarian and anarchist, areas of the city. These areas had a profound feeling of “us versus them” and a common identity with fellow residents against outsiders, especially the police and the Catalan bourgeoisie.<sup>77</sup> This was a period of increased subdivision of housing, rapid expansion of shanties, and the

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75. Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction*, 54. See also the work of Chris Ealham, José Luis Oyón Bañales, and Nick Rider.

76. Patricia Virginia Greene, “Autobiography as Resistance,” 42.

77. Ealham, The Myth of the ‘Maddened Crowd’,” in Ealham and Richards, *The Splintering of Spain*, 116.

staggering inflation of rents, between 50 and 150 percent in Barcelona during the 1920s while wages remained relatively stable.

Montseny's purpose with this novel was, as always, didactic. By the medium of her narration, she instructed the reader through the development of Nina's character. Nina's intelligence develops parallel to the awakening of free love between her and Jaime.<sup>78</sup> As Nina's character grows in the novel, the reader simultaneously learns not only the perils and problems typical of melodramatic fiction, but in addition, the power and the strength of a woman's character.<sup>79</sup> The suffering body is a common device in fiction as well as in political and religious propaganda. This is especially true of the bodies of both women and children. In almost all of her novellas, Montseny fashions the female body as a place of contest between the secluded, private, and domestic space and the open, public, and political space. The realization and the assertion of a woman's maturity and empowerment is linked to her body. In *Los hijos de la calle*, by constituting the female body as a site for male violence and control, Montseny showed how Nina asserts control over her own individualized body as she matures.<sup>80</sup> Only when she rejects Roure, and through an act of counter-violence, can she and Jaime freely share their adult bodies with each other in an honest, erotic, and moral love. Maintaining complete control over her own life and body gives Nina the power and

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<sup>78</sup>. Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria*, 92.

<sup>79</sup>. *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>80</sup>. Crucial here is that she is controlling only her body. Roure dies because he seeks to dominate another's body.

maturity to share it with Jaime as they move on to the next stage, “out of the shadows of the past.”<sup>81</sup>

Nina is actively participating in life, together with Jaime and not dependent on him, as she attends rallies and meetings. She is subtly making the change from juvenile dependence, as Jaime’s figurative sister when he gives her the means of freeing herself from La Coja, to being the mature woman who is his equal. Together, they learn, explore, and even undertake nostalgic and sentimental visits to their former cave. Only by becoming Jaime’s equal can Nina be the object of an adult romantic love. This transformation of Nina is Montseny’s rendering of the falsity of the contemporary argument that women who develop their minds lose their femininity. Montseny relates this development of Nina to Marañón’s argument of sexual evolution and development. He states, based on a masculine scale, that women are at an adolescent stage of development and only have an equivalent maturity to a man’s when the woman is no longer capable of bearing children.<sup>82</sup> Nina not only becomes Jaime’s equal in knowledge, physical and sexual maturity, and capacity; she does it at the same time as she is becoming sexually active. This was in complete contrast to the argument of Marañón. Politically, as Montseny and many other anarchist activists argued, it is precisely this independence and freedom, of both will and

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81. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*.

82. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 269, 297, and 301.

activity, that will lead to the engendering of revolution without sacrificing the maternalism.<sup>83</sup>

Montseny uses religious references in a profoundly anticlerical and secular fashion. She draws upon a knowledge and vocabulary shared by her readers regardless of their individual beliefs. These references draw the reader further into the story of Nina and Jaime, frequently with a reversal of the standard roles. While Nina has the face of a “madonna amongst all the vice of Barcelona,” it is she who is protected and mothered by Jaime.<sup>84</sup> It is Nina’s life rather than Jaime’s that has been a “short and painful calvary.”<sup>85</sup> Montseny writes that her childlike soul, hence innocent, prevents the surrounding society corrupting her.<sup>86</sup> In a parallel to the Pilgrimage of Santiago, the most popular medieval Catholic pilgrimage route that followed the Way of Saint James, Nina follows the path of James/Jaime, yet at the end she avoids martyrdom.

Montseny throughout emphasized the fact that these two are children of the street — but what wonderful children — flowers from the sewers of Barcelona. The street, which was so fruitful, was bringing forth the children who tomorrow would bring glory. She was responding to the debates about the street children, the children who caused the social concern discussed

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83. Etta Federn, *Mujeres de las revoluciones* (Barcelona: Mujeres Libres, [1938?]) 5–6. I deal with the combination of politics and maternalism in more detail in my chapter 8. Montseny in her fiction as well as her journalism, and, at just over twenty years old, was engaging in contemporary debates about gender in ways that have been unrecognized in previous studies.

84. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, 13.

85. *Ibid.*, 8. An English translation of *calvario* is “torment,” and I believe that Montseny is consciously using the word *calvario* to draw upon the symbolism of martyrdom, which Nina avoids.

86. *Ibid.*

earlier. Jaime is daring, mischievous, resourceful, and organized. He works in concert with other street traders and then later in a factory. It is in Nina's factory, during exchanges between owner and employee, that Montseny further defended street children with an explicit critique of contemporary society. When Roure questions Nina about her obvious intelligence, he asks where she went to school. She replies that "her teachers have been hunger and cold, the injustice of society that kills with an excess some and denies bread to others, that leave children in the foundling hospital and sidewalks, that turns man into a wolf of man, does one need a more terrible teacher?"<sup>87</sup> When Roure calls her a Bolshevnik, she does not tell Jaime so as not to worry him. In Barcelona textile work of this period, family was important for employment, family members of varying ages often worked or had worked for the same employers, creating familial networks.<sup>88</sup> Thus for Roure, Nina's status as an orphan presumably makes her even more vulnerable.

In the novel, the orphaned children are close to nature, almost a part of it. They are not children of culture. Rather they are natural children, even though they are also urban children as children of the streets. Montseny contrasts the imaginary pastoral (because it is in a city) with the unnatural vices of the city. Nina can be out on the streets selling newspapers because her innocence acts as a "tempered steel cuirass" against all the bestiality that

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87. *Ibid.*, 21.

88. Borrás Llop, "Zagales, pinches, gamenes — aproximaciones al trabajo infantil," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 271-275.



surrounds her.<sup>89</sup> She still lacks the independence and will to escape her situation until, following Jaime, she acquires these attributes. Again, references to the importance of nature abound, and the greater vitality of such a life. Nina is unhealthy, lives in a squalid street, and shows the effects of a lack of fresh air and light whereas Jaime is healthy, brown with green eyes, “a true prototype of the Barcelona street rascal.” Montseny’s reference to Jaime’s lack of childhood and his “prematurely begun struggle for existence” uses an evolutionary vocabulary, when she writes that he fought “tooth and nail” for the cave. In his cave is the first time that Nina sleeps well, literally in the ground, she is finally warm when sleeping in nature.<sup>90</sup>

Harvey argues in “Good Girls Go to Heaven” that while in Catholic Spain “the ideal of self-sacrifice has been put before men and women alike, it is to women that it has been most rigorously applied. And it is women who have been singled out to expiate the sins of men.”<sup>91</sup> By having Nina stab the proprietor Roure, Montseny turns this upside down. The culmination of Nina’s calvary is not her crucifixion or death but that of Roure. She rises from his bloody body an adult. Hence, Montseny does not follow the typical melodramatic trope of passive — and often unsuccessful — resistance, which would make Nina a fallen woman.<sup>92</sup> Instead, she rises in an active struggle that

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89. Montseny uses this exact word.

90. Montseny, *Los hijos de la calle*, 4 and 8.

91. Jessamy Harvey, “Good Girls Go to Heaven: The Venerable Mari Carmen-Gonzalez-Valerio y Saenz de Heredia (1930–1939),” in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 126.

92. Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 31.

completes her transformation and she becomes an independent subject and a working-class heroine. Nina's transgression of gendered boundaries of agency and subjectivity makes her, what one author labeled a working-class exemplar.<sup>93</sup> Nina is not a martyr; she has become a strong determined figure who not only prevents her own destruction, rather, she avenges those women before her who lacked both the character and the political will.

The literature of religious witness transformed into the genre of political witness after the French Revolution. Raymond Williams observed that it becomes not only the witnessing and experience of the individual, but also potentially that of a class or people.<sup>94</sup> Montseny took advantage of the popular understanding of the format and tropes of religious and popular melodrama when she offered up an orphan's triumphant pilgrimage as a secular saint's life.<sup>95</sup> Others do not save Nina just in time, nor does religious faith. Rather she becomes the agent of her salvation. In killing Roure, the boss, she cements her independence, maturity, and working-class strength; Nina ends her calvary. Instead of offering up salvation in the next world, Montseny's characters seek and make it in this one, from each other, even killing to protect themselves and their dreams.<sup>96</sup> Federica Montseny used

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93. "[T]hese women became working class exemplars, their very gender transgressions marked them as courageous women. They were an active sign of the utopian socialist imaginary." Lisa Rofel, *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China After Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 77-78.

94. Williams, "The Ragged-Arsed Philanthropists," in *Writing in Society*, 241.

95. Williams, "Forms of English Fiction in 1848," in *Writing in Society*, 153.

96. Again, Raymond Williams has examined this in the English context finding that the literature of religious witness became the basis for political writing. "This is writing which

melodrama to create a political parable of female independence, working-class strength, and mutual aid. The one who was supposedly low, without consciousness, is the same who at her weakest moment struck the blow that gave her character true emancipation, self-determination, and adult love. Nina is the emancipated working-class.

Montseny makes Nina independent of all control, she literally becomes free. She foils Roure's attempts to negotiate and trick her through her independence and will. The female orphan breaks the male employer's monopoly on violence (and thus also the state's). Both used violence against labor, and the series of bloody and murderous confrontations between the CNT and the employers/state had only ended recently. The government and employers used several means, many extra-legal, in order to suppress labor: detention without trial, internal deportation, lockouts, blacklists, assassinations, and ceaseless prosecution of those alleged to be "morally responsible" for labor unrest.<sup>97</sup> The relationship between employer and employee is analogous to that between husband and wife and, in rejecting it, Nina is asserting her own individual subjectivity. She gives of herself only in

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depends on the tradition of witness 'I am like this because I have lived like this' and then in the description of 'living like this' comes a condition which is not only personal but also that of a whole class, a whole people." Williams, "The Ragged-Arsed Philanthropists," in *Writing n Society*, 241.

97. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937*, 18.

an equal relationship, and only to the man who can respect her and treat her as an equal.<sup>98</sup>

Nina and Jaime were part of the economy, especially since they sell their goods on the street. The two cannot really have a private domestic sphere; they must go out into the public sphere of work. Not only was Montseny putting Nina into the public, Montseny was making the public part of the private sphere; this was not a novel about the consumption of goods. Instead it about the consumption of ideas: the marketplace is the mind and the body of Nina. Montseny 's characterization of Nina, her descriptions of Nina's origins, growth, and maturation, alongside the simultaneous development of several contemporary conflicts, place the novel as a thesis novel like *Resurrección*. A thesis novel that deals with the problems faced by youth and the context of the perilous nature of wages and life in the Barcelona economy. Most families were close to the edge, even an unmarried couple without children (and consequently lower expenses), also had significantly less income and could not make ends meet without the wages of working children. In the case of Nina and Jaime, they both had to work and Jaime's unemployment is the reason she agreed to work late. Jaime defended a worker fired after twenty years of employment, and because there is no "organization" for a collective defense of labor, he no longer has a job. Consequently, Nina takes on the extra

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<sup>98</sup>. In Montseny's first Novela Ideal, *FloreCIMIENTO* (1925), the socially orphaned central male tells the traditionally orphaned central female character that he only wants a woman who is an equal in the relationship.

work of cleaning the shop floor and windows that keeps her at the factory at night, after hours, when the rest of the workers have gone to their homes.

Montseny is using melodrama to alter domesticity radically: the household becomes the place to make the revolution first — to make it in the relations between men and women. Montseny makes the factory floor the new drawing room. The contest between Nina and Roure is the contest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This was one of consistent themes of radical literature.<sup>99</sup> When Nina cuts Roure's throat and then steps over his bloody body, she is leaving the past behind.

Writing provided Montseny with the chance to not only re-imagine the present, but also to re-imagine herself. She was able to deal fictionally with many of the tensions and pressures of her own youth by using her writing as an outlet. She was exploring the tremendous range of possibilities she saw before her, and what cost those choices might involve —not only choices on an individual and personal level, but additionally the wider political impact of the choices one made. Montseny's father Urales took her with him to meetings and out into the public world of the street. He was actively exposing her to the world, trying to shape her, while the young Montseny was concurrently exploring her options.<sup>100</sup> Nina's slashing of Roure's throat was not simply an act of self-defense or definition. The fact that the action took place in the

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99. Lida, "Discurso e imaginario en la literatura anarquista," 124.

100. I am trying to avoid facile psychological explanations though Montseny's memoirs and what little correspondence survives leaves the distinct impression that Montseny was resistant to both parents' attempts to mold her.

factory or in the street (public spaces) as opposed to home (private space) transformed this novel even more overtly into the realm of the political.

The portrayal of Roure is another criticism of Catalan nationalism, which in the twenties was closely associated with the conservative Lliga and the Catalan elite of the city's industry and commerce.<sup>101</sup> The factory owner represents negative values, only looking out for his own selfish interests. Siguan Boehmer in her analysis of the *La Novela Ideal* series lists four key themes, all present in *Los hijos de la calle*: capitalist society as corrupting natural primitive human traits; the false values of the dominant classes; the mechanics of exploiting employees; and anarchism's potential regeneration as a morally liberating doctrine.<sup>102</sup> One of Siguan Bohemer's arguments is that "the victim is resigned to play its role in order to be redeemed by the hero (who in turn shows socially positive values), after which she assumes her real positive values." In contrast, Jaime does not need to rescue or teach Nina. Instead, she learns these values and acts alongside him in a parallel growth to maturity, a separate yet equal female path.<sup>103</sup>

The factory balance of power in the novel is clearly in Roure's favor though Nina can resist it. When Roure calls Nina to the owner's office, she refuses to go, stating he can speak with her in the factory's courtyard. This is a contrast between not only the open natural air of the courtyard versus the closed artificial space of the office, but further between a public and private

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<sup>101</sup>. Smith, "Barcelona Through the European Mirror," in Smith, *Red Barcelona*, 4.

<sup>102</sup>. Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria*, 52.

<sup>103</sup>. *Ibid.*, 51.

space. Nina is asserting working–class control of the public space in contrast to the closed space of the bourgeoisie. In this action, she became the first operator to refuse the orders of the boss. Writing provided Montseny the opportunity to reimagine the present, to remake herself, and to provide models for others. Nina’s refusal is an act of self–definition that Montseny makes a turning point of the novel. Nina achieving her consciousness as a working female who will not submit to power.<sup>104</sup>

Nina’s conscious actions force Roure to waylay Nina in the street to have his meeting with her, as in *Resurrección*, when the priest waylays Carmela. In both novellas, the women expressed impatience with the demands on their time by the powerful, “time is short” for both women. Both the priest and the patron try to coerce the women into actions, both are unsuccessful. Roure even tries to grab Nina, but she breaks free and runs home. Rather than hide in the domestic space with Jaime’s protection, Nina decides to quit and returns to collect her wages. There she accepts Roure’s promises to leave her alone. While it is financial pressure that causes her to return to work, she vows never to go to the office, where the “honor of weak and pretty operatives is trampled.” Ealham discusses how the “men of order,” Barcelona’s élite, had a narrow sense of order, starting with the hierarchical power of the owner in the factory.<sup>105</sup> Nina not only challenges this, she does so successfully.

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<sup>104</sup>. Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 252.

<sup>105</sup>. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 18–19.

Montserrat states that Nina, though pretty, is not weak, she will not fall to the owner's games. Nina is making the decisions now and Jaime is just a support. Nina has gained an agency and identity based in self-worth and a firmness of will (*voluntad*). This is the ultimate goal of *Los hijos de la calle*, the validation of women becoming independent and making their own decisions. No longer do men need to decide or even consulted. Now Nina is independent, and her decision to keep a flick knife verifies her personal strength and self-worth. She had decided she is worth defending herself, not needing to rely on Jaime or anyone else, only on herself. When she finally kills Roure, it is because she no longer has the physical strength to run, though she still has the moral strength to fight.

Throughout the novella, Montseny contrasts the private space of the bourgeoisie and open public space that belonged to the working classes, a situation that would be fiercely contested during the Second Republic, especially in the Barcelona battles over street merchants.<sup>106</sup> There are the unaffordable goods locked behind shop windows, visible to the working classes in the streets. There is the symbolism of Nina's washing the factory's windows,

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<sup>106</sup>. The August 1933 *Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* (Vagrancy Law) was contentious, as was the October 1931 *Ley de Defensa de la República*. One of the major struggles in the Second Republic was over public order and space. Ealham has made this a focus of his work. See his essays "Anarchism and Illegality in Barcelona, 1931-7," *Contemporary European History* 4, no. 2 (1995), 133-151; "Crime and Punishment in 1930's Barcelona," *History Today* 43, no. 10 (1993), 31-37; "An Imagined Geography: Ideology, Urban Space, and Protest in the Creation of Barcelona's 'Chinatown', c.1835-1936," *International Review of Social History* 50, no. 3 (2005), 373-397; "La lluita pel carrer: els venedors ambulants durant la II República," *L'Avenç*, no. 230 (1998), 21-26; "The Myth of the 'Maddened Crowd'," in Ealham and Richards, *The Splintering of Spain*; and "The Struggle for the Streets: Unemployed Hawkers, Protest Culture and Repression in the Barcelona area (c. 1918-1936)," *Labour History Review* 75, no. 1 (2008), 19-38.



the situation Roure has set up to aid his attempt to rape her. She is enhancing the light and the ability to see in by cleaning the windows. He locks her in, the object of desire behind the windows, and she struggles to get out. She must vanquish him to gain the key and free herself. The innocent worker is triumphant, but only through her willingness to contest the ruling class for the space and gain power over it.

This contest over domestic and public space was part of the struggle all Spaniards faced. Several medical, religious, and political authorities tried to reshape the working class family according to their image of the bourgeois family. These different authorities called upon their sources of empowerment, whether it was Darwinism, Christianity, or the law, to achieve their goals. Montseny also used Darwin, Jesus, and the law in her journalism and fiction, but she used them to counter or alter the bourgeoisie's goals while striving towards achieving hers — the liberation of the individual from the family and as a consequence, the state. These conflicts came to a violent dénouement in the Civil War of 1936–1939 as the cultural production of the anarchist press, in journals such as *Estudios*, *La Revista Blanca*, and *Tiempos Nuevos*, as well as the novels and iconography, all contributed immeasurably to the social revolution that took place in July 1936. People could not only imagine a better world, moreover, when given less than half a chance, they valiantly tried to put it into practice.

## CHAPTER 6: FAMILY PROBLEMS

“There is no history if there are no children, however, their presence in the history of mankind has often been a hidden presence. The footprints and traces of their passage through history, in scenarios in which they share their lives with adults, are difficult to find.”<sup>1</sup>

Montseny used orphans as central characters in her novels at the same time as Spanish reformers were simultaneously promoting the bourgeois family as a model of social stability.<sup>2</sup> The stability of the family concerned the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, which, like other Western European governments in the wake of the enormous carnage of World War I, sought social stability. Although Spain had remained neutral during the War, those who viewed their country as part of Western Europe and those concerned with the ramifications of the war for social stability frequently viewed the family as the fundamental foundation of social order.<sup>3</sup> The rise of social movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the revolutions that followed World War I accentuated the fears that authorities and experts had about the family, seen as the basis for all social and political relationships. For the reformers the root cause of working-class unrest was the instability of the working-class family, which was also a source of concern for the authorities. To counter the influence of the newer social movements, the authorities and

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1. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, “Presentación” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, not paginated.

2. Orphans are children who have lost one or both parents in Spanish. Thus children in Montseny’s fiction are described as orphans even as they live with their mother or father.

3. Birderues–Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 32.

reformers promoted an idealized male-dominated bourgeois family that they believed would support allegedly traditional structures of obedience to authority. Reformers disseminated the model of the bourgeois family. They contrasted the order and cleanliness of the bourgeois family with the disorder and squalor of the workers homes. A series of dichotomies was set up: clean/dirty, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, ventilation/stuffiness, freshness/stench...<sup>4</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the reformers' emphasis had been on reforming the individual and targeting the family through the individual.<sup>5</sup> The decline of the power of the Church as an instrument of control over the urban working-class in this period coincided with the rise of science as a tool of social control. The reformers' ideal of the family in society combined Social Darwinist conceptions of society with an unshakeable belief in the surety of empirical scientific truths. Many of these reformers were doctors, and published studies of contemporary society in a number of publications, both specialized and popular. Fields such as sociology, psychology, and especially medicine provided the necessary frameworks to theorize the problems and for them to label those outside what was normal as deviant and degenerate. Together with the reformers, the state increasingly tried to remake the working-class family. The working-class family was portrayed as unstable

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4. *Ibid.*, 29.

5. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 213.

and a principal reason for Spain's apparent backwardness and lack of progress in contrast with the perceived stability and normalcy of the middle class family. Historian Pedro Trinidad Fernández explains that "Where the nineteenth-century philanthropy found moral deficiencies, at the end of the century one finds defects of a biological character to explain all forms of disorder."<sup>6</sup> Those who did not fall into the standard norms of behavior — the male model of the sober and industrious workman or peasant, the female domesticity of the *ángel del hogar*, and the children in the home or school — were constructed to be deviants and potential pathogens, at the slightest evidence of dysfunction in the home.

The first third of the twentieth century saw the boundaries between public and private shifting rapidly in Spain, in part as result of legislative reforms.<sup>7</sup> Republicans, Socialists, and the dynastic parties attempted to enact social reforms governing education and labor conditions.<sup>8</sup> Landed interests dominated the system and opposed improvements beneficial to the urban working-class.<sup>9</sup> Even when governments successfully maneuvered legislation

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6. Trinidad Fernández, "La infancia delincuente y abandonada," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 488–489.

7. Michelle Perrot, "Historia, género y vida privada," in *Otras visiones de España*, ed. Pilar Folguera Crespo (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1993), 1.

8. Joseph M. Harrison, "The Beginnings of Social Legislation in Spain 1900–1919," *Iberian Studies* 3, no. 1 (1974), 3.

9. This included maintaining high tariffs on imported wheat, which elevated the cost of bread, a primary staple.

through the Cortes, there were almost never funds to enforce the reforms.<sup>10</sup> With the failures of labor reform and the concurrent growth of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, attempts at remediating social problems remained centered on the working-class family.

### **WORKING-CLASS FAMILY**

The “private sphere” was an oxymoron when applied to the Spanish working-class family of the first third of the twentieth century. Spanish authorities — in the Church, state, professions, and civic organizations — assumed that the European bourgeois family was an organic occurrence, rather than a creation of human society. They idealized the bourgeois family and ascribed to it universal values. Reformers perceived a lack of these values in working-class homes. If the bourgeois home was private, orderly, and bright with love, the working-class homes lacked privacy, was chaotic, and dark and gloomy. As in many other parts of Europe, social reformers constructed the working-class home as the opposite of the bourgeois family home. While not explicit, another perceived problem of the working-class was its failure to maintain gender boundaries in the private sphere of the home as well as in the public street.<sup>11</sup> The middle class home was clearly demarcated as a feminine space, a distinction reinforced by fiction and the new picture

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10. In 1919, following a massive general strike that paralyzed Barcelona, Spain became the first European country to legislate the eight-hour day for industry. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 41.

11. This idea originated with an argument made by Rofel in *Other Modernities*, 73.

magazines. The working-class home had no sexual demarcations, because women and men worked and shared the limited private space.<sup>12</sup>

Reformers believed that the middle-class family not only took better care of their children because the mothers did not work after childbirth, but also fed and housed their children in significantly better conditions. Income disparity is the obvious reason behind the differences in care, but experts preferred to look at moral and eugenic factors rather than confront poverty head on. Reformers analyzing the morality of the working-class, linked morals with eugenics, and placed responsibility solely on the parents, especially the mother.<sup>13</sup> When women worked or went out, except for performing domestic tasks such as washing or shopping for food, the perception was that they were abandoning the home and failing to perform their female and/or maternal duties. Men clearly had public duties such as working for a living and military service, while women did not. Moreover, men guarded the home from external dangers and women stayed home and thus guard it from internal dangers such as dirt and filth, disease, and poor

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12. According to the 1931 World League for Sexual Reform meeting held in Vienna, the chief cause of sexual pathologies was overcrowding. Helmut Gruber, "The 'New Woman:' Realities and Illusions of Gender Equality in Red Vienna," in Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, 76.

13. Experts would also use this to begin to ask for the right to examine couples before marriage. Supposedly, authorities that detected eugenic failings in the couple could prevent them from marrying and producing degenerate offspring. Arón Cohen Amselem, "La infancia entre la vida y la muerte: La mortalidad de los niños," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 138.

nutrition.<sup>14</sup> The focus of the man was outward; the woman's was supposed to be inward.

The working-class mother was expected to transform her home as a way to encourage her children and husband to spend their free time in the home when they were not at school and work respectively. Reformers stressed the role of the mother in household economy, hygiene, and cleanliness rather than emphasizing consumption, which would have required an increase in household income. The emphasis was on openness and light, though in a small space.<sup>15</sup> For the woman, the criterion was her ability to maintain a proper home, which reflected her qualities as a mother and a wife. To maintain a clean home was to love her family as order and love became inseparable. The *ángel del hogar* model was yet another burden upon the working-class woman, who had the double duty of domestic labor and needed additional income for the family's subsistence. Reformers connected the cleanliness of the home and the family staying there with the fitness of the mother, the father, and the rest of the family as well.<sup>16</sup>

Montseny thought the problem lay with the bourgeois family, not the working-class. Throughout her novels, single mothers often have happy

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14. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 72–73.

15. See Danièle Bussy Genevois, "El retorno de la hija pródiga: Mujeres entre lo público y lo privado," in Folguera Crespo, *Otras visiones de España*, 111–138. Also Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), especially Chapter 10, "Housework Made Easy," 206–226.

16. Birderues-Guereña, "Niños y niñas en familia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 30.

families, while the Catalan bourgeois patriarchal families are often quite miserable. In *Resurrección*, Montseny contrasts the unhappiness of Jaime and Carmela's parents with the happiness of Jaime, Carmela, and Paz. In 1928's *La ruta iluminada* [*The Illuminated Way*], the heavy hand of the father of the well-to-do family of the Montagud oppressed his children. He is a man who is authoritarian and cares only about making money.<sup>17</sup> Montseny's portrayal of the bourgeoisie ideal is a negative one; these families are dark and unhappy. However, the same family that reformers portrayed as a problem, others saw as the source of the sense of solidarity and community. This sense operated through various forms of mutual aid in the barrios, whether it was helping with childcare, as in 1925's *Las santas* [*The {Female} Saints*] and the 1928 *Nuestra señora del Paralelo* [*Our Lady of the Parallel*], or assistance and support during periods of unemployment, as in *Los hijos de la calle*.<sup>18</sup>

## FATHERS

Reformers saw working-class fatherhood as a problem needing modification, but the problem of paternity also included certain behaviors of

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17. Federica Montseny, *La ruta iluminada*, La Novela Ideal 89 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1928]). See also Federica Montseny, "Glosas: Reclamos," *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 313 (18 January 1935)72, for a critique of the "penny-pinching" Catalan bourgeoisie. Montseny was no spendthrift. José Peirats wrote to a friend in 1978 stating he had never known anyone as cheap as she. "Have you anytime ever seen her name on any solidarity list?" José Peirats to Gerardo Patán Gutierrez, 28 March 1978, José Peirats Papers, IISG, File 337. My thanks to Chris Ealham for telling me about this letter.

18. Federica Montseny, *Las santas*, La Novela Ideal 5 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1925]) and Federica Montseny, *Nuestra señora del Paralelo*, La Novela Ideal 107 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1928]).



upper-class males.<sup>19</sup> Here reformers focused their attention on two parallel tracks: absent working-class fathers and those who fathered children out of wedlock. These two concerns seem to have reflected class bias. The absent father was principally seen as a working-class issue while fathering children out of wedlock was a symptom of *donjuanismo*, a behavior of the well-to-do male who had seduced and abandoned a woman of generally a lesser social station.<sup>20</sup>

### **ABSENT FATHERS**

The reformers wanted men to work and women to remain at home, assuming that this would be the principal solution to several of the issues facing the family in the first third of the twentieth century. If men stayed home after work, it lessened their exposure to vice and the “low life” (*vida baja*), increasing the health and stability of the working-class family.<sup>21</sup> Alcoholism, perceived as a serious problem of the working-class male, would correspondingly be reduced. It would furthermore reduce the burden on women as men would participate more fully in the domestic household and the

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19. Mothers were of such importance in Montseny’s fiction that I will focus on motherhood in my chapters 8 and 9.

20. See my presentation in the previous chapter of why Montseny’s use of Don Juan is a political one. Even though it departs from the standard definition by implicitly using class, I also believe Montseny is using Marañón’s definition that Don Juan is not masculine, but because he was idle. He spent the force of his vital energy on seduction, rather than meaningful work. See Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

21. See Ralph Bates’ 1935 novel, *Lean Men: An Episode in a Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), for a detailed portrayal of the life of the Barcelona working and artisanal classes during the interwar period. Bates lived in Barcelona and was intimately involved in organizing the socialist unions and in their conflicts with the CNT.

wives would be happier performing domestic duties with their husbands home, rather than worrying about what they were doing while out. Additionally, this was widely believed to reduce the need for women to work outside the home because men would not be spending money on alcohol or other entertainment.<sup>22</sup> With mothers at home, the supervision of the children would increase, the children would have better home environments, and, in a trickledown theory, would also find less time for criminal behavior associated with the street and the environment of the working-class home without parents and supervision.

The Spanish state's more active interest in childhood was part of a broader trend in Europe and North America. At the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, professionals specializing in children developed. In addition, middle class philanthropic organizations formed to address social problems and concerns about the stability and eugenic stock of the lower classes.<sup>23</sup> Some of these organizations took on an international character, such as the Scouts and the International Association for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. Both of these organizations had royal patronage, the king and the queen respectively, while the Infanta Isabel (1851–1931) was the head of the board of the Spanish branch of the London based International Association for the Suppression of

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22. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 230.

23. These organizations include the YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Boy Scouts. The first two, with their close connections to Protestantism, were slower to develop in Spain, but Spanish scouting took off after its founding in 1911 until its suspension under Franco in 1940.

the White Slave Traffic.<sup>24</sup> Scouting, by emphasizing outdoor activities that involved nature, sought to promote healthy living for boys.

For the bourgeois model family to even begin to be possible, several factors outside of the household needed to be changed. While both the socialist and anarchist movements discouraged vices such as drinking and the low life, bars and neighborhood taverns were frequently the only places for men to socialize. To reach the oft-stated goal of a woman staying home would have required a substantial increase in male wages and more facilities for children such as schools.

Anarchist reformers generally assumed that working-class men would help with domestic duties. However, the reality was that few men aided with domestic duties. Women alone had the double shift of working at waged labor and then preparing meals and other domestic responsibilities. At the end of the nineteenth century and before the rapid expansion of employment occasioned by the First World War, male workers in the textile mills in Catalonia wanted to ban women working at night. This was partly a way to expand employment, but also as a measure for men to regain their self-respect that was supposedly lost by their attending to “women’s responsibilities” (but more likely because employers were using women and children as a form of de-skilling jobs). The male textile operatives argued that the men who would

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24. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 481. The suppression of the traffic in women addressed a symptom rather than the causes of prostitution.

be employed after the ban would no longer be men–women (*hombres–mujeres*) who helped out with domestic tasks because women would return to their proper and “sacred” sphere of the home.<sup>25</sup> The poor income due to the prevalence of low wages became a marker of the moral deficiencies of a working–class home and the fault of the father. He did not earn enough for the mother to remain at home and care for the children, who in turn became delinquents, because of the absence of the mother who was at work leaving the children unsupervised.

Montseny wanted women to go out rather than men to stay home. In her fiction and journalism, women did not need men to go out, and both sexes were encouraged to participate in public life. In her memoirs, she acknowledged that a substantial portion of the audience at some of her propaganda tours in other parts of Spain came because a woman speaker was a novelty, not because of what she had to say about anarchism. She certainly had gone out and about as a child, accompanying her father to various meetings and plays as well as sitting in on meetings with him.<sup>26</sup> Urales wrote that sharing experiences both inside and outside the home provided children with the best education.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution, and Reaction*, 39.

26. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 27.

27. Federico Urales, “Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 12. He also remarks that it was best undertaken exclusively by the father/parent [padre] with the child.

## PATERNITY

Women faced disgrace if they bore children out of wedlock, but more importantly, Spanish law forbade women from seeking to establish paternity. The 1889 Civil Code not only banned women from proving paternity, it also made it easy for men to avoid recognizing the child unless they had already done so or there was written evidence from the father himself.<sup>28</sup> This was ostensibly to protect men from unwarranted accusations of fathering children and to protect their honor, but at the sizeable cost of many women's honor. Moreover, without recourse through the courts, these fathers were free to abandon the children born outside of marriage, and to deny their existence. However, investigations could be made to determine who the mother of a child was.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, the state and society perceived a mother to abandoning her child as a greater crime than for a father to do so.

Social medicine, a term that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, was, according to Dorothy and Roy Porter, a "mixture of the medical and social sciences, and their application to the health aspects of populations and social organizations."<sup>30</sup> A group of progressive doctors led by Marañón attempted to apply their skills to public health. In post-WWI Spain, public

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28. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 183.

29. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 187. In France, women were only allowed to bring paternity suits beginning in 1912. Michelle Perrot, "The New Eve and the Old Adam: Changes in French Women's Condition at the Turn of the Century," in Higonnet, Jenson, Michel, and Weitz, *Behind the Lines*, 53.

30. See Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, "What Was Social Medicine?," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1998), 91.

health practitioners spoke out about political issues, including the regeneration of the Spain after the demise of its empire in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1898.<sup>31</sup>

Many of those engaged in social medicine also campaigned for the legal investigation and acknowledgment of paternity. Because paternity investigations were against the law, there was no way to force delinquent fathers to take over the financial support of children that orphanages provided. During the 1920s, reformers argued that paternal support would permit financially strapped mothers to take over the care of their children.<sup>32</sup> Identifying fathers would lower the infant mortality rate, the incidence of *donjuanismo* would shrink, and the children would be healthier because mothers loved them more and they would receive a better education from their mothers, thus improving the race and economically benefiting the nation.<sup>33</sup>

In the twenties the campaign continued, notably in the journal *Sexualidad*.<sup>34</sup> Its writers argued that the state should step in to protect the “seduced mother and abandoned child.”<sup>35</sup> These writers, joined by other

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31. Esteban Rodríguez-Ocaña, “Medicine as a Social Political Science: The Case of Spain c. 1920,” *Hygiea Internationalis* 7, no. 1 (2007), 38.

32. Clearly this ignored the class dimensions of *donjuanismo*, such as the married Don Juans who seduced household servants or the village *señoritos* who seduced local peasants.

33. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 189. See the the series of tables at the end of the chapter.

34. The review intended to provide a scientific perspective on sexuality. Cleminson, “The Review *Sexualidad* (1925–28), Social Hygiene and the Pathologisation of Male Homosexuality in Spain,” 121.

35. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 190. This was in line with Ramón Pérez de Ayala statement in his 1921 *Belarmino y Apolonio: Novela*: “I agree that prostitution is a huge foul-smelling ulcer, but how can one blame the ulcer for belonging to a corrupt

practitioners of social medicine, focused on child welfare, though feminists like the socialist Margarita Nelken believed establishing paternity would reduce the incidences of prostitution by aiding abandoned mothers.<sup>36</sup>

Nerea Aresti argues that this debate and the eventual reform of the law in the Second Republic reflected the slow and gradual change in the role of fathers. Whereas the father in the beginning of the century was more of an autocrat, there was an evolution toward greater communication within the family. However, for the majority of Spanish families in the first third of the twentieth century, the father was generally absent from the sphere of everyday life and ignorant of childcare.<sup>37</sup> Men were ignorant of childcare because universally, across the political spectrum, women were responsible for children, and both the Catholics and anarchists believed it to be both a sacred and organic duty of women.<sup>38</sup> The success of the campaign for the legalization of investigation of paternity in the 1931 Republican constitution reflected the slow shift toward more involvement by fathers and the perception that they needed to be more involved. Both of these were campaigns by social medicine, and reformers based both campaigns on the belief that while women were

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body? It is no more than a frank manifestation and fatal result of the suffering body politic. Where everything is prostituted, feminine prostitution is almost praiseworthy because at least it is a clear symptom." Madrid: [Jimenez y Molina], 1921, translated as *Belarmino and Apolonio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 14.

36. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 189.

37. Birderues–Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 33.

38. Esteban Rodríguez Ocaña, “Una medicina para la infancia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 150. For anarchists the sacredness was not religious, but out of an organic responsibility to humanity.

responsible for childcare and education, men were responsible for discipline and ensuring that children remained in their proper roles.<sup>39</sup> Social medicine practitioners, supported by reformers inside and outside the government as well as by many in the labor movement, came into contact with these families through urban clinics, government sponsored *Gotas de Leche*, and the network of clinics set up to control venereal disease and monitor prostitution. The goal was not to lessen the burdens of mothers but to increase the role of fathers by “domesticating” them while stabilizing the family, notably the working-class family.<sup>40</sup> Reformers viewed working-class women as incapable of performing this stabilizing role, but they needed mothers to provide childcare and education. Several benefits to bourgeois society would result by tying the father to family responsibilities, including the reduction in the number of abandoned children.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Birderues–Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 23.

40. This draws upon reading work by Susan Pederson and the essay of Koven and Michel on the development of the welfare state in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. These authors focus on women and mothers as objects of state intervention whereas my focus in this chapter is on the children. I believe that the state viewed mothers as instruments – and perceived by state authorities as passive ones at that – to use to mold the child. Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Koven and Michel, “Womanly Duties.”

41. Part of the problem of the abandoned child was the lack of faculties to care for them and the close correlation between abandonment and infant death. While I have not found any figures on infant abandonment, it was part of the moral panic of regenerationist reformers who saw it as wasting stock vital for national growth.



## CHILDREN

A significant portion of Spain's population were children, despite an appallingly high rate of infant mortality.<sup>42</sup> The population grew and the percentage of children declined only slightly over the first third of the century. In 1910, thirty-four percent of the population was under the age of fifteen, and that declined slightly in 1920 to thirty-two percent and remained there in 1930.<sup>43</sup>

Spain's orphaned and abandoned children, and the "street child" or *golfo*, was seen as both a symptom of the problem of abandoned children and a threat to the stability of urban society. The well-to-do social scientists and those involved in the social medicine movement perceived the high rates of mortality and the number of abandoned children in Spain as losses of the national wealth, a diminution of the eugenic stock, hindering the nation's evolutionary progress.<sup>44</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century the definition of a child had changed from the cultural description based on chronology, traditional in all European cultures, to one based on biological considerations that were used to

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42. Spanish infant mortality was the highest in Western Europe in 1925, 137 per 1000. Brian R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750–1970* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 42–43. See Tables 6.1 and 6.2 at the end of the chapter.

43. José María de Miguel, "Modelo sociológico para el análisis de la estructura e ideología de la puericultura–pediatría," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 136.

44. Nash observes that Spanish eugenics before the Civil War usually had a social hygiene, rather than a racial hereditarian, perspective. Mary Nash, "Social Eugenics and Nationalist Race Hygiene in Early Twentieth Century Spain," *History of European Ideas* 15, no. 4–6 (1992), 744.

establish differences between children, adolescents, and adults.<sup>45</sup> Scientists based these considerations on characteristics of puberty to create adolescence that was a period of tumult, instability, and anti-social behavior. The work of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and his followers reinforced these.<sup>46</sup> A scientific definition enabled experts to claim objectivity and authority over children and youth, even in the private sphere, for proper socialization ostensibly for the benefit and future of the nation. It also enabled them to claim scientific objectivity in prescribing for families and identifying certain children as threats to the nation in need of control.

This control would take shape in the first third of the twentieth century as children were to be taken from the streets (including work) and subjected to an ever-narrowing circle of regulations and laws enforced by new and expanding institutions.<sup>47</sup> The expansion of the time spent in school, the raising of the age of mandatory attendance, and the creation of organizations such as the *Consejo Superior de Protección a la Infancia y la Represión de la Mendacidad* (*Superior Council for the Protection of Childhood and the Repression of Begging*), all addressed the problems of the child, social order and regeneration. The child should be controlled and disciplined within the family. Anarchists attacked the family while reformers and the authorities

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45. Birderues–Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 21.

46. Souto Kustrín, “Juventud, teoría e historia,” 178.

47. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 479.

upheld it as the bedrock of society: “Sons and daughters should, above all, show themselves to be submissive and obedient, receive a strict education and frequently be subjected to corporal punishment in order to subdue their character.”<sup>48</sup> Working-class families sometimes gave up their children to institutions if they could not care for them. Temma Kaplan discusses one scandalous case in a Barcelona Church orphanage. In 1910, the nuns at the orphanage sent a seven-year-old child home to her widowed mother. Ostensibly, the child was ill and had a contagious disease. Doctors identified the disease as a venereal disease and it came out that a man had sexually molested the child while she was at the orphanage. This became a point of mobilization in the child’s neighborhood and a source of friction with the authorities. However, Kaplan states it was not a source of conflict with the Church. Even if this case did not lead to demonstrations against the Church, it would have entered into public consciousness and become a memory of Church abuse.<sup>49</sup> Parents could commit their children to reformatories as incorrigibles if they could not discipline or control them. The parents of the future anarchist anti-Francoist guerrilla, Francesc Sabaté Llopart (1915–

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48. Birderues-Guereña, “Niños y niñas en familia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 31.

49. Kaplan, “Female Consciousness and Collective Action,” 521–522.

1960), gave him to the Asilo Durán in 1922, when he was only seven years old.<sup>50</sup>

The concern over the role of children and the threat to the future of the nation was the result of a panicked preoccupation with degeneration, in part because of Spain's defeat by the United States and the decline of Spain as a world power. Demands to fix these problems appeared in numerous venues from multiple sources: fiction, medicine, civil society, and the government.<sup>51</sup> There were a number of moralizing works that appeared to offer solutions to the problems, but usually these addressed only the symptoms rather than the causes: widespread poverty and the lack of sufficient social and welfare services to avert the problem. Reformers argued that infant mortality was the result of not only poor health care but also the low moral character of the parents. Parents abandoned children because they could not maintain them, often due to a series of crises.<sup>52</sup> Because the majority of abandoned children were newborns, the assumption was that they were illegitimate.<sup>53</sup> Illegitimacy was a legal disability, as well as a moral and social disability. Consequently, unwed mothers sought the anonymity of the orphanages in provincial

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50. Sabaté escaped the Asilo Durán and returned home. He is the historical basis for Miguel Artiguez, the character played by Gregory Peck in the 1964 film *Behold a Pale Horse*. Because of the film, Francoist Spain banned Columbia Pictures productions for several years.

51. Trinidad Fernández, "La infancia delincuente y abandonada," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 512.

52. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 12.

53. Birderues–Guereña, "Niños y niñas en familia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 42.

capitals.<sup>54</sup> As discussed earlier, there was almost no welfare and what did exist was under the control of the Church.<sup>55</sup> The Church created the *Inclusas* principally for women who bore children out of wedlock in order to prevent the abandonment of infants in the streets.

## **INCLUSAS**

What little has been written about orphans and illegitimacy in earlier periods appears to have still held true in the first third of the twentieth century. Frequently, orphans of legitimate relationships were adopted informally, or placed as servants. Even then, they were dependent on the less than tender compassion of adults. Orphans were often the most deprived and abused, frequently linked with all sorts of minor crimes, such as mendicancy, petty theft, and vagrancy. Scant institutional services, especially outside of provincial capitals, meant that orphans were at the mercy of whatever charity they could find. While the rate of abandoned children declined at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the numbers of abandoned children remained high with an average of greater than one child per day abandoned in each of the major cities. In 1924 alone, 1,050 foundlings entered

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54. David E. Vassberg, "Orphans and Adoption in Early Modern Castilian Villages," *History of the Family* 3, no. 4 (1998), 447.

55. This was also to change rapidly during the Civil War when the problems of refugees and children came to the fore. Franz Borkenau, an Austrian observer in Spain in the initial part of the war, noted that the government was acting to prevent a "*bezprizony* problem" — vagabond children. Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit: An Eye-Witness Account of the Political and Social Conflicts of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 133. Citations refer to the Michigan edition. Montseny was very involved and proud of the work she did as minister in caring for children whose lives were disrupted by the war.

the Madrid Inclusa, half from the Casa de Maternidad (Maternity House, for indigent pregnant women, another measure intended to prevent child abandonment) and half left anonymously at the Inclusa.<sup>56</sup> The Inclusas, which were religious institutions, had a method to allow mothers to anonymously “deposit” their newborns. The mothers rang a bell at the gate of the Inclusa. The doorkeeper then turned a device that rotated with an opening for the mother to leave the child, known as the “*turno*” (rotation). This was exactly like a bank deposit or the revolving lazy susan devices used in some post offices and other places that handle money. Child abandonment was a moral horror, but one so banal that Inclusas developed an easy “deposit” system for the mothers. In Montseny’s 1927 novella *Martirio*, the single and pregnant (raped by the local noble) sixteen-year-old is told she should leave the child “on the turn” when it is born and she will be placed in domestic service in Pamplona or San Sebastián.<sup>57</sup>

The causes for the high rate of infant mortality are hard to figure out from the data. There are the various problems inherent in statistical data compounded by the number of people simply not reporting births. Additionally, at one time the official statistics recorded stillbirths as part of the figures for infant deaths at less than a year, and individuals could hide infanticide as a stillbirth. While diarrhea was the major killer of infants in

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56. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 505.

57. Federica Montseny, *Martirio*, La Novela Ideal 48 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1927]), 22.

their first year, there were also numerous diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera, and diphtheria that ravaged Spain and to which children were particularly susceptible. During periods of economic stress, abandoned, dead, or dying babies were found in the streets.<sup>58</sup> In Montseny's novella *María de Magdala* the protagonist, Jesus of Rigabell, delivers an impromptu "sermon" upon finding a child frozen to death on a Barcelona street, a victim of society's "criminal neglect." A quarter of newborns died before they were a year old, and only half of those who survived lived to age fifteen, meaning that just over a third of the children born ever reached that age.<sup>59</sup> Even as infant mortality was declining in Spain, it remained high in the Inklusas. The overwhelming contemporary assumption was that children in the Inklusas and other institutions must be from the working-classes because of their perceived lower morality and higher numbers of illegitimate births.

The role of the Inklusas is hard to determine. Montseny refers to Inklusas in several of her novellas and it figures as a place of death and imprisonment, but there appears to have been no historical study of the Inklusas in the contemporary period. Montseny wrote that an infant left in the Inklusas was in effect dead and buried.<sup>60</sup> Historical research supports this assumption. The mortality rate was high for a number of reasons, including

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58. Ealham, "Anarco-Capitalistes, Lumpenburgesía and the Origins of Anarchism in Catalonia," 52.

59. Trinidad Fernández, "La infancia delincuente y abandonada," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 506. Montseny's sister Blanca, who was a year younger, died of cholera.

60. Montseny, *Martirio*, 22.

the overcrowding, the poor quality of care, and the ease with which disease could spread. There are no reliable figures but there is agreement that the death rate of children in the Inclusas was enormous.<sup>61</sup> One authority argues for a rate of between seventy to eighty percent, which could reach one hundred percent if there was an epidemic or a famine.<sup>62</sup> He also remarks that the system of child abandonment in the Inclusas was a “form of legal infanticide.”<sup>63</sup> The high death rate in the Inclusas fed anti-clericalism because the Inclusas were Church run institutions.<sup>64</sup>

### **ORPHANS**

It may have been because of the conflict with her father that Montseny rarely featured fathers as positive characters in her novels.<sup>65</sup> Usually, the only good fathers in her fiction were dead — martyrs in the social struggle or because of accidents or disease. Orphans featured prominently and positively in her novels where they are either literal orphans or social orphans, i.e., those who are alienated from their family or society because of their adherence to

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61. Cohen Amselem, “La infancia entre la vida y la muerte,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 142. See Table 6.3 at the end of the chapter.

62. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 506.

63. *Ibid.*, 507.

64. The widely believed rumors that the dead children were the offspring of the clergy itself only added to anti-clericalism.

65. In Montseny’s 1926 novella, *La última primavera*, the father is the central character, but flawed because he failed to act on his love for a woman, instead marrying another who was more socially acceptable. Federica Montseny, *La última primavera*, La Novela Ideal 39 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1926]).



the Ideal. Moreover, in Spain a child with only one parent can be an orphan.<sup>66</sup> Montseny was not naively drawing on literary clichés to write her romance fiction. She consciously chose orphans in order to break down the expectations around family, both as a dampening force on social struggle and to validate those whom society cast out.

Orphans are innocent. That is, their status as orphans carries neither sin nor shame — as opposed to bastards and single mothers. Orphans are pure distillations of the innocence of childhood because they lack parents.<sup>67</sup> They do not have ulterior motives and thus can ask pointed and penetrating questions about the past, present, and future of the family and social relationships with complete naiveté. They can also form their own bonds outside of the structures of existing societal norms. Orphans are individuals, usually but not always children, who are alone in the world. They are alone, encountering the hardships, trials, and tribulations of reaching maturity. Children in a family are partially buffered or face hardships together in the family unit. Even here there is often a clear gendered difference in the standard use of orphans in fiction. Orphan boys go off, fight battles, and rescue damsels in distress, even if only in their imaginations, forming a part of the picaresque tradition in

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66. The Royal Academy's 1925 dictionary defines orphan as a "minor child who is missing their father and mother, or one of the two." Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 15th ed., 1925. In the 22nd ed. (2001), the definition adds to the end of this phrase, "especially the father." <http://buscon.rae.es>.

67. Claudia Nelson, "Nontraditional Adoption in Progressive-Era Orphan Narratives," *Mosaic* 34, no. 2 (2001), 263.

literature.<sup>68</sup> However, relatives take in and keep female orphans as lesser members of the family or place them in domestic service — if they were lucky. If they were unlucky, orphan girls became prostitutes.

Montseny used these constructions of the orphan in *Los hijos de la calle* and in *Los caminos del mundo*.<sup>69</sup> In the latter, she set a traditional love story among a band of Roma who take in a child whose mother died. The mother was driven from society as a single mother and dies on the side of the road. There the Roma discover the baby lying with her dead mother. The Roma redeem the baby and raised her, turning on its head the popular myth of Roma baby-stealing.<sup>70</sup> The young girls falls in love with the boy destined to be the leader, he loves her as well, but his family has promised him to another girl in an arranged marriage. The redeemed orphan and the boy end up killing themselves. The tragedy that ensued was not because of the low morality of the Roma, which Montseny did not ascribe to in any case, but because of the denial of love by societal norms. The novella was a positive portrayal of a group that, like the anarchists, the Italian criminologist Lombroso had labeled as biologically predisposed to crime.<sup>71</sup>

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68. “In the strict sense, a novel with a picaresque (Spanish, *pícaro*: a rogue or scoundrel) as its hero or heroine, usually recounting his or her escapades in a first-person narrative marked by its episodic structure and realistic low-life descriptions.” Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. “picaresque.”

69. Federica Montseny, *Los caminos del mundo*, La Novela Ideal 120 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1928]).

70. Lou Channon-Deutsch, “Travels of the Imaginary Spanish Gypsy,” in Labanyi, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*, 27.

71. *Ibid.*, 24.

Orphans and bastards were central to the familial narrative of the Montseny Mañé clan. Urales believed that they were often activists: “We can say that the work of humans is made by the children of love: the illegitimate, illicit, bastards, spurious, and damned.”<sup>72</sup> According to Montseny, her father was a bastard and was quite proud of the fact. “Himself a child of love, he judged with tenderness all who were born before or outside of legal sanction: ‘All the great men of history have been bastards.’ he frequently stated.”<sup>73</sup> Advertisements for his novel *Los hijos del amor* (*The Children of Love*) boasted that it sustained the thesis that the “fruit of natural unions are superior to legal love.” Montseny’s partner, Germinal Esgleas, was the sole support of his mother after becoming an orphan at age eight due to the Moroccan colonial wars.<sup>74</sup> Montseny was drawing upon her own experiences, limited as they were due to her youth.

The use of orphans offered several advantages to Montseny. The orphaned youth is a stock figure in literature.<sup>75</sup> Because the orphan has no

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72. Federico Urales, “Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 13.

73. Federica Montseny, “Prólogo” in Federico Urales, *Los hijos del amor*, Toulouse: Universo, 1951, III.

74. According to Montseny, Esgleas was orphaned when Riffian bandits killed his father and brother on their farm in Spanish Morocco. The bandits could have been Riffian guerrillas. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, 8 August 1930. Max Nettlau Papers, IISG.

75. “Orphans as archetypal figures in children’s literature can be traced back to myths and folk tales, in which the symbolic removal of parental figures is the foremost requirement for a successful rite of passage. The most common hero of myth and folk tale is an underprivileged child or young person, a youngest son or youngest daughter, often a child of unknown origin. At the end, the hero finds his fortune, ‘the princess and half the kingdom,’ and triumphs over those who at first seemed cleverer and stronger. In children’s fiction, the absence of parents is a condition for the protagonist’s unhampered exploration of the world. The degree of

living parents, they are naturally sympathetic, an opportunity for pathos. The use of orphaned characters allowed her to explore larger questions through the experiences of an innocent and naive child — the individual as an alternative to the family.<sup>76</sup> By depriving her orphaned children of parents, she also frees them of a past and a social identity that could possibly limit what the reader expected. Thus, the orphan is free, liberated from the structures and strictures of family, the orphan has the “capacity for perpetual rebirth, his continuing ability to shuck off the past and begin life anew.”<sup>77</sup> Montseny places orphans outside history, but close to nature. In *Los hijos de la calle*, the orphans live in a cave, literally in the ground.<sup>78</sup> Like nineteenth-century romantics, she seemed to view children as innocent and pure.<sup>79</sup>

While rejecting religion and Catholic notions of grace, Montseny, like true Romantics, seems to view nature as a source of grace. Montseny’s

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abandonment can vary from a simple excursion by the parents to their emotional indifference to their actual death.” Maria Nikolajeva, “Orphans,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, ed. Jack Zipes (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 200. The vast majority of the scholarship I found on orphans deals with children’s literature and even that almost entirely with the Anglo–American tradition. The very few exceptions are histories of the problem of the homeless children in Russia after the 1917 Revolution (two authors), and the question of adoption in Early Modern Spain and France as well as Soviet Russia (one author each). So, while the argument on orphans is my own, I have tried to support it with what little scholarly literature I did discover.

76. Jessamy Harvey, “Death and the Adorable Orphan: *Marcelino pan y vino* (1954; 1991; 2000),” *Journal of Romance Studies* 4, no. 1 (2004), 64.

77. Nina Auerbach, “Incarnations of the Orphan Source,” *ELH* 42, no. 3 (1975), 398.

78. Minda Rae Amiran, “‘She Was Wildly Clad’: Orphan Girls in Earlier Children’s Literature,” *The Mid–Atlantic Almanack: The Journal of the Mid–Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association*, no. 1 (1992), 86.

79. *Ibid.*, 85–92.

orphans, in fact, become icons of personal liberation.<sup>80</sup> In Montseny's *Las santas*, her second novella in the *Novela Ideal* series, two single women save a young pregnant girl from suicide and come together collectively to raise their children in a strikingly positive portrayal of single motherhood.<sup>81</sup> She followed this novella less than a year later with *Los hijos de la calle*, focusing on the two orphans growing up in Barcelona.

Again, as in *Resurrección*, Montseny here appears to be following the novel *La madre naturaleza* by Emilia Pardo Bazán, but with a different political message.<sup>82</sup> For while the orphans in that novel do not struggle against society and its corruption, Montseny's orphans do, with a violent consequence in *Los hijos de la calle*. Whereas in many works of fiction the orphan discovers that she really has a family and is "rescued" by returning to her true family, in Montseny's work the orphans discover agency and become active subjects. Instead of relying on forces outside their control, orphans discover innate abilities, strengths, and a force of will.<sup>83</sup> Orphans represent humanity at large

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80. Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 134–135.

81. Montseny, *Las santas*. Two of the women are social orphans. The family of one cast her out for falling in love with the leader of a strike against their factory, making her a social orphan. The police killed him in a labor dispute but not before she became pregnant. The other is the young pregnant servant who attempted suicide after being seduced by her employer (*donjuanismo*) and is then thrown out onto the street by her employers upon the discovery of her pregnancy. The dismissal of the pregnant servant was a common occurrence and numerous commentators argued that abandoned children frequently were the illegitimate offspring of servants.

82. Ruth El Saffar, "Mother Nature's Nature," *Anales Galdosianos*, no. 2 (1987), 93.

83. The individualist anarchist Stirner was an influence on Montseny, as were Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Strindberg. See Ealham, "From the Summit to the Abyss," in Preston and McKenzie, *The Republic Besieged*, 135–162.

in Montseny's work and focus the reader's attention on the experience of life itself.

Spanish radicals looked at the Soviet Union for many reasons. One of the areas that attracted a great deal of interest throughout was the Bolshevik transformation of family relations. Even reputable newspapers published stories of the Soviets collectivization of women and free love. In addition to Soviet fiction, Montseny also read works from and about the new régime in the USSR such as those by Nikolai Bukharin (1888–1938), Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), Ilya Ehrenberg (1891–1967), Fyodor Gladkov (1883–1958), and Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952).<sup>84</sup> She agreed with the Soviets that illegitimacy was not a legal question but rather a social one that the new order would resolve. The family was to disappear in communism, *pace* Engels, and both the concept of illegitimacy and the need for adoption would be gone. She would have fiercely opposed the Soviets' initial ban on adoption and their preference for state-run orphanages for ideological reasons.<sup>85</sup> She argued that women needed to raise children, not the state. She would have been horrified

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84. Among the works she read were Ángel Pestaña, *Setenta días en Rusia*, Diego Hidalgo, *Un notario español en Rusia*, John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, Panait Istrati, *Rusia desnudo*, Ernest Toller, *Nueva York – Moscú*, and Francisco Hostench, *El código ruso de trabajo*. The authors above and here are just the ones she reviewed in *La Revista Blanca*.

85. Even though Russian peasants were apparently adopting children only to have them as labor, Montseny would have been concerned about the state taking over raising children. Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, "Beyond Adoption: Orphans and Family Strategies in Pre-Industrial France," *The History of the Family* 1, no. 1 (1996), 1–13 and ; Laurie Bernstein, "The Evolution of Soviet Adoption Law," *Journal of Family History* 22, no. 1 (1997), 206.

at the idea that children raised in state orphanages would be better communists.<sup>86</sup>

## CHILD HEALTH

Parallel to societal concerns about children was the development of medical specialties that focused on children. In Europe and North America, the specialty of pediatrics developed over the nineteenth century. Additionally, another specialty developed, that of puericulture. Puericulture is the science of childcare, distinct from pediatrics:

[T]he medical and social activity needed to protect natality, to curb mortality and therefore aimed to sustaining the rise of the population. It had to do with the technical guidance of child rearing and leaned over the shoulders of women, either mothers or mothers-to-be. Physicians, then, saw themselves as a kind of preceptors, who sought to free women from the bonds of superstition and traditional habits and to educate them in the new scientific culture.<sup>87</sup>

The two specialties developed simultaneously in Spain as the concerns over infant mortality combined with eugenic and evolutionary concerns over the loss of the children as a loss of a national resource. While pediatrics focuses on medical and clinical issues, puericulture focuses on hygiene and social aspects of childcare.<sup>88</sup> The impact of evolutionary thought in medical schools initially meant that doctors viewed children solely as a developmental

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86. Laurie Bernstein, "Fostering the Next Generation of Socialists: *Patronirovanie* in the Fledgling Soviet State," *Journal of Family History* 26, no. 1 (2001), 71; Bernstein, "The Evolution of Soviet Adoption Law," 209. The Soviet experience profoundly affected her ministry, and she devoted resources to refugee and orphaned children during the Civil War out of tremendous concern for the future of these children.

87. Rodríguez Ocaña, "Medicine as a Social Political Science," 44. The quote is from Jesús Sarabia y Pardo, *Discurso leído en la sesión inaugural del año académico de 1913 en la Sociedad Ginecológica Española por el presidente de la misma*, Madrid, 1913.

88. Rodríguez Ocaña, "Una medicina para la infancia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 149.

stage. With the development of the field of nutrition and studies on metabolism and the etiology of bacterial infections, pediatrics became its own field, establishing points of reference between children's health and disease in 1923.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the development of puericulture in response to fears about both national degeneration and declining population in France and in Spain, the field received state recognition and sanction later than pediatrics.<sup>90</sup> A royal decree of 23 May 1923 authorized the opening of an *Escuela Nacional de Puericultura*. This was the desired outcome of draft regulations first proposed in 1909 — fourteen years earlier — by the Consejo Superior de Protección a la Infancia y la Represión de la Mendacidad, five years after the establishment of the Consejo.<sup>91</sup> The school opened in 1925, and scheduled provincial schools of *Puericultura e Higiene* were to follow. It was only under the Second Republic that, in 1932, the *Centros Provinciales de Higiene Infantil* (Provincial Centers for Child Hygiene), began to be established.<sup>92</sup>

Obviously, the development of the specialties of pediatrics and puericulture coincided with the concerns over childhood already discussed, the

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89. *Ibid.*, 157.

90. Puericulture also exists in the Philippines, but that is most likely due to its position as a former Spanish colony.

91. Rodríguez Ocaña, "Una medicina para la infancia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 165. The original proposal was for an Instituto Nacional de Maternología y Puericultura. Maternología was dropped, perhaps in part because of the development of obstetrics.

92. Miguel, "Modelo sociológico para el análisis de la estructura e ideología de la puericultura–pediatría," in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 143.



two developments integral to each other. Pediatricians would write books on childcare and promote the proper ways to raise children — the Doctor Spocks of their era. Often far removed from the realities and demands of working-class life, they promoted the bourgeois family as the model to emulate. They wrote about the family as a civilizing or ameliorating process to adjust for the perceived disruptions caused by industrialization. Doctors especially emphasized that the children were to be in school and the mother at home, the *ángel del hogar*.<sup>93</sup>

Anarchists welcomed puericulture as an improvement that intended to replace custom with modern methods and theories of childcare and cleanliness. Its association with science and modernity (and with France, where it originated) made it a positive step in improving the lives of Spanish children. Anarchist publications regularly featured articles on childcare in addition to the traditional didactic stories, and published pamphlets on puericulture. Montseny approved of puericulture. By this period, she was making editorial decisions at the journal and was herself a parent.<sup>94</sup> *La Revista Blanca* published Doctor J. Sala's *Higiene pre-natal y puericultura: cuidados que necesitan nuestros hijos* [*Pre-Natal Hygiene and Infant Care:*

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93. Borrás Llop, "Zagales, pinches, gamenes — aproximaciones al trabajo infantil," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 250.

94. Montseny would also emphasize care for children during her tenure in the Ministry of Health and the CNT set up numerous centers for puericulture including services for lactating mothers such as Barcelona's Instituto de Puericultura y Maternología Luisa Michel. Confederación Nacional de Trabajo-Federación Anarquista Ibérica, *Jornadas sanitarias cenetistas: En las que se glosará públicamente la obra constructiva de la C.N.T. en su aspecto social* (Barcelona: CNT-FAI, n.d. [1937?]), 3.

*Care Needed by Our Children*] during the Second Republic.<sup>95</sup> However, others questioned the concept of social hygiene as being part of the attempts to control the young and to remove the young's natural ideas of rebellion. For these anarchists, social medicine and hygiene were forms of repression by the powerful.<sup>96</sup>

Montseny and the anarchists were no different from others in associating the responsibility of childcare as an organic and natural function of women. In anarchist publications, the iconography became quite clear, the child represented the future, and the woman was the teacher and guardian of that future. Closely linked with the concern over child rearing would be sexuality. *Cuadernos de Cultura* represented a sustained popular educational effort that addressed this in numerous pamphlets, including a translation of a work by the American author William J. Fielding, *La educación sexual del niño: Lo que deben saber todos los niños* [*Sexual Education of the Child: What Should Be Known by All Children*].<sup>97</sup> In all this ferment over childhood and health the anarchists also insisted on a sexual education as an integral

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95. Dr. J. Sala, *Higiene pre-natal y puericultura: Cuidados que necesitan nuestros hijos*, *El Mundo al Día* 13. (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, n.d.). I could not find biographical information on Sala.

96. Eloísa Andes, "La rebelión de los niños," *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 174 (15 August 1930), 147. Nothing is known about Andes.

97. This was part of a broader publishing trend. Publishing houses that were associated with journals published hundreds of books and pamphlets on historical, sociological, and scientific topics. Magnien argues that this was done without any regard for editorial rigor or concern "for the capacity of workers to absorb these, but which demonstrates the obsessive and paternalistic will of the publishers to popularize culture and educate the people." Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 263.

component to children's education, just as sexual health was central to overall health.

In 1928, Montseny reviewed a book by Doctor Benzion Lieber (1875–1958), an important influence on progressive child rearing practices in the United States.<sup>98</sup> Progressive attempts to shape the future through children echoed the anarchist doctrine that one could not achieve liberty using authoritarian means. Urales wrote that if anarchism was about economics rather than love, if they accepted “all the immoral and inhumane means that society offers to those who are good and obey, we would become rich as well like others and we would give our children the education we wanted, but then we would have ceased to be anarchists and our children would not receive the education craved for them now.”<sup>99</sup> If one were harsh and brutal, the children would grow up to be harsh and brutal according to Lieber.<sup>100</sup> This is similar to the belief of some Soviet experts whose efforts to reform the family Montseny was very aware of. These Soviet experts often blamed the mother as well. The rector of Sverdlov Communist University, Martyn Liadov (1872–1947), remarked, “A child is born physically and morally healthy. But in raising it, we

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98. Montseny spells his name Liber and is reviewing the French edition of Lieber's book. Federica Montseny, “Lecturas,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 117 (1 April 1928), 660–661. For Lieber see Julia Mickenberg, “The Pedagogy of the Popular Front: Progressive Parenting for a ‘New Generation,’ 1935–1945,” in *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*, eds. Caroline Levander and Carol Singley (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 226–245.

99. Federico Urales, “Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 12.

100. Mickenberg, “The Pedagogy of the Popular Front,” in Levander and Singley, *The American Child*, 227.

instill in it our hereditary diseases, our hereditary character traits. ... Nervousness, tuberculosis, shrewishness, all these are imbibed with a mother's milk."<sup>101</sup>

The idea that a parent's personality (and the weather) strongly influenced that of the child at the moment of conception was widespread and influenced ideas about the role of the family and the child. This Lamarckian perspective of acquired characteristics and evolution corresponded with what Montseny wrote in her 1927 novella, *La hija del verdugo* [*The Daughter of the Executioner*]. It offers a counterpoint to the arguments of Lombroso about born criminals. Montseny wrote that various factors surrounding conception influence a child's character, including the weather at the time of conception and the morality of the parents. In *La hija del verdugo*, the protagonist, presumably an anarchist, is attracted to the daughter of the town's executioner, which puzzles him. He is puzzled how he could be attracted to the daughter of such an evil and degenerate man. He assumes her mother must have had an affair and so the child is not the daughter of the executioner. At the end of the novella, he tells the daughter as they flee the executioner's home, that a positive set of circumstances at conception could overcome even a "bad seed." It was now the duty "to live, fight, create another humanity on the ruins of both this world and ourselves" ("sobre las ruinas de este mundo, sobre

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101. Sverdlov Communist University was the highest party school in the USSR. Quoted in Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 190.

las ruinas de nosotros mismos.”)<sup>102</sup> The future was with our children and we should struggle to make it.

### **THE STREET CHILD**

There was also great concern about children whose parents had not abandoned them but who played in the street or were perceived as not being under a parent’s care. This was the problem of the street child, in Spanish the *golfo*. *Golfo* is applied to children and youths, and in its masculine form can be translated in various ways as an urchin, a scoundrel, a rogue or a loafer. In short, it means a juvenile delinquent. However, in its feminine form it always means a prostitute regardless of age.<sup>103</sup> The middle and upper classes did not allow their children to play in the street but working–class children had few other options. Properly brought up children did not play in the street, only *golfos* did.<sup>104</sup> In the minds of contemporary observers, the abandoned infant who lived and the child who played or lived on the street, could both become the delinquent of tomorrow due to the “pernicious influence of the street.”<sup>105</sup> That influence meant that the child could become a criminal; moreover, any child who saw and was tempted by the apparent easiness of leading the low life was also escaping work discipline. The working–class was inherently lazy and

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102. Montseny, *La hija del verdugo*, 32.

103. Jo Labanyi pointed out this important gender discrepancy in *golfo/golfa*.

104. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 199. In *La Revista Blanca*’s short–lived section of stories for children there were numerous examples of street children defending others, including adults, from the abusive attention of well–to–do children.

105. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 31. Cuello Calón viewed the street as one of the very few factors outside of the family and hereditary that contributed towards delinquency.

given to being vagabonds.<sup>106</sup> Montseny herself saw this free play as crucial to developing a spirit of independence and a healthy physical being.<sup>107</sup>

Like the Soviets, Spanish authorities viewed street children as threats to stability, as these children reflected the destabilization of the traditional family structure. State control was a way of preventing revolution because the uncontrolled child on the street was in danger of becoming a criminal. The street child who was not part of a family, or more accurately, not under the control of a family, represented a problem for society.

In the model of the ideal bourgeois family, resources were devoted to raising the child with a gender appropriate education, not neglecting physical and moral aspects as well.<sup>108</sup> The predominance of clericalism in education and the fact that teaching was also the only acceptable profession for women (at the lower levels), made education an activity that straddled the public-private boundary. Because delinquents were on the street, and thus completely in the public sphere, they presented a highly visible issue. The authorities simultaneously experienced and created social panics by using a medical vocabulary to discuss delinquency and social disorder and constituting the street child as pathology. Because the street was as a site of

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106. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 13.

107. See her essay “Naturismo y naturalismo I,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), 740–744, on the importance of unsupervised outside play (in the fresh air and sun) in her own development.

108. Aldaraca, “The Revolution of 1868 and the Rebellion of Rosalía Bringas,” 55.

“infection,” then all who encountered it were at risk, especially women and children, seen as having less resistance.

The image of the uncontrolled child contributed to social panic for several reasons. Social critics viewed these children, so visible in the major cities, as morally depraved criminals, who were threats to the social order.<sup>109</sup> The street urchin was “protoplasm of the bad life [*la mala vida*],” and a symptom of social degeneration.<sup>110</sup>

Bourgeois reformers argued that children were innocent, and “corrupting” influences, including the labor movement, needed to be kept away.<sup>111</sup> Social critics linked together street children, the labor movement, gangs, and revolutionaries as those who threatened the social order of Spanish cities.<sup>112</sup> While a few tried to use religion as a form of social control, most members of the middle classes demanded an increase in legislation outlawing these “social pathologies” and a concomitant increase in the forces and institutions of repression such as the asylums or reformatories.<sup>113</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the two most widely known and infamous reformatories were Santa Rita in Madrid’s Carabanchel district and

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109. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 477.

110. *Ibid.*, 485 and Cohen Amsalem, “La infancia entre la vida y la muerte,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 137.

111. Souto Kustrín, “Juventud, teoría e historia,” 173–174.

112. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 40–41.

113. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 479. The Second Republic would see laws passed that led to the criminalization of street trade in Barcelona and the creation of a section of the municipal police dedicated to its suppression.

the Asilo Toribio Durán in Barcelona.<sup>114</sup> The Church ran the latter and it had a reputation for abuse (including sexual abuse) of its male inmates.<sup>115</sup> The anarchist critique of these institutions was fierce. For the anarchists, these asylums acted contrary to the interests of their unfortunate residents and every Spanish asylum perpetuated inequality. Furthermore, they were a bourgeois institution cultivated as a business, despite being run by priests and nuns. The clergy took no account of humanity, or even of their own religious mission, which they claimed to serve and represent.<sup>116</sup>

The street child was easy to discover and promote as a social problem — one merely had to take a photograph and publish it to illustrate (and create) the problem. It became a catch phrase of philanthropic organizations and activists, especially the physician Manuel Tolosa Latour (1857–1919), one of the founders of pediatrics in Spain. Dr. Tolosa Latour’s activities led, in 1904, to the creation of first official state–sponsored institution under his leadership as General–Secretary. The *Consejo Superior de Protección a la Infancia y Represión de la Mendicidad* had a dual mission, which reflected the fears of contemporary society: protection but also suppression. Eliminating begging was as much a part of the mission as protecting children: the law did not distinguish between homeless (*vagabundo*) and criminal (*vicioso*) children;


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114. *Ibid.*, 474. The novelist Michel del Castillo (1933–) also spent time in Asilo Duran after the Civil War until he escaped to France.

115. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 185.

116. Eloísa Andes, “La rebelión de los niños,” *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 174 (15 August 1930), 147.



the law equally disciplined and sentenced to juvenile facilities both types.<sup>117</sup> The focus of the Consejo was on the children of the so called “popular classes,” which were perceived as being at the root of the problem, because it was simultaneously a moral and criminal problem, rather than a social one, much less an economic one. Private institutions played a prominent public role in “correcting” juveniles, whether children ived on the street or ~~were~~ abandoned.

Cesare Lombroso, the Italian criminologist, argued that anarchists were born criminals. He played an influential part in the development of ideas and theories about juvenile delinquency.<sup>118</sup> According to Lombroso, children lacked a moral sense; rather, it needed to be cultivated through education. He applied his Social Darwinist theories and a belief that humans individually replicated the same evolutionary processes as the species, arguing that children needed the proper environment to acquire and learn to develop morality and not be degenerate, which led to criminal behavior.<sup>119</sup> To this effect in 1929, as another reform during the Primo de Rivera régime, the government established the *Tribunal Tutelar de Menores* (Minor

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117. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 474. Cuello Calón argued that the child who violated the penal law was not a child different from other children, but rather just one of the differences of conduct that the child’s life will alert us to. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 73.

118. See Cuello Calón’s use of Lombroso’s “morbid inheritance” and juvenile delinquency. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 2.

119. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 489.

Guardianship Court), which ran the juvenile reformatories.<sup>120</sup> However, despite being part of the state administration these institutions were still dependent on religious orders for staff.

The children were collected in institutions that followed the model of one of the earliest, Santa Rita in Madrid. These institutions contained children whose behavior did not fit the norms: the child who could not be managed, whether at home or in school; the child who was criminal — either through inclination or bad company; or the child without a father. Children arrived at these asylums either through a legal/judicial process or because their parents/guardians deposited them, in effect abandoning them, at the gates. The asylum was seen as functioning as a social filter where the youths would be put to work at sex-appropriate tasks in order to “cleanse” them of bad inheritance, behavior, or company, “purifying” them through the combination of rewards and punishments, including, often as not, corporal punishment.<sup>121</sup>

Whether the child was on the street because of neglect (i.e., parents allowing children to run free), a lack of funds for school fees, or the need for child labor to assist in the family income, the child was a problem. Authorities believed that the lack of parental supervision or income enabled the child to be rebellious and prefer the freedom of the street to the supervision and work of the classroom. In the street children were exposed to bad company, learned

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120. Miguel, “Modelo sociológico para el análisis de la estructura e ideología de la puericultura–pediatría,” in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 143.

121. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 475.

foul language, and sucked into a life of crime, which began with petty crime. This exposure was an “initiation to the mysteries of vice and crime.”<sup>122</sup>

For authorities and reformers, the working-class family was at the root of the problem and a source of delinquency that led to degeneracy. The statistics on young offenders, and the self-serving observations of reformers, reflect the predominantly working-class background of those involved in criminal activity. Delinquents came from the lower classes, which were seen as more likely to commit crime because no one corrected their behavior, and the environment in which they lived — the “air they breathe” — was responsible for their moral and physical degeneracy.<sup>123</sup>

It was not until the Second Republic that some reformers would begin to see juvenile delinquency as a symptom of the limited opportunities available to working-class youth and a cause of their “criminality.”<sup>124</sup> Even then, the tendency was to see the root of delinquency as arising from within the family environment.

Eugenio Cuello Calón (1879–1963), a judge and legal authority, helped write Primo de Rivera’s revisions of the penal code in 1928. Cuello Calón’s 1934 study of juvenile delinquency, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, was a prime example of the melding of social prejudices, class biases, and current

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122. Concepción Arenal quoted in *Ibid.*, 478.

123. Julián Juderías y Loyot (1877–1918), quoted in *Ibid.*, 483. Juderías wrote the first study of the Black Legend.

124. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 155.

scientific thinking. The work openly acknowledged a tremendous debt to Italian criminologist Lombroso. Cuello Calón placed the responsibility on the working–class family and the low morality of the parents:

There are a very considerable number of children who are living with parents who are immoral, alcoholics, vagrants, beggars, criminals, mothers involved in prostitution, and parents or other relatives who died in the deepest moral degeneration. From my time as a judge, I still have vivid memories of countless cases of children living in a domestic hell, with parents always drunk; criminals, vagrants or prostitutes as mothers; households of continued discord, daily witnessing all sorts of fights and violence, hearing of continuous brutal expressions of obscenity; being victims of abuse and inhuman cruelty, with cases of female children victims of sexual assault made by their own parents or relatives; boys and girls objects of inductions to prostitution and crime.<sup>125</sup>

There is nothing particularly unique to Spain in this account; juvenile delinquency has long been associated with the poor and working–classes. Others analyzed the living conditions of the working–class, but in a tone that laid the blame on the working–class itself rather than on any other factors. In Barcelona, many of the critiques were of the city’s migrants from other regions of Spain, especially Murcia.<sup>126</sup> Cuello Calón discussed bands of delinquents primarily composed of children of “immigrant” families, “removed from their native villages and consequently without moral restraint.”<sup>127</sup> Migration, low moral standards and problems with street children were further associated

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125. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 26.

126. From this you get racial arguments for the persistence of anarchism among these migrants from the south. The failure of anarchist revolts in the south of Spain led to a “sudden relapse into ‘Moorish’ fatalism, apathy, and brute indifference.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 445.

127. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 35. This is not far from what Carr wrote in 1982: “Immigration into the lower reaches of the working classes from the violent and backward areas of the south, the contagions of a great port...” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 445. Notice that both Cuello Calón and Carr use immigration rather than migration making migrants to Barcelona from other regions of Spain foreigners.

with specific Barcelona neighborhoods: Hostafranchs, Barceloneta, La Torrassa, Poble Seco, and Barrio Chico.<sup>128</sup> It was not a coincidence that these same exact neighborhoods were strongholds of the CNT when the state legalized it in 1930.

Other studies from the United States and Europe further buttressed these Social Darwinist interpretations of criminality. Linking disease and criminality with evolutionary degeneration was not new, and Cuello Calón certainly documented his work with a wide range of sources in several languages to carry his arguments. Cuello Calón argued that diseases such as syphilis and tuberculosis were directly involved in the transmission of hereditary criminality, that endocrinology and glandular problems (showing the influence of Marañón) indirectly influenced criminal behavior, as did “excessive” cinema attendance (also bad for the child’s health). Cuello Calón stated that the family and social environment is “the principle source” of the delinquent’s behavior.<sup>129</sup>

In his listing of factors, the first cause was “incomplete homes,” which he explained as homes composed of orphans, abandoned children, and absent parents.<sup>130</sup> Second on his list was an “immoral home,” and poverty was only

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128. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 33–34; Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 485.

129. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 8, 18–19, 37 and 22.

130. *Ibid.*, 23.

third.<sup>131</sup> He listed several social factors as hereditary causes, such as prostitution and the diseases syphilis and tuberculosis. Cuello Calón's adaptation of Lombrosian arguments about inherent criminality and juvenile crime fitted in perfectly with the social panics of the bourgeoisie of inter-war Barcelona, who were engaged in a conflict with the predominantly unskilled working-class.

The first third of the century saw massive migration to the cities, especially the cities of Madrid and Barcelona. By moving to the city, the young emigrants escaped the village elite's tight social control (as in *Resurrección*), finding much more freedom and independence in the city. The resulting freedom became a major concern, a social panic, of the bourgeoisie.<sup>132</sup> Cuello Calón states that almost half of the children brought to the Tribunal were the children of migrants from either Murcia or Almería. One of his examples of a barrio rife with juvenile delinquency was the Hospitalet barrio of La Torrassa, which was "almost exclusively inhabited by people from the same region."<sup>133</sup> During the 1920s, La Torrassa and its adjacent barrio of Collblanc grew through immigration as some 20,000 people moved in, an increase of over 456 percent.<sup>134</sup> For Cuello Calón, these children were from the country and consequently ill equipped to handle a city "teeming with temptations."

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131. *Ibid.*, The immoral home begins on page 26, and poverty on page 28.

132. Souto Kustrín, "Juventud, teoría e historia," 174.

133. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 33–34.

134. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 24.

Furthermore, they lived with an absence of care or supervision when not completely abandoned.<sup>135</sup>

The number of appearances before the *Tribunales Tutelares* (juvenile courts) Cuello Calón provides is remarkable because they seem so small.<sup>136</sup> While Barcelona stands out in the percentage of the national totals, it is still relatively small.<sup>137</sup> Because the courts kept no detailed records, and the destruction of the Civil War, we cannot make too many assumptions of what types of crimes were committed and the seriousness of the offenses. The whole question of juvenile crime is a vexed one and society's standards vary. However, from his sample cases, many of these children were profoundly unlucky to end up in the system.<sup>138</sup> Kriegel argues that youth movements sought the liberation of the young so their adversary was the whole of society.<sup>139</sup> It would also appear that in the case of the Spanish working-class youth, society operated in a reversal of this, as Spanish society sought the incarceration and repression of all working-class youth.

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135. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 41–42. He calls for these children to have special supervision and to be taught how to live in the city.

136. See Table 6.6 at the end of the chapter.

137. The figures provided did not line up completely. The national figures began and ended a year earlier than the Barcelona ones and the Barcelona figures were broken into serious (*delito*) and misdemeanor (*falta*) offenses. I dropped the earliest year for the national figure and the latest year for Barcelona while combining the Barcelona figures into a single total from which I computed the percentage.

138. The age at which children go before these courts varies but the majority of the appearances would be children younger than eighteen. The age of legal adulthood during the Republic was 23 for both sexes. Demófilo de Buen Lozano, "La famille, la propriété, le travail," in Rafael Altamira y Crevea et al., *Espagne*, vol. 5 of *La vie juridique des peuples: Bibliothèque de droit contemporain* (Paris: Delagrave, 1934), 160, 168, 198.

139. Kriegel, "Generational Differences," 27.

Young workers, whose socialization occurred through play in the streets, routinely came into conflict with the police.<sup>140</sup> The police arrested children for transgressions that did not involve injury to a person or property, such as heckling a strikebreaker.<sup>141</sup> Just riding a train without a ticket would get a child sentenced to the Asilo Durán, the infamous Barcelona juvenile facility.<sup>142</sup> Officialdom and reformers ignored, or worse, were unaware of the sociological advantages of children playing on the street. In fact, they viewed much of this play as being aggressive and potentially criminal, certainly an introduction into the low life.<sup>143</sup> For Montseny this “insolence” was laudatory, the experience of playing on the streets was where they could learn, the type of play or experience that was fundamentally more practical. It provided a different yet more realistic sociability. The orphans of *Los hijos de la calle* were also street children. Montseny describes *Los hijos de la calle*’s Jaime as the prototypical Barcelona street child. For Urales the street was one of the principal places to learn, rather than school or work.<sup>144</sup> The street children

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140. Ealham, *Class, Culture, and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898–1937*, 33.

141. *Ibid.*, 97. In this case the children called a telephone worker “*María esquirolo*” (squirrel) — squirrel being the Spanish equivalent of scab.

142. One boy, age 15, was taken to the court and sent to the juvenile facility, escaping the next day. He was sentenced because he rode the train without a ticket — his first offense. Cuello Calón’s lack of comment in his book on the harshness of this punishment would appear to indicate that he saw it as normal and perfectly justified. Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 59.

143. Souto Kustrín, “Juventud, teoría e historia,” 175.

144. “[T]here is an element of more value than economics in the formation of our minds. An item that is not in the school or at the bank, which is on the street, in the newspaper, in the book, in customs, and in time ... So irrational and cheap to measure children as monthly income, it is the limiting to bourgeois servitude of intelligent and rebellious beings.” Federico



learned about their neighborhoods, the experiences of other families, and developed bonds of social networks that could prove to be the difference between survival and disaster. For the less well off, the camaraderie born of the street was a better family and provided a more practical education than the official institutions.<sup>145</sup> Though the intentions of the reformers may have been good, the majority of the objects of their inventions distrusted their actions.

The dual role, of protection and punishment, exemplifies one of the fundamental problems of the period's social reform movements. The patronizing view of the popular classes, along with the goal of strengthening the bourgeois patriarchal family structure, combined with the anarchists' traditional distrust of state endeavors, and the punitive nature of its reforms, strengthened the popular connotation of state intervention and incarceration.<sup>146</sup> The lack of positive perception of these reforms, especially the increases in mandatory schooling, made the objects of these reforms, the children and their parents, very wary. Parents were wary for several reasons. The intervention of the state in personal and family life had never been a positive experience for most Spaniards, since it was generally associated with

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Urales, "Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 11.

145. Birderues-Guereña, "Niños y niñas en familia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 27.

146. The quality of the schools was also of concern to the Socialists and they developed an extensive network of adult education centers and cultural centers at a local Casa del Pueblo, similar to the French and Belgian Maison de le Peuple. Because of the Socialists' assumption that they would eventually take over the state, they were less concerned with the expansion of mandatory education, and would play an important role in educational reforms enacted during the Republic.

military service or tax collection. Secondly, removing children from the control of the household by increasing schooling seriously affected the household economy. Also, there were few, if any, positive portrayals of the public school teacher, a beneficial figure in many other societies. In Spain, school time was commonly associated with jail time and this popular belief was reflected in the memoirs and novels of the period.<sup>147</sup> Pestaña retained no fond memories of teachers. He spent too little time in schools due to wandering with his illiterate father, both looking for work.<sup>148</sup>

In focusing on the working-class, experts and officials were in part responding to several factors, chiefly class prejudices. The reformers agreed that working-class children, especially boys, were in need of alternatives to their home. Urban adolescent boys were especially at risk because they were less likely to have domestic duties (no sheep or cows to watch) and consequently were freer to play unsupervised, while mothers expected their daughters to help. As the children's protection movement grew, so did the pathologisation of the working-class family. It was impossible to separate the child from the family as the former was seen as the fruit of the latter. Paternalistic and moralistic to the core, these organizations and institutions became interconnected, often sharing the same personnel, and experienced the same transformation of educational, welfare, and criminal functions into a

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147. Guereña, "Infancia y escolarización," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834-1936*, 400. Montseny's teachers are popular figures but they work for ateneos and other popular institutions, rather than the state or the Church.

148. Ángel Pestaña Nuñez, *Lo que aprendí en la vida*, 1933, v. 2 (Algorto: Zero, 1971), 3-6.

weapon for the “rehabilitation” of the working–class. An integral part of this rehabilitation was the imposition of a narrower concept of the family unit upon the urban working–classes.<sup>149</sup> A substantial part of the problem was the structure of urban life for youth, the lack of services, and the inclination of the police to suspect them of criminal activity because of police assumptions about class and age.<sup>150</sup>

Behind the efforts to effect juvenile submission was more than the traditional desire of authorities for control. Adding to the social panic about uncontrolled youth were the studies of social scientists and other professionals, who argued that the child was very close to irrationality of crowds and of savages.<sup>151</sup> Social Darwinists did not use savage in the positive sense of Rousseau and the anarchists, describing a being who was closer to nature.<sup>152</sup> Rather, it meant the brute, a person who had not yet evolved or was under the threat of regression/degeneration into the savage state, an archaic

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149. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 479.

150. According to Ealham, the belief that the police were impossibly corrupt was not limited to the anarchists. “*La policía española*, the professional journal of the Spanish police, observed that the main activity of the Barcelona constabulary was the ‘framing’ of innocent citizens, and that the eradication of crime could only be achieved after the incarceration of the city’s policemen!” Ealham, “An Imagined Geography,” 380–381.

151. Interestingly, the crowd was also gendered feminine, presumably because of the combination of sociability and irrationality. Miguel de Unamuno in his *Vida de don Quijote y Sancho* repeated what Cervantes had written: “Crowds are feminine.”

152. Montseny describes her childhood in Madrid as a “little savage” and that her parents called her their Indian. Federica Montseny, “Naturismo y naturalismo I,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 96 (15 May 1927), 740–744.

irrationality.<sup>153</sup> The working-class family was at fault and, in a classic example of blaming the victims, the working-class family became responsible for the problems it faced. Rather than seek to solve the root problem, which was poverty, reformers focused their attention on the errors of the working-class family. Reformers argued the central faults of the working-class family were a lack of care and supervision, poor eating habits, and living conditions.<sup>154</sup>

Children were also at the heart of another anarchist conflict with the state. The state had to record all children and the marital status of their parents upon birth — it was a crime not to do so. For anarchists, this was problematic because the Army used the register for call-ups to military service. In addition, illegitimate children had fewer rights, and if the anarchists' children were the product of free love unions, then the register recorded these children as illegitimate.<sup>155</sup> To not register children was an attempt by libertarians to avoid any entanglements with the state.<sup>156</sup> For the anarchist, the child was the living future, and consequently a number of resources from an anarchist perspective were available to libertarian parents. Beyond the emotional and melodramatic manipulations of appeals made in the

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153. Trinidad Fernández, “La infancia delincuente y abandonada,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 489.

154. Rodríguez Ocaña, “Una medicina para la infancia,” in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 149.

155. Legitimacy was a concern of one inquiry. If a twenty year old not in the civil registry has children, are they legitimate? “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 12, no. 308 (14 December 1934), 1012.

156. See extended discussion with many local informants of the practices in Casas Viejas in Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*, 91–99.

name of children and mothers, anarchists sincerely believed in the importance of the child.

During the Second Republic, *La Revista Blanca* was encouraging its readers to register for several reasons. In its regular section “Consultorio General” which was a service that answered readers’ questions, there were questions about registering children. A V. Saiz wrote in the late spring of 1934 and asked what was the punishment for failure to register. The response acknowledged that while the state had to catch one in order to punish an individual for evading this law, the consequences for the child were so great as to outweigh anything else, and so parents should register their children.<sup>157</sup> Under the Republic, there was no longer any legal discrimination over the circumstances of a child’s birth and the parent’s marital status.

Decidedly not neo-Malthusians, Urales, Gustavo, and Montseny encouraged population growth and did not believe it was a threat. They believed large anarchist families enriched anarchism and Urales and Gustavo had several children, but Federica was the only one who survived to adulthood. Ricardo Mella and his partner Esperanza Serrano Rivera had eleven children,

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157. “We would not advise any parent to stop enrolling their children, because even though the authorities do not find out, it puts the child out of every social relationship. He may not file petitions, cannot marry, cannot test, cannot inherit, may not lease, or hire, or continue any course. In the final analysis, you put the child in a difficult situation for which it will not be thankful when as an adult the child faces more difficulties.” “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 12, no. 278 (18 May 1934), 429.

most of whom lived long lives.<sup>158</sup> However, others encouraged limiting population growth, especially doctors in the anarchist movement, such as Luis Bulffi de Quintana. Other anarchists criticized him for his neo-Malthusian activities in favor of birth control and for publishing the tract *Huelga de vientres* [*Strike of the Wombs*].<sup>159</sup>

At the 1936 Zaragoza Congress, the CNT addressed the issue of abandoned and illegitimate children in a report co-authored by Federico Urales. In a simplistic analysis, the authors asserted that the problem after the would not exist after the revolution. The reasoning was that in a libertarian communist society the abandonment of children simply would not be a problem because in such a society a father and/or a mother would love their children. In a libertarian society, parents could let their children be free, just as animals do, because they would know that their child would not lack for anything and that the society would protect them. The children would be at their parents' side when they were needed — when either a parent or a child, needed support.<sup>160</sup> For Montseny this proposal was not much different from

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158. While Mella is well documented, I could not find information on Esperanza Serrano Rivera aside from her name and the number of children she had with Mella.

159. Federica Montseny, "A manera de prólogo," in Federico Urales, *Sembrando Flores* (Paris: Fomento de la Cultura Libertaria, 1974). It is not clear if Bulffi de Quintana translated this tract or wrote his own using the term associated with the French movement. He also translated an earlier Spanish edition of René Chaughi's *La mujer esclavo*. Another neo-Malthusian was Isaac Puente. I examine his dispute with Montseny in my chapter 9.

160. Eusebio C. Carbó, Federico Urales, and Juan Puig, "Dictamen que el sindicato de Profesiones Liberales presenta al tema 'Concepto Confederal del Comunismo Libertario' que se discutirá en el Congreso de la C.N.T., que ha de celebrarse en Zaragoza el Primero de Mayo de 1936," *La Revista Blanca* 14, no. 381 (8 May 1936), 374.

the type of relationships she had described fictionally whether in *Las santas*, *Martirio*, or *El hijo de Clara*.

Montseny presented positive portrayals of the working–class, especially women and children. She repeatedly used orphans as positive characters in her novels. Through these fictional works and her journalism, she engaged in the debates over childhood and the family. Montseny agreed with Lieber that a person properly raised with rational child rearing would question “the contradictions inherent in the social order.”<sup>161</sup> A parental responsibility towards humanity included the provision of an appropriate education because the child was part of humanity and this education would empower the child when they became an adult.<sup>162</sup> In Montseny’s novels, well treated children are happy, and if mistreated, they escape in order to find happiness. From infants to adults, all thrived more in a libertarian household, which was the message of Urales’ *Sembrando flores* as well. Montseny wanted a child’s natural inquisitive spirit to be encouraged, for it would lead to an analysis of life, and to strength, courage and joy. The optimism and pride that resulted would enable them to face life and live it fully, giving one the strength to love and continue despite defeats.<sup>163</sup>

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161. Mickenberg, “The Pedagogy of the Popular Front,” in Levander and Singley, *The American Child*, 230.

162. *Ibid.*, 234.

163. Federica Montseny, “El espíritu gregario y el individuo,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 31 (1 September 1924), 11.

Reformers laid the problems of the lack of care and poor eating habits of children at the feet of mothers, charging them with neglect. Motherhood was central to many of the admonitions of reformers and the Church, whether to remake the working-class family, a healthier childhood, or a more stable nation — even the 1931 Constitution recognized the importance of motherhood. It was about motherhood that Montseny made some of her most original contributions to anarchism.



Table 6. 1. The Birth Rate in Spain

YEAR	Estimated Population Mid-Year	Number of Women Aged 15-45 Years Estimated to Mid-Year	Number of Births	Number of Deaths	Crude Birth Rate	Birth Rate per 1000 Females 15-45	Crude Birth Rate	Birth Rate per 1000 Females 15-45	Vital Index
1912	20,160,766	4,657,978	654,553	426,297	32.47	140.52	100	100	100
1913	20,301,795	4,686,890	634,399	449,349	31.25	135.36	96.24	96.33	92
1914	20,443,810	4,715,982	624,999	450,340	30.57	132.53	94.15	94.31	90.4
1915	20,586,819	4,745,254	631,462	452,479	30.67	133.07	94.46	94.7	90.9
1916	20,730,828	4,774,708	615,575	441,673	29.69	128.92	91.44	91.74	90.8
1917	20,875,844	4,804,345	618,704	465,722	29.64	128.78	91.28	91.65	86.5
1918	21,021,875	4,834,166	630,023	695,758	29.97	130.33	92.3	92.75	59
1919	21,168,927	4,864,172	601,640	482,752	28.38	123.49	87.4	87.88	81.2
1920	21,389,842	5,091,492	640,117	494,540	29.88	125.51	92.02	89.32	84.2
1921	21,502,768	5,143,364	666,597	455,469	31.01	129.66	95.5	92.27	95.2
1922	21,658,222	5,195,765	673,644	441,330	31.14	129.8	95.9	92.37	99.5
1923	21,763,147	5,248,699	681,250	449,683	31.3	129.79	96.4	92.36	98.7
1924	21,966,641	5,302,173	672,480	430,590	30.61	126.83	94.27	90.26	102
1925	22,127,699	5,366,192	664,027	432,400	30	123.95	92.39	88.21	100
1926	22,290,162	5,410,761	681,048	420,621	30.63	126.17	94.33	89.79	106
1927	22,444,156	5,465,886	654,680	395,893	29.17	119.78	89.84	85.24	108

Source: Jacob Sanders, *Comparative Birth-Rate Movements Among European Nations: A Comparison of Both the Crude Birth-Rate, the Birth-Rate Per 1000 Females 15 to 45 Years of Age, and the "Vital Index" (or 100 Births/deaths Ratio) of the Nordic Peoples and the Non-Nordic Peoples of Europe*, Monograph Series 1 (Cold Spring Harbor: Eugenics Research Association, 1929), 49.

Table 6: 2 Stillbirths in Europe

Number of stillbirths (or children declared as born dead) per 1000 births								
Year	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Switzerland	Netherlands	France	Italy	Spain
1891–1895	25	27	26	36	46	47	39	
1896–1900	24	24	26	35	43	46	41	
1901–1905	24	24	25	35	41	45	43	25
1906–1910	23	23	25	33	40	45	43	24
1911–1915	23	22	24	30	36	46	42	26
1916–1920	24	22	23	29	37	46	43	26
1921–1925	23	21	24	28	35	45	42	25

Source: Sanders, *Comparative Birth-Rate Movements Among European Nations*, 3.

Table 6: 3 The Madrid Inclusa. Percentages derived by the author from figures.

"REAL INCLUSA"1903-1922									
Year	Entering Children	Deaths	To Parents	Adopted	Sent to School	% returned to Parents	% to School	% Died	Totals
1906	1,351	990	319	8	111	24%	8%	73%	105%
1907	1,233	786	301	4	72	24%	6%	64%	94%
1908	1,232	788	356	1	92	29%	7%	64%	100%
1909	1,320	827	356	1	116	27%	9%	63%	98%
1910	1,320	761	373		126	28%	10%	58%	95%
1911	1,256	647	393	2	81	31%	6%	52%	89%
1912	1,340	859	411		83	31%	6%	64%	101%
1913	1,395	842	442		78	32%	6%	60%	98%
1914	1,455	797	461		113	32%	8%	55%	94%
1915	1,586	968	495		116	31%	7%	61%	100%
1916	1,632	1,042	554		60	34%	4%	64%	101%
1917	1,172	1,094	199	4	30	17%	3%	93%	113%
1918	1,245	937	159	4	55	13%	4%	75%	92%
1919	1,123	719	181	5	33	16%	3%	64%	83%
1920	1,138	933	194	1	44	17%	4%	82%	103%
1921	1,021	787	189	10	9	19%	1%	77%	96%
1922	1,013	606	170	6	89	17%	9%	60%	85%

Source: Pedro Espina Pérez, *Historia de la Inclusa de Madrid vista a través de los artículos y trabajos históricos [recopilación de textos y notas] años 1400-2000*, (Madrid: Defensor del Menor en la Comunidad de Madrid, 2005), 344.

Years	Births	Deaths	Less than a year
1891–1900	34.8	30	152
1901–1910	34.5	24.4	161
1911–1920	29.8	23.5	148
1921–1930	29.2	19	128

Pilar Folguera Crespo, “Relaciones privadas y cambio social 1940–1970,” in Folguera Crespo, *Otras visiones de España*, 191.

Year	%
1900	20
1910	15
1920	16
1930	12

Miguel, “Modelo ideológico para el análisis de la estructura e ideología de la puericulture–pediatría,” in Aranguren, *Infancia y sociedad en España*, 136.

Year	Spain	Barcelona	Barcelona's %
1928	4053	542	13%
1929	4434	614	14%
1930	4412	632	14%
1931	2899	521	18%

Eugenio Cuello Calón, *Criminalidad infantil y juvenil*, 80 for national figures, 81 for Barcelona.

## CHAPTER 7: FEMINISM? NEVER! HUMANISM ALWAYS

She has to appear alongside him on the same level, with the same independence, with the same recognition of their mutual identical capacity, not the loving and submissive female, not the adored and dominating man. Instead, they are comrades facing life, with equal rights, identical duties, and parallel liberties. Absolutely not asking for nor being submissive. Balance, beauty, liberty, and happiness always must be present, and as it does not exist in the present society, they should be seeking it continuously, firmly planted in their own souls, with each preserving their own individuality, in this lofty and universal aspiration.<sup>1</sup>

Federica Montseny's writings on women are part of the post-war European debate over the changes in gender roles in society, debates and changes that occurred in Spain as well. Historian Nerea Aresti describes this debate as an effort to control the process of change as medical professionals, activists, educators, and others offered various definitions of feminism rather than directly oppose improvements in the status of women.<sup>2</sup> Montseny took a position that, while not always consistent, argued for the equality of men and women centered in sexual difference. Crucial to Montseny's conception of difference was her maternalism. This was her shared conviction that motherhood was the pinnacle of a woman's life. Her views on difference and maternity were similar to those of her contemporaries — scientists, women's organizations, as well as anarchists. Montseny shared with many of them the paradoxical situation of invoking women as a different category while arguing for the equality of the sexes. However, one aspect of her maternalism was strikingly different. Her particular emphasis on the mother was unique. It

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1. Montseny, *La victoria*, 30.

2. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 100.

was unique because she rejected the need for a father. Other than the basic act of procreation, she viewed fathers as superfluous to the relationship between the mother and the child.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, unlike these groups, Montseny rejected the family as the basic unit of society in favor of the individual.<sup>4</sup>

The first step towards individual empowerment, dignity, and will was a strong sense of self-worth. “Without the firm conviction of one’s own individual capacity, it will always be impossible to establish freedom,” Montseny wrote in 1924.<sup>5</sup> She added that the person who needed another person was not complete or fulfilled. Montseny’s individualist anarchism enabled her to advance new models of interpersonal relations by grounding these in traditional anarchist arguments. Meanwhile, she vigorously attacked feminism in the pages of *La Revista Blanca*.

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3. Like her fellow anarchists, she rejected the view that the family was the basis of social relations but did view it as the nucleus of the state (*pace* Engels, see below). However, she rejected the communal raising of children. Rather than breaking up the family, she excluded the father. Anselmo Lorenzo had earlier proposed a similar argument about the end of the family but not the rejection of the father, though he later retracted it all. Mary Nash, “Estudio preliminar,” in *Mujer, Familia y Trabajo en España, 1875–1936*, ed. Mary Nash (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1983), 21; and Anselmo Lorenzo, *Evolución proletaria* (Barcelona: Publicaciones de la Escuela moderna, n.d.) in Nash, *Mujer, Familia y Trabajo en España, 1875–1936*, 111–114.

4. She read and accepted Friedrich Engel’s argument on the family as the origin of the state. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: In the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*, 1884, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 63. The fourth edition was also the first edition translated into Spanish in 1884. “Nota de los editores” in Federico Engels, *El origen de la familia, la propiedad privada y el estado* (Madrid: Fundación Federico Engels, 2006), 9.

5. Federica Montseny, “El espíritu gregario y el individuo,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 31 (1 September 1924), 11.

Montseny distrusted Spanish women's organizations.<sup>6</sup> She viewed them as selfish and bourgeois; moreover, if associated with the Catholic Church, as agents of clerical influence.<sup>7</sup> As an anarchist, she did not believe in the importance of suffrage, and it was not a right that she thought of benefit to working-class women.<sup>8</sup> These beliefs colored her view of the quasi-secular *Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas* (National Association of Spanish Women, ANME). Their demands centered on the right to vote and greater educational and employment opportunities for women.<sup>9</sup> Montseny argued the granting of these demands would only be for the benefit of their own class. After the First World War, women active in Catholic organizations began to articulate a new vision of women working outside the home.<sup>10</sup> *Acción Católica de la Mujer* (Women's Catholic Action, ACM) formed in 1919 as a branch of

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6. She could be positive about individual feminists such as Margarita Nelken and Irene Falcón (1907–1999), especially activities outside of politics. See Federica Montseny, “La falta de idealidad en el feminismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 3–4, and Federica Montseny, “Una obra feminista de cultura,” *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 172 (15 July 1930), 80–83. She sought to promote work by women, starting the section “*Libros de mujeres*” (Books by Women) in *La Revista Blanca* in 1927, which she launched with a review of four works by French authors. The goal was to provide news about literary work by women, not to separate it from the work of humanity in general but to give a “merited and discrete notice” of the literary work of the sex that has been marginalized. Federica Montseny, “Libros de mujeres,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 99 (1 July 1927), 82–83.

7. Montseny did have a few positive comments about Catholic feminist Celsa Regis, the pseudonym of Consuelo González Ramos. Federica Montseny, “Dos mujeres, dos frases y dos libros,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 59 (1 November 1925), 11–12. González Ramos published a woman's review, *La voz de la mujer*, was an officer of the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas and one of the first female city councilors in Madrid.

8. Carr sums up a general attitude towards voting in Restoration Spain, “‘insincere’ elections and the indifference of a managed electorate.” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 477.

9. Bussy Genevois, “The Women of Spain from the Republic to Franco,” in Thébaud, *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, 179. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 5. Nash, “The Rise of the Women's Movement in Nineteenth-Century Spain,” in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, 245.

10. Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, “Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain,” *Gender & History* 19, no. 3 (2007), 441.

the male Acción Católica. An anti-clerical, Montseny inherently opposed Church influence anywhere and everywhere.

For Montseny, it was the individual, acting either alone (but not isolated) or in like-minded organizations, who advanced society. Society was artificially restricting and impeding progress by excluding women. If women were fully included, then the evolutionary progress of both sexes, and hence society, would be more profound and rapid. Montseny showed the strong influence of the debates over evolution and women. She drew on the evolutionary arguments of Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* to argue for the importance of women in effecting change.<sup>11</sup> Montseny presented the rapid changes occurring in Turkey as proof both of the important role women played in advancing societal progress and its evolutionary impact.

Montseny advocated individual freedom and agency by creating fictional women as exemplars. These exemplars embodied an anarchist message of self-determination. The characteristics of being self-aware, secular, educated, and tolerant of others' individuality were the markers of a modern woman in Montseny's work.<sup>12</sup> Her respect for an individual was itself limited by Montseny's lack of understanding for women who did not choose motherhood, such as the English labor leader and politician Margaret

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11. Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (London: William Heinemann, 1902). The Spanish edition was *El apoyo mutuo*. Barcelona: B. Bauza, 1906 and several editions afterwards.

12. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 25. For Montseny these were also the markers of a modern man, she thought there were even fewer of these.



Bondfield (1873–1953), and *la garçonne*, or the “new woman.”<sup>13</sup> Her perspective on what constituted the new woman was a repudiation of the modernity of the figure as it was popularly perceived and the presentation of her own definition of a *mujer nueva* (“new woman”).

### SPANISH WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS

Because the historiography initially focused on a definition of feminist that defined it in terms of the campaign for women’s suffrage, tracking the history of specific organizations is difficult. Historian Mary Nash correctly argues for the recognition of diverse feminisms with heterogeneous expressions formed by specific historical processes.<sup>14</sup> An example of the importance of specific processes, she points out that not all Spanish feminists argued for political rights because of the existing political situation.<sup>15</sup> “Education, work, dignity, and not the ballot were defined as primary feminist goals on both the Right and Left of the women’s movement.”<sup>16</sup> While some did campaign for the vote, they also focused attention on questions of education,

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13. Often referred to as the flapper and “new woman” in the United States, *girlkultur* in Germany, *donna nuova* in Italy, and *dona moderna* in Catalonia. See Mary Nash, “La dona moderna del segle XX: la ‘Nova Dona’ a Catalunya.” *L’Avenç*, no. 112 (1993), 7–10.

14. Mary Nash, “Diverse Identities – Constructing European Feminisms,” in *Women’s Politics and Women in Politics: In Honour of Ida Blom*, eds. Sølvi Sogner and Gro Hagemann (Oslo: Universitetet i Bergen: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2000), 269. See also Cabrera Bosch, “Las mujeres que lucharon solas,” in Folguera Crespo, *El feminismo en España*, 29–50.

15. Nash’s work repeatedly makes this point. See especially Mary Nash, “Experiencia y aprendizaje: La formación histórica de los feminismos en España,” *Historia Social*, no. 20 (1994), 151–172.

16. Nash, “‘Ideals of Redemption,’” in Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, 363–364.

employment, and protecting mothers and the family.<sup>17</sup> Feminists could have regionalist aspirations, such as the Catalans. In the case of many Catalan feminists, they first formulated a national identity to ask for rights as Catalans and then as Catalan women.<sup>18</sup> Catholic feminists saw themselves as Catholics first and women second. All these organizations used a maternalist discourse to argue for an expansion of women's presence in the public sphere.

Throughout this period, the Socialists in the PSOE and the UGT were ambivalent about women's issues in general, not to mention feminism.<sup>19</sup> Emblematic of this is the fact that the translation of one of the seminal works on women and socialism, August Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879), was translated into Spanish and published in 1893 by the Catholic and conservative bourgeois feminist Emilia Pardo Bazán.<sup>20</sup> The PSOE easily adhered to the Second International's 1907 Stuttgart Congress admonitions against collaboration with bourgeois feminist organizations. This was because of the relative political conservatism of Spanish women's organizations.

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17. Nash, "The Rise of the Women's Movement in Nineteenth-Century Spain," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, 251.

18. Mary Nash, "Political Culture, Catalan Nationalism, and the Women's Movement in Early Twentieth-Century Spain," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, nos. 1–2 (1996), 46. Again, this did not necessarily include the vote.

19. Montseny reviewed *Feminismo socialista*, a 1925 book by Valencian socialist María Cambrils. Federica Montseny, "Dos mujeres, dos frases y dos libros," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 59 (1 November 1925), 11–13. Margarita Nelken, who would be the leading feminist in the PSOE during the Second Republic, only joined the party in 1931.

20. August Bebel, *La mujer ante el socialismo*, Emilia Pardo Bazán, foreword and translation (Madrid: Imp. de la Comp. de Impr. y Libr., [1893]). Part of the series Biblioteca de la mujer edited by Pardo Bazán, she remarks in her forward that she prefers Mills to Bebel. She abridged the work, removing some "crudities" and a great deal of statistical data. "Advertencia preliminar," in *Ibid.*, 8–9. My thanks to Nuria Franco of the Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero for giving me access to the original Spanish edition of this work.

Moreover, neither the PSOE nor the feminists sought such an alliance. The left in general suffered from a masculinist view of the importance of industrial labor on the road to socialism. It viewed feminism with disdain and as a distraction on the route towards proletarian empowerment.<sup>21</sup> Radicals assumed that, after this empowerment, the need for feminism would disappear.<sup>22</sup>

For the PSOE, like most European socialist and communist parties, women's issues were marginal to the class struggle.<sup>23</sup> The PSOE saw itself as representing the working class, which was viewed as male, despite some inroads by women. The PSOE was one of the weakest of the European parties on gender issues, in a very weak field.<sup>24</sup> The focus of the PSOE, beyond the immediate political needs of the party, was on its male youth and their training as cadres through the Socialist Youth.<sup>25</sup> The unions were certainly worse, due to the iconic figure of the proletarian and male industrial worker, but also to

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21. This disdain for female labor was across class. At the International Labor Conference in 1890, Spain was the only country that did not vote in favor of women's protective labor legislation. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 89.

22. Cabrera Bosch, "Las mujeres que lucharon solas," in Folguera Crespo, *El feminismo en España*, 37. Until the Civil War, the Communist Party was numerically insignificant.

23. Wood argues that this neglect comes from the emphasis on class relations and Marxist relative neglect of the woman question built into Marxist theory by its emphasis on class and an economic determinism. Nevertheless, I think it is a more profound and problematic consequence of the historical circumstances of the initial Marxist theorists, with the possible exception of Engels, and their search for scientific certainty. Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 27–28.

24. This was a universal issue for the Socialist parties of Europe as almost every entry in the anthology by Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, attests.

25. For example in 1915 the PSOE only had three or four female groups, compared to 230 men's groups and 120 sections of the socialist youth. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 234–235.

the small number of women working in industry.<sup>26</sup> By 1930 women were still only 12.65 percent of the employed population and not a significant target for unionization, especially as many of them worked in small shops and other places that were hard to organize.<sup>27</sup> UGT agricultural organizing was effectively non-existent, leaving this area to Catholic unions and cooperatives.

### **FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS**

The growth in employment spurred by the demands of the First World War led to new employment opportunities for women. It was accompanied by a severe inflation in the prices of dietary staples, an increase in Barcelona of between twenty-three and twenty-nine percent from 1911 to 1917. At the same time, wages had not increased significantly.<sup>28</sup> Fuel shortages in the exceptionally cold winter of 1917–1918 forced the temporary closure and subsequent unemployment of more than 10,000 workers in the city. Because of this subsistence crisis, a series of protests by women began in Barcelona in January 1918.

The demonstrations began on Wednesday January 9, and continued through February. Actions varied, and included seizing coal and selling it on

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26. The UGT's trade union for the peasantry, the Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra (FNTT, National Federation of Workers on the Land), which would become the largest member of the UGT, was only founded in 1930 and its significant growth came during the Second Republic. See Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain*.

27. Mary Nash, "Pronatalism and Motherhood in Franco's Spain," in *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880–1950s*, eds. Pat Thane and Gisela Bock (London: Routledge, 1991), 167. She points out that this figure probably drastically undercounted the number of women employed in agriculture.

28. Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 118–119. The following information is drawn from pages 118–124 of this work. See also her earlier article "Female Consciousness and Collective Action."

the street for a “fair” price, marching against stores and calls for women working in shops and in music halls to join the protests. The latter occurred very quickly, on only the second day of protests. That Friday night, January 11, women went to the area of music halls on the Paral·lel. There demonstrators demanded that the women working in the halls, popularly associated with prostitution, join the protest. They repeatedly confronted and made demands on officials, which led to violent repression. On January 15, the majority of women workers, accompanied by 1700 men, began a strike. The central government in Madrid recalled the civil governor and on January 25<sup>th</sup> it declared martial law. Two days later, the government stationed an additional 25,000 soldiers in the city to protect the neighborhood markets from women.

These demonstrations are an example of working—class women defining their social roles differently than that of men of the same class. Noticeably absent in the women’s protest were specific political demands, such as female suffrage. The demands were focused items that would benefit the entire community, regardless of class. As Kaplan argues, even as they defined their roles differently, they transgressed these selfsame boundaries. When they defended their separate role as guardians of the home, they transgressed the division of public and private. Women confronted men in the public spaces of markets and government offices. Kaplan refers to this series of events as an example of women’s collective “female consciousness” which placed human needs above all other requirements. Male trade union leaders

criticized this type of female protest as chaotic and apolitical. Helen Graham agrees with Kaplan that this type of protest had its own logic:

women were taking action to alleviate rapidly problems and needs which directly affected the quality of life in their families and communities — the space to which the sexual division of labour consigned them. Female direct action was conditioned, then, by their exclusion from other forms of political protest which rested on permanent structures — i.e., unions. Moreover, ... these structures also failed to address the specific needs of female proletarians and working-class mothers...<sup>29</sup>

Female consciousness developed in Barcelona over a period of time. It included contesting public spaces, such as the system of neighborhood markets in Barcelona, and the streets. The city administered the markets and the majority of users were women purchasing goods for their households, an urban “estuary” between public and private. Even more striking were the demands by protesters that the women working along the Paral·lel, the quintessential “public woman,” join their protest.<sup>30</sup>

Montserrat was just twelve when these demonstrations occurred. She certainly would have been aware of them and the assertion of a *radical* female consciousness would become a crucial part of her ideology, one she referred to as humanism. She would write later that it was from such women, in “the fields, factories, and workshops of proletarian women ... that the liberty of

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29. Graham, “Women and Social Change,” in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 101.

30. Montseny featured women working in the clubs along the Paral·lel as positive central characters in two entries in *La Novela Ideal: María de Magdala* in 1927 and *Nuestra señora del Paralelo* in 1928.

women would bloom if the seeds were sown.”<sup>31</sup> As was common on the left, Montseny viewed feminism as an entirely bourgeois movement, which had nothing to offer the woman worker.<sup>32</sup> Instead, feminism wanted to share power with bourgeois men rather than eliminate power and free everyone. For Montseny, power was wrong from the start and to demand a share of it was worse than fighting it completely. To request participation in the status quo as the feminists did was to perpetuate the oppression of women and men. For Montseny this was class oppression, a human oppression, rather than one limited by sex. The solution was not the sharing of women in society’s power, but rather a new society. With very few exceptions, she always positioned the working–class opposite to political feminism, which she denounced as selfish, bourgeois, and lacking in a spirit of idealism.<sup>33</sup>

Montseny was rarely clear or specific about which feminist organizations or movements she was describing in her writing. She positively associated feminism with women’s achievements and movements in the arts, sciences, and literature, almost everywhere but in politics. She viewed these

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31. Federica Montseny, “La falta de idealidad en el feminismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 3. This is typical of Montseny’s romantic style where flowers are often metaphors for women, such as the passage above or the title of the novella *FloreCIMIENTO*. In *El hijo de Clara* flowers are a repeated symbol of a character’s relationship to nature. The “fields, factories, and workshops” also pulled in Kropotkin, who in 1899 published the work *Fields, Factories and Workshops: Or Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1899), a key text on the application of his conception of mutual aid on human society.

32. A summary of the left’s problematic relationship is in Marilyn J. Boxer, “Rethinking the Socialist Construction and International Career of the Concept ‘Bourgeois Feminism’,” *American Historical Review* 112, no. 1 (2007), 131–158.

33. The one exception would appear to be the Turkish feminists with whom Montseny was so pleased. However, the Turkish state suppressed their political party. I discuss this in more detail below.

movements favorably because these were paths that men had tried to keep closed to women. The successes of women in these fields were worthy of note.<sup>34</sup> She complicates the very definition of feminism by her own usage. She usually saw feminism as a negative movement when it was concerned with any aspect of the state, whether suffrage or social services.<sup>35</sup>

In the period of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, when Montseny did begin to write, there were two principal women's organizations: the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas and Acción Católica de la Mujer. They appealed to a female consciousness, one that saw the need of women to enter in the public space for social action. Both were Catholic, though the first was fiercely independent while the second was an official organization of the Church. These two organizations exemplified Spanish feminism for Federica Montseny during the 1920s. They also embodied its problems and limitations.

#### **BOURGEOIS FEMINISM: THE ANME**

The ANME formed in 1918.<sup>36</sup> Its demands centered on the right to vote, the abolition of legal prostitution, and greater educational and employment

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34. Federica Montseny, "Las conquistas sociales de la mujer," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 55 (1 September 1925), 15.

35. Montseny completely secularized social services while she was Minister of Health and Social Services by expanding them and placing them under the control of her ministry.

36. Bussy Genevois, "The Women of Spain from the Republic to Franco," in Thébaud, *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, 179. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974)*, 5. Nash, "The Rise of the Women's Movement in Nineteenth-Century Spain," in Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, 245. In 1934, ANME formed an independent women's political party. It 1936 it almost affiliated with the Popular Front, but abandoned this idea for fear of diluting support. The ANME ceased to function that same year.



opportunities for women.<sup>37</sup> A year later, it was one of the founding members of the Consejo Feminista de España, a coalition of Spanish feminist groups, and the Juventud Universitaria Femenina, an organization of university women. The ANME and the Consejo shared the same first president, María Espinosa de los Monteros y Díaz de Santiago (1875–1946), who was the head of the Spanish branch of Yost, an American typewriter company.<sup>38</sup> For an organization with such noted membership, many of whom were to occupy important positions in the Republican government, it has left only specters of information.<sup>39</sup>

It was the most important of the Spanish feminist organizations during the inter-war period.<sup>40</sup> The first issue of its journal, *El Mundo Femenino* [*The Female World*], stated the organization looked towards the conservative politicians Antonio Maura, Juan de la Cierva y Peñafiel (1864–1938), and Eduardo Dato Iradier (1856–1921) for guidance.<sup>41</sup> While ANME's leaders avoided a direct relationship with the Church, they were generally devoutly Roman Catholic. The ANME demanded that women's issues gain priority over religious ones. This could impede collaboration with other organizations,

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37. The ANME also called for state subsidies for publications by women.

38. Women were just beginning to work in offices. The founding meeting of the ANME was actually in her home.

39. Some of its more illustrious members were Clara Campoamor (1888–1972), the first female lawyer in Spain and campaigner for female suffrage; María de Maeztu, leading female educator and founder of the Residencia de Señoritas, the lawyer Victoria Kent, and journalist and future Republican diplomat Isabel Oyarzábal Smith de Palencia. All four of these women died in exile.

40. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 212.

41. *Ibid.*, 204.

which did not have the same clear feminist focus.<sup>42</sup> ANME wanted to retain its autonomy, unlike other women's organizations that accepted clerical or political guidance from men.<sup>43</sup> The ANME assumed that such guidance would lead to eventual male control.

The ANME was an avowedly feminist organization in that it articulated a series of demands to benefit women, its membership and officers were exclusively female, and it presented itself as a voice for female improvement using the language of maternalism. The ANME was attacked as radical despite its moderate demands, its appeal for guidance from conservative (male) politicians, a middle to upper-class membership, and mainstream leadership.<sup>44</sup> The ANME argued that women offered a special and unique quality to the society and the public sphere. The ANME was an advocacy organization, not one that directly provided services. Since it did not offer directly programs of education or services, it did not attract a working-class membership. Consequently, only middle and upper-class women had the time and energy to expend on this. Its actions and policies reflected the interests of its class rather than its sex.

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42. *Ibid.*, 206. All three were leaders of the Conservative Party. Maura was prime minister five times between 1903 and 1922, Dato was Prime Minister three times between 1913 and his assassination in 1921. La Cierva served in seven different cabinets, often with Maura. The Tragic Week and its repression occurred while Maura was prime minister. La Cierva was Minister of Government (now the Ministry of Interior) and responsible for security and hence the fierce repression and subsequent execution of Ferrer.

43. Yet, they declared their intentions to be guided by some of the most conservative politicians in the country.

44. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 6. It was also attacked as foreign and not suitable for Spanish women, just like in France. Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism, a Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (1988), 144.

## BOURGEOIS FEMINISM: THE ACM

Catholic women had come to accept social reform as a suitable arena for women's participation. Before the war, the Catholic Church had argued that marriage and life as the *ángel del hogar* was the appropriate role for women. Several writers whose faith could not be questioned challenged this. In 1909, the Catalan and Catholic writer Dolors Monserdà de Macià (1845–1919) wrote in her *Estudi feminista* [*Feminist Study*] that the natural law and Jesus Christ mandated the submission of women in marriage. She argued that this was necessary to maintain the hierarchical order for the good of the family and society.<sup>45</sup> Monserdà represented a growing trend that argued for the expansion of women's educational and employment opportunities before they were married. In January 1916, Carme Karr i Alfonsetti (1865–1943) gave a series of courses in the Ateneo de Barcelona on woman's education. In these, she defended women's education as a help to husbands, not as a right due to women.<sup>46</sup>

After the war, this domestic discourse began to gradually change as women sought an expansion of their possibilities. The argument was still a maternalist one. Society was sick and only women, pure and devout by their

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45. Dolors Monserdà de Macià, *Estudi feminista, orientacions per a la dona catalana* (Barcelona: Lluís Gili, 1909), 24, in Nash, *Mujer, Familia y Trabajo en España, 1875–1936*, 63.

46. Carme Karr i Alfonsetti de Lasarte, "De la misión social de la mujer en la vida moderna" in Carme Karr i Alfonsetti de Lasarte et al., *Educación femenina (Cursillo de conferencias celebrado en el ateneo barcelonés, los días 31 de enero y 1, 3, 4 y 5 de febrero de 1916)* (Barcelona: Librería Parera, 1916), 34–35, in Nash, *Mujer, Familia y Trabajo en España, 1875–1936*, 87.

inherent nature, could save it. This became an ideological base for social Catholicism. They argued for women to participate in the public sphere and engage with the state through providing services and pressuring governmental institutions to do more for women. This was the maternalism of public service and the natural role of women in looking out for the welfare of the society.

In 1919, shortly after the end of the First World War, a group of women organized a new Catholic organization, the ACM.<sup>47</sup> It would be a reformist and social-Catholic women's organization, similar to those in other European countries.<sup>48</sup> The ACM was created for two complimentary purposes. First, it would compete with secular feminist organizations in arguing for a greater presence for women in the public sphere. Second, it was to consolidate and "nationalize" the disparate lay Catholic women's organizations throughout Spain by bringing these into a single and hierarchical organization.<sup>49</sup>

One of the most important tasks of Catholic women's organization was the provision of social welfare and charitable services. As discussed earlier, there was almost no social services provided by the Spanish state, and the Church filled the gap. The Church provided social services in institutions such as the *Inclusas*, dormitories for single women, and food services for mothers.

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47. According to Blasco Herranz, the ACM published the first statutes in May 1919. Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 464 n. 20. According to Nerea Aresti, the Church's ability support a women's movement was due to widespread misogyny of most liberal men. Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 44.

48. Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 441.

49. *Ibid.*, 446. She describes the existing situations in Spain as "dotted with a network of numerous, heterogeneous and scattered Catholic associations for female laity." She stresses this as an important and overlooked aspect of ACM's creation and operations.

According to Temma Kaplan, poor and working-class women used these services to avoid sexual assault in dangerous lodgings and to feed hungry children. They turned to Catholic unions and cooperatives that could directly provide or give them access to such services.<sup>50</sup>

Unlike the ANME, the ACM did have connections to actual programs and services. The ACM sought to consolidate the local and regional organizations that provided these services for two principal reasons. First, they wanted to move social activism from charity to action. Second, as historian Inmaculada Blasco Herranz argues, they wanted to refocus attention on the denial of women's rights as citizens, rather than their needs as workers or Catholics.<sup>51</sup>

When Montseny wrote about feminism, her critique was twofold. She perceived the organizations of Spanish feminism as clerical and reactionary in that they openly reinforced the existing oligarchic structures of Church and state. Furthermore, in their quest for the instruments of power (suffrage, higher education, and professional employment), they lacked any moral or ethical values. She argued they lacked ideals and idealism. Most of Montseny's articles dealing with feminism assert that feminist movements lacked the love of humanity that for Montseny was the basis of idealism. She

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50. Temma Kaplan's comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. See the brief mention of these services in Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 165.

51. Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 447. Nevertheless, the ACM still defended the interests of women workers, such as when they demanded improvements in the wages of telegraphers and the demand of equal pay for equal work in these professions. The latter was approved in 1923. *Ibid.*, 459, 450, and 466, n. 59.

did not disagree with their maternalist view of women. Instead, she disagreed about a mother's role and purpose in society. Rather than see women as a force only for good, Montseny argued that women were not better — or worse — than men. Montseny did not accept that women in positions of power would lead to a kinder and gentler world. She feared a coarsening and masculinization of women in power. She argued women were just as able of being unjust and cruel as men were, neither one nor the other had a monopoly.<sup>52</sup>

In 1924, a Valencia newspaper published an article that caused Montseny to write a response, published in *La Revista Blanca*. The author's argument was that everything would be better when women legislate and administer, because the “major basic institutions of society” — family, education, childbirth, justice, welfare and health — were teetering in the arms of man. Montseny argued in her response that women would not be improved because the society itself was still rotten. She saw this as a typical reformist error, the belief that one can administer a bad system better, rather than seeking to completely eradicate the system.<sup>53</sup> Everyone, including the anarchists, wanted to see women as mothers, teachers, and supportive companions of men. The woman would be subordinate to the man. It was this view that prevailed in Christian socialism and southern feminism, both

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52. Federica Montseny, “La falta de idealidad en el feminismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 4.

53. This is also Costa's iron surgeon and the vocabulary of cutting away diseased parts. See Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 525–528.

opposed by Montseny.<sup>54</sup> It was this vision of feminism, promoted and favored by the left political parties, which could come to be a brake on the social movements. She argued again that feminism, because of its narrow focus on one sex, is never a factor in the evolution of progress or social renewal. At most, it won small victories.<sup>55</sup> She would have agreed completely with the critique that the feminism that appealed to the state for redress created a dependency, subjected women even more to the state, and enabled the likelihood of an increase in male power.<sup>56</sup>

The ANME and the ACM shared some common ground in their ideologies and activities. Both were profoundly centralist. The first two articles of ANME's program were traditional expressions of conservative and centralist nationalism in Spain.<sup>57</sup> The first called upon the organization to oppose every proposition, act, or demonstration that threatened the integrity of the national territory. The second article sought to have every Spanish mother teach her children to love their mother country, "one and indivisible," in parallel with the school teacher.<sup>58</sup>

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54. Montseny believed is feminism in Latin America was more aggressive and socially conscious than the Spanish organizations.

55. Federica Montseny, "Feminismo y humanismo," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 33 (1 October 1924), 13–14.

56. Susan Gal and Gail Klingman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative–Historical Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 66–67.

57. See also María Teresa González Calbet, "El surgimiento del movimiento feminista, 1900–1940" in Foguera Crespo, *El feminismo en España*, 51–56.

58. The third article of the ANME's program called for revision of the laws on women. The program is reproduced as Appendix I in Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 357–361.

In 1919, the ANME and the ACM, amongst others, successfully lobbied the government to prevent the scheduled 1920 meeting in Spain of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. The organizations argued that it did not benefit the “national interest” or Spanish women.<sup>59</sup> A likely problem with the meeting being held in Spain was that the Spanish groups were not members of the Association and thus would be only observers. Yet the ANME sent three official representatives to the relocated meeting and sent a delegation to the next conference held in Rome in 1922.<sup>60</sup>

The ACM had problems, which apparently involved expressions of regionalism, with their Catalan affiliate, the *Liga de Acci3n Cat3lica de la Mujer de Barcelona* (The League of Catholic Action for Women in Barcelona).<sup>61</sup> Such centralism on the part of the ACME and the ACM would have alienated many of the organizations’ natural allies in Catalonia, such as the Catholic, bourgeois, yet Catalanist feminists Carme Karr and Francesca Bonnemaison i Figols (1872–1949).<sup>62</sup> Both women, concerned with female

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59. Scanlon, *La pol3mica feminista en la Espa1a contempor1nea (1868–1974)*, 204–205. The meeting moved to Geneva, Switzerland.

60. Oyarz1bal Smith de Palencia attended and wrote a very brief account of attending this conference and the one in Rome two years later is discussed briefly in her memoir. Palencia, *I Must Have Liberty*, 155–158. The focus on the Rome conference is her ripping of her black satin slip to cover the shoulder and arms of a South American delegate before an audience with the Pope.

61. Blasco Herranz, “Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain,” 448. “In a letter dated 15 May 1921, Benedict XV responded to Alfonso XIII’s request that he intervene to prevent the ACM’s Catalan wing from claiming its independence. In this letter, the Pope, alarmed by ‘the separatist spirit that unfortunately has raised its head in a few centres of Catholic Spanish women in Catalonia’, affirmed that he had raised the issue with the Bishop of Barcelona.” *Ibid.*, 464 n. 24.

62. See three articles by Nash: “La dona moderna del segle XX,” 9–10; “Political Culture, Catalan Nationalism, and the Women’s Movement in Early Twentieth–Century Spain,” 49–



education and employment opportunities, founded important institutions. In 1909–1910 Bonnemaïson established the *Institut de Cultura i Biblioteca Popular de la Dona* (Cultural Institute and Women’s Popular Library), the first library dedicated to women in Europe, and then Karr established the *La Llar* (The Home) in 1913 and in the 1920s, *Acci3n Femenina* (Female Action).<sup>63</sup>

Herself a Catalan, Montseny did not support the political demands of Catalan nationalism. Again, her anarchist internationalism would not support nationalism. Bonnemaïson was the widow of the conservative Catalanist Narcis Verdaguer y Callis (1863–1918), one of the major figures of the nationalist *Lliga*.<sup>64</sup> The factory owners and other anti–labor figures during the labor conflicts of the period 1917–1923 were leading figures in the *Lliga*. According to historian Raymond Carr, the *Lliga* was a “conservative affair run by millionaires” and “an appendix of monarchical conservatism.”<sup>65</sup> Beyond this, generally, anarcho–syndicalists were not sympathetic to regionalism,

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50; and “Feminisme català i presa de consciència de les dones,” *Revista Literatures*, segona època, no. 5 (2007), online at

[http://www.escriptors.cat/?q=publicacions\\_literatures\\_articles\\_nash](http://www.escriptors.cat/?q=publicacions_literatures_articles_nash).

63. Ajuntament de Barcelona. Biblioteques de Barcelona. Francesca Bonnemaïson [http://w3.bcn.es/V51/Home/V51HomeLinkPl/0.3989.526640750\\_528519693\\_2.00.html](http://w3.bcn.es/V51/Home/V51HomeLinkPl/0.3989.526640750_528519693_2.00.html).

An important national education institution for women was the *Escuela del Hogar y Profesional de la Mujer* (The School for Home Economics and Women’s Professional Training) in Madrid. When Primo de Rivera seized power he replaced the entire staff, which he claimed were all political appointees. But also the school’s reading list changed to focus solely on household topics. Vincent, “Spain,” in Passmore, *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 193–194.

64. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 102. She goes on to remark that Bonnemaïson’s feminist Catalan identity was “only interrupted” by her entering the Fascists in 1939.

65. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 549 and 555, respectively.

which they justifiably associated with the Fomento del Trabajo Nacional, the Church, and the repressive institutions of the state.

Class was one of the principal criticisms of Spanish feminist organizations. Class in Spanish anarchism was not a fixed category. Bourgeois was often used as an elastic and loose descriptive term, usually pejorative.<sup>66</sup> Montseny wrote in one essay that anarchism had no classes, just positive or negative individuals.<sup>67</sup> Montseny's criticisms of feminism asserted that one of its greatest failures was its loyalty to the bourgeoisie. Montseny attacked feminism as being a product of the bourgeoisie. As a consequence, it was blind to the needs of women in other classes and, moreover, ultimately to their own real needs in the bourgeoisie. Despite Montseny's statement about there not being class in anarchism, she made frequent use of it in her work. This was the flexibility of anarchism, where class was asserted against a group, yet individuals could transcend their class backgrounds. She consistently condemned Spanish feminism as bourgeois, parsimonious, and lacking in idealism and clarity. There was the bourgeoisie's lack of independence as evidenced by the desire of the emerging middle classes to copy the aristocracy and defend those traditions rather than create their own.<sup>68</sup> The working-

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66. It was also used by conservatives like Antonio Maura as a pejorative. He denounced the two dynastic parties and Republicans as bourgeois. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 488.

67. Federica Montseny, "Libros," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 62 (15 December 1925), 18.

68. Birderues-Guereña, "Niños y niñas en familia," in Borrás Llop, *Historia de la infancia en la España contemporánea, 1834–1936*, 22. Montseny's most direct statement of this is in *La victoria*, 120.

classes were a principal point of reference; moreover, and more important, was the concept of the people, *el pueblo*, which transcends class.

Before 1918, women could not hold state civil service jobs except for the positions of teacher and telegraphist. Even when the jobs opened to women, there were few women qualified for professional jobs because of the low level of women's secondary education.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, women were expected to cease working when they married to be able to manage their home and children. New educational institutions for women focused on improving the education of women within a Catholic framework. While including domestic skills as part of their core educational services, they also offered courses in what society perceived as suitable tasks for women working outside the home. These included training in stenography and commercial mathematics. These institutions, along with the ACME and ACM, entered into the public sphere to improve the opportunities for women.<sup>70</sup>

For the ACM, it was clear that if the changing economic situation brought women into the labor force, then it was important to ensure they had suitable workplaces and training. This in turn helped expand the Church's role in social services:

The need to promote social schools (training centres for female directors and managers of Catholic projects that were linked to social action) is a good example of the combination of, on the one hand, ideas based on sexual

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69. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*. 54.

70. Montseny took classes at the Academia Cots, in the barrio near her home. It offered young women the training to take up work in an office, work that Tavera refers to as an innovation of the interwar period. Montseny would refer to herself as a worker whose skills were shorthand and typing. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 67–68.

difference, and on the other, of the campaigns aimed to secure specific benefits in terms of the creation of labour opportunities. They also managed to inscribe a Catholic orientation on the functioning of government social welfare services.<sup>71</sup>

Federica Montseny and other writers in *La Revista Blanca* routinely criticized feminism for its activities. The problem was not that women were in public or what they did. Rather, it was why they did it and anarchists' grounded their suspicion of these organizations' motives in the contemporary political situation. Even when the work was beneficial to women, anarchists questioned the motives. Montseny and the anarchists writing in *La Revista Blanca* assumed feminists' motives were not grounded in a love for their fellow beings, what Montseny referred to as idealism and humanism. Rather, the feminists' actions arose from selfish and class-based motives. Women must not fight just for themselves but for everyone. Their concerns should be the lives and conditions of everyone, not just women.

María Dolores Rodríguez criticized Catholic feminism and argued that if it was to have an impact, it needed to recognize that the problems of women were the problems of society and not of just one sex.<sup>72</sup> This required working towards a solution by men and women, rather than women against men. The criticism they offered was not much different from those of other anti-

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71. Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 451, n. 15.

72. María Dolores Rodríguez, "Algo acerca de las Asociaciones feministas," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 37 (1 December 1924), 21. This article deplored Acción Femenina (the Karr organization) as an evolution towards masculinism because they wanted to intervene in the "corruption of public life." She also dismissed feminist organizations and charitable groups as merely the pastime of (voluntarily) unemployed women serving the interest of their class. Nothing more is known about her. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Rodríguez, María Dolores."

feminists. Articles by other authors in *La Revista Blanca* frequently equated feminism with attempts by women to gain power or to be identical with men, overwhelmingly seen in negative terms as imitative rather than transformative. Typical was the article in 1923, signed Hypatía, that defined feminism as a word equivalent to “the imitation of all the things, good and bad, of men” and described feminists as those who aspired to copy the not particularly good aspects of men.<sup>73</sup> This argument, that women participating in a corrupt society would not purify that society, was a common anti-feminist argument. What differentiates the anarchists’ solution from conservatives was the goal of the complete transformation of society — not its preservation.

The anarchists were not far off the mark in their criticisms. The women of ACM sought the “rechristianization” of the country, especially the public sphere. As anti-clericals, the anarchists viewed this as a negative motive. ANME wanted women of the middle classes to have increased access to the necessary educational and employment opportunities in the liberal professions and civil service jobs, with equal pay, similar to the opportunities (middle-class) men had. Feminists’ based their demands on the status of women in relationship to men, rather than any great desire for the rights of the individual. Moreover, ANME claims to improvement in the status of middle-class women lay in beliefs about their inherently superior class and status in

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73. Hipatía, “Rodando del mundo: Aspectos del feminismo.” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 18 (15 February 1924), 27–28. Again the reference to a classical name, but also an early Christian martyr.

contrast to women of the lower classes. In fact, according to Scanlon, ANME argued against the state making the same opportunities available for working—class women, because education would incline them to “rebellion and libertinage.”<sup>74</sup>

During the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the ANME and ACM shifted focus to arguing for educational and civil rights equal to those of men and all but abandoned suffrage.<sup>75</sup> Primo de Rivera abolished elections so male suffrage ceased to exist and there did not appear to be a possibility of including women on electoral rolls. Primo de Rivera gave independent women (single adult women and those such as widows who were the heads of households) the right to vote during this period.<sup>76</sup> The 1924 Municipal Statute not only restored a variant of male suffrage but also added a separate women’s roll for local elections, and allowed women to serve as councilors.<sup>77</sup> The ACM campaigned full out for women to register themselves on the female municipal electoral roll created as a result of the 1924 Municipal Statute. ACM

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74. From *El Mundo Femenino* 17, no. 112, 7. Quoted in Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 207.

75. Glick argues that in the twenties the focus of the debates about the social role of Spanish women was not feminism but sexual dysfunction. Glick “Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre–guerras,” 13. I think sexual dysfunction was a side debate localized principally in medical and certain anarchist journals such as *Estudios*. The central debate was what was compatible with motherhood, perceived as the fundamental task of women.

76. Before the Republic the age for the legal status as an adult varied. For much of Spain it was 23, but in Zaragoza it was 20 and in Catalonia 25. See Buen Lozano, “La famille, la propriété, le travail,” in Altamira y Crevea et al., *Espagne*, 151–203.

77. “It gave municipalities, based on a mixed corporate and universal suffrage, autonomy and extensive powers to raise loans for local improvements. ... They were held to be an orgy of conspicuous waste...” Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 577.

propaganda presented this as a series of imperatives: the nation commands, God requests, and the Church demands.<sup>78</sup>

Conservative forces had embraced female suffrage before this for their own goals.<sup>79</sup> In 1918, the Catholic newspaper *El Debate* supported woman's suffrage because it believed women's votes would go to candidates supported by the Church. The Carlists, supporters of a pretender to the Spanish throne and generally viewed as ultra-reactionary, endorsed female suffrage for this reason. Additionally, the 1919 statement by Pope Benedict XV (1854–1922, pope 1914–1922) in support of women's suffrage in Italy offered a significant boost to the ACM's campaign for female suffrage.<sup>80</sup>

The reason for Primo de Rivera's endorsement of women's participation in local elections was to draw them into his régime.<sup>81</sup> Primo de Rivera consciously sought to build a mass base of support for his régime through the mass mobilization of the population, the *pueblo*. "For the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, political modernity was to be achieved largely on the basis of mobilisation."<sup>82</sup> While initially Primo de Rivera's régime used women as figurative and symbolic mothers, such as godmothers of Sometén units' flags, he soon expanded the maternal role to women in public administration at the

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78. See the translated full text from the *Boletín de la ACM*, no. 51 (1924), 109–10 in Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 455.

79. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 11.

80. Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," 463 n. 15. See also page 453.

81. Though when he seized power in September 1923, Primo claimed he had to save the country because of the "lack of masculinity" of the politicians. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 523.

82. Vincent, "Spain," in Passmore, *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 190.

local level.<sup>83</sup> Primo de Rivera made a typical flippant remark on why he wanted to allocate seats for women on municipal councils. He aimed at “preventing the men in the councils from conceiving insane ideas.”<sup>84</sup> According to José Daniel Santamaría M., Primo de Rivera made several statements about the need to give the vote to women stating in 1928. “It is not possible that humanity continued to be divided in rights and duties. I gave women the right to the vote in municipal [elections]. Shortly I am going to not only give you the vote, but also the right to occupy other public offices. Legislation involves both men and women and they need give me their opinion on all issues.”<sup>85</sup>

Primo de Rivera’s views on women’s suffrage showed his recognition of the proximity between the ideals of the Unión Patriótica, Primo de Rivera’s new movement/party, and the ACM. Historian Shlomo Ben-Ami describes this movement as a “virile” endeavor for Primo de Rivera.<sup>86</sup> It showed a move away from the patronage politics of the Restoration régime to a conservative modernization that included women in mass mobilizations. The new régime gave the ACM preeminence in women’s affairs that the ACME and other organizations could not compete with. The ACM and its status as an official

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83. In March 1929 pregnant women were eligible for payments from social insurance. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 289. When Primo de Rivera expanded the Somentent to the entire nation, its name was castilianized: Somentent to Somatén. So in this usage as godmothers, it would be the Castilian form.

84. Quoted in Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 189.

85. “El mejoramiento de su condición actual pide la mujer española,” *Diario de Panamá* (March 20, 1927), 1. Quoted in José Daniel Santamaría M., *El sufragio de la mujer en Panamá, 1920 – 1946* (masters thesis, Universidad de Panamá, 2000), 17.

86. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 131.



organization of the Church embodied a subtle transformation of gender roles. Roles that appeared to put women into the public sphere, yet appeared to be traditional, provided a reassurance of the stability of the social order. This stability was a key component of Primo de Rivera's seizure of power. Thus, in return for the confidence of the dictator, the ACM offered Primo de Rivera and his régime a version of femininity that was not threatening and successfully merged the domestic with a stabilizing public social role.<sup>87</sup> The collaboration would be so successful that Primo de Rivera reserved seats for women in the National Assembly.<sup>88</sup> The National Assembly was not a legislative body; rather it was a place for discussions on writing a new constitution were to take place — but not debates.<sup>89</sup> According to one American political scientist writing in 1929, the women were there to provide the “stabilizing influences of religious conservatism.”<sup>90</sup> Primo de Rivera appointed ACM activist and labor organizer María de Echarri (1878–1955) to one seat and ANME activist and educator María de Maeztu to another.<sup>91</sup> They were delegated with providing the “feminine voice” in discussions over labor and education, respectively.<sup>92</sup>

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87. Blasco Herranz, “Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain,” 454–455.

88. Primo reportedly said, “The greatest, perhaps the only support of my government consists of women and workers.” Quoted in Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 586–587. For the number of women in the Assembly, Scanlon has fifteen seats, Vincent and Mangini have thirteen, and Ben-Ami only nine. No one gives the total number of seats for men or for both sexes. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 157. No figure is given in Bussy Genevois, “The Women of Spain from the Republic to Franco,” in Thébaud, *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, 177. Mangini states that female voting was never implemented, Mangini, *Memories of Resistance*, 7. Vincent, “Spain,” in Passmore, *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 196. Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 228.

89. All speeches were limited to thirty minutes. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 586.

90. Malborn W. Graham, “The Spanish Directory and the Constitution,” 154–155 n.7.

91. Vincent, “Spain,” in Passmore, *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*, 196.

Montseny's anarchism meant she never asked for suffrage, for men or women. Beyond her ideology, she repeated the left's reservations on female suffrage in other contexts, especially anti-clericalism. Montseny believed Spanish women were under the domination of their fathers, husbands, and priest, and hence always subject to outside control.<sup>93</sup> To judge Montseny solely by the standards of her positions on political questions, such as suffrage and legal status under the law, is a fundamental error.<sup>94</sup> As an anarchist, she rejected these measures for two basic reasons. First, feminist organizations sought reforms from the state, rather than making them themselves. Profound change came from the people whereas reform came from the state. Not only could the state take the changes back, it did not solve the central problems and was simply amelioration. Montseny was harshly critical of Spanish feminist organizations, particularly their view of change as being from the top down.

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Maeztu was the sister of the writer Ramiro de Maeztu, an important régime propagandist. María de Echarri founded the Sindicato Católica Femenina (a Catholic trade union for women), she was a labor inspector, a member of the Instituto de Reformas Sociales, and a municipal councillor in Madrid.

92. See the description in Ben-Ami of what he called "a colorful and curious innovation." Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above*, 228.

93. Notice how she echoes many of the anticlerical arguments against the extension of suffrage to women. Women had to have permission to work, and were legally under the guardianship of their father until marriage, their husband after that. As widows they could have some measure of escape, but even that was limited because they still would have no civil status except as the widow of their husband. Widows who had been in free unions did not even have that. The system was heavily tilted towards marriage. Urales and Gustavo not only got married, but published a bound pamphlet defending it: *Dos cartas por Teresa Mañé (Soledad Gustavo) y Juan Montseny publicadas en 18 de marzo de 1891 día de su enlace matrimonial en obsequio a sus amigos* (Reus: Imprenta de Celestino Ferrando, n.d.).

94. In addition to the already cited work of Nash see also Charnon-Deutsch, "Concepción Arenal and the Nineteenth Century Spanish Debates About Women's Sphere and Education," in Vollendorf, *Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition*, 205 and Shirley Fay Fredericks, "Frederica Montseny and Spanish Anarchism," *Frontiers* 1, no. 3 (1976), 71–80.

Yet, these merely reflected the actual possibilities of their time.<sup>95</sup> When male suffrage did not exist as an option, they adapted to the changing circumstances by emphasizing other aspects of their programs. When the role of women during the Primo de Rivera régime expanded, they took advantage of the opportunities to advance their agendas. For Montseny this was unforgiveable. Consistently, she criticized Spanish feminism for this. Ironically, she lauded foreign feminists for the same actions, most notably in the case of Turkey.

### **WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY**

Montseny wrote enthusiastically about organizations of women in the young Turkish Republic in the 1923 article titled "The Awakening of the Turkish Woman." Even as she was highly critical of feminism in Spain, she reflected positively on the changes in Turkey. One of the positives was that the reforms came from the active participation of its women's movement. Though linked to the reforms of what would be the new Republic of Turkey, she stated that the women's movement was a "major force for good."<sup>96</sup> These reforms included the abolition of harems, the unveiling of women, the "avalanche" of women into the universities, offices, and all types of positions, as well as a "ceaseless struggle" for women's "emancipation."<sup>97</sup>

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95. Thus the feminists resembled others who thought that reform should come from above. And when suffrage did come, it was from above. Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939*, 24 and Graham, "Women and Social Change," in Labanyi and Graham, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 101.

96. Federica Montseny, "El despertar de la mujer turca," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 11 (1 November 1923), 5–8.

97. *Ibid.*, 6. Note the evolutionary vocabulary of "ceaseless struggle."

Montseny's list of reforms predated their legal enactment. The Turkish Republic was only declared in October 1923 and its constitution ratified in April 1924, after Montseny's article. It was only in 1926 that the new Turkish Civil Code banned polygamy.<sup>98</sup> However, Montseny was not concerned with the new state and legality, rather her focus was on women who were making changes. She viewed these changes as not just beneficial for women, but representing progress for everyone. Montseny was so positive because, though it was a solely feminist movement *per se*, it operated with a "surprising universality." The rapid pace of change was for the "good of humanity." For her, this was particularly the case in Turkey because of its transformation from a clerical régime to a secular one. She hinted at the need for this change in Spain. She argued that it demonstrated that no one could avoid the pace of evolutionary change. For her, the abandonment of religion and the emancipation of women was progress. In her view, Turkey was making rapid strides on that path.<sup>99</sup> Montseny recognized the impact of the First World War in Europe in the rapid pace of change. She repeats that "perhaps one could say" that women's movement lagged behind the government. She dismissed as

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98. Pinar İlkkaracan, *A Brief Overview of Women's Movement(s) in Turkey (and the Influence of Political Discourses)*, [2nd ed.], Women for Women's Human Rights Reports, no. 2 ([Istanbul: Women For Women's Human Rights – New Ways], 1997), 5. Women's suffrage came in 1935.

99. Federica Montseny, "El despertar de la mujer turca," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 11 (1 November 1923), 8. Much of her vocabulary here is similar to what Clara argues in *La victoria* about the relationship between men and women. But in Turkey the previous state and religion were "the enslavers of both men and women, the ones who would maintain everyone in ignorance." Furthermore, progress is a result of the domination of history by evolution, a natural process and thus for Montseny and other anarchists not only acceptable but to be applauded.

“fictional and romantic” the argument that Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) introduced the reforms “out of the love of a woman.”

What Montseny could not have foreseen was the fate of one of the organizations she praised. Montseny described one political party as the “most proletarian” of the woman’s organizations. She identified it as *Partido femenino de las mujeres del pueblo* or Female Party of the Women of the People. This was the *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* (Women’s Peoples Party), which the Turkish government never recognized.<sup>100</sup> Nezihe Muhittin (1889–1958) founded the party in June 1923, before the end of the war. The party applied to the new state for recognition and the state denied it in January 1924. The reason given was that the party’s goals lay outside the objectives of the Kemalist reforms: “[the] founders were informed by the ruling party, Public’s Party, that the Women’s Political Party’s program was improper and it was not an appropriate time to constitute such a party.”<sup>101</sup> In February that same year, it reestablished itself as the Turkish Women’s Association, and was to be a major campaigner for women’s suffrage.<sup>102</sup>

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100. It was also known as the Women’s Political Party. The party was the first political party of republican Turkey. I am very grateful for the assistance of my Turkish classmates at the 2010 Global Labour History Workshop: Burcu Cingay, Yelda Kaya, and Emre Erol. Burcu also followed up with more information which improved my understanding of the Turkish contexts of Montseny’s article.

101. Seda Cosar, “The Reflections of the Ottoman–Turkish Feminism on the Literary Works of Nezihe Muhittin,” masters thesis (Middle East Technical University, 2006), 39.

102. *Ibid.* The Association abolished itself when women’s suffrage was granted. In the meantime Nezihe Muhittin had been accused of embezzlement and was expelled from the association. In a curious parallel to Montseny, she wrote novellas. “It is noteworthy that in each novella, Nezihe Muhittin dwells on important issues of womanhood which can be considered as an indicator that Muhittin continued her interest in women’s issues via writing popular romance novels.” *Ibid.*, 36. Even some of her covers reproduced in Cosar’s thesis are

Montseny was close to the issues and problems of the Spanish women's movements. It is not clear where she was getting her information on Turkey, or how complete it was. Many of the same features that she criticized in Spain were present in Turkey. One 1996 Turkish publication on human rights argues that the new Republic failed to recognize the role of Turkish women in organizing for their own rights and instead argued that it gave women rights.<sup>103</sup> The state adopted a maternalist ideology with women positioned as equal to men in the public sphere though with motherhood as their principal duty.<sup>104</sup> Even though rights were granted to women, these rights were hard to use as there were no mechanisms facilitating their application. Therefore, the principal beneficiaries were the upper-classes and women connected to the bureaucracy of the new state. Thus, just as Montseny critiqued in Spain, Turkish "women were instrumentalised once more, this time in line with the Turkish Republican ideology, as the 'protectors' of secularism and the 'new Republic'."<sup>105</sup> The significant difference, and the one that blinded Montseny to the problems, was the secularism.

For Montseny the example of the feminist movement in Turkey was proof of society's evolutionary progress. Anarchists were well aware of evolutionary theories. Montseny used her protagonist of her novel *La victoria* to argue for acquired traits in a discussion of the nature of women and what

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similar to Montseny's.

103. *Ibid.*, 18.

104. *Ibid.*, 19.

105. İlkkaracan, *A Brief Overview of Women's Movement(s) in Turkey*, 5.

society forced upon them. Anarchists opposed Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism and its application of Darwinian ideas of natural selection to society. Anarchists preferred instead the ideas Kropotkin propounded. These combined Lamarck and Darwin, especially the idea that mutual aid was a more important factor in evolution.<sup>106</sup> Dr. Ramón y Cajal argued that "natural chastity" was the organic method of preserving the race from degeneration caused by the excess of the male, while conserving the human protoplasm.<sup>107</sup> In contrast to this belief in natural chastity, Montseny argued that it was the pressure and impact of contemporary society, especially the state and the Church, which contributed to human degeneration. Moreover, women's subordination was due to these societal forces, and not to any inherent aspect of female nature.<sup>108</sup> For Montseny, it was contemporary men who had not sufficiently evolved to accept strong and independent women. Her belief in the mutability of acquired characteristics meant, however, that she not only hoped for change, but also that one could actively work towards creating desired evolutionary changes.

This was an evolution along Lamarckian lines — a view emphasized by Kropotkin in his classic work *Mutual Aid* (1902). This latter emphasis was due

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106. A good introduction to the relationship between scientific ideas and anarchism in Spain is Álvaro Girón Sierra, "Kropotkin Between Lamarck and Darwin: The Impossible Synthesis," *Asclepio* 55, no. 1 (2003), 189–213. For the essential anarchist text refuting Social Darwinism see Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*.

107. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 181.

108. Nash points out that Spain did not attain the same level of secularization as the rest of Europe so that the role of the Church in the subordination of women was still very important. Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 13.

to her view of evolution that rejected Spencer's notion of competitive struggle and Social Darwinism. Susanna Tavera argues that Montseny does follow Spencer and that this was an ideology inherited from her parents, and a part of Catalan positivism.<sup>109</sup> While Spencer influenced her (note her use of struggle in her evolutionary arguments), it was not an ideology she adopted. Rather, Montseny drew from what historian of science Álvaro Girón Sierra referred to as Kropotkin's "impossible synthesis."<sup>110</sup> This was his combination of Lamarck and Darwin, an interpretation of evolutionary change that emphasized mutual aid. Kropotkin maintained that desirable characteristics could be acquired quickly and without the need for competitive evolutionary struggle.

What she saw in Turkey, especially the quick pace of change in the country, was a validation of her beliefs. The Turkish republic's secularism, and her own prejudices about women in Islamic countries, made it into a giant forward leap in evolution. She wove several threads of her own thoughts in a clear statement of her beliefs about ideas and evolution:

[N]othing escapes the domain of evolution. Those who try to enslave and keep women in ignorance and try to delay the advent of things to come, struggle in vain. The evolutionary ideas perfect, select, and free us for eternity ... they cannot be killed by persecution, rejection, terror, or death ... They penetrate everywhere ... Nothing escapes, nothing, from evolution. ... Turkey and its progressive movement and young people should serve as an example to those who, in the name of a dying society, oppose the triumph of a society in birth. Turkey's political and moral changes are the precursors of further changes, a prelude to more intense action, [we can be] safe and secure in the permanence and indestructibility of human aspirations.<sup>111</sup>

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109. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 92.

110. Girón Sierra, "Kropotkin Between Lamarck and Darwin."

111. Federica Montseny, "El despertar de la mujer turca," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 11 (1 November 1923), 8.



Turkey was the contemporary model showing the possibility of rapid, much-needed change. In Montseny's perspective, Turkey was closer to Spain, leaping past Spain in fact, as it left religious obscurantism behind. Consequently, Turkey evolved faster than Spain, which was still caught up in clericalism. Just three months later Montseny analyzed the changes in Britain after the December 1923 elections. Britain offered Montseny the chance to analyze a woman in a position of power: the Labour politician Margaret Bondfield.

#### **MARGARET BONDFIELD**

Montseny's attention shifted from the rapid pace of Turkey to the slow yet steady progress in Britain. Montseny was suspicious of women in politics, though positive about the achievements of British women in the Labour Party. She published an essay just before the December 1923 British general election that brought the Labor Party to power for the first time. In it Montseny distinguished between "Anglo-Saxon" and "Latin" feminist movements, finding the former more advanced (in evolutionary terms) and the latter lacking in freedom and "moral" vision. For Montseny, a moral vision was one that looked to liberate women and men, a concern with humanity and not a concern with the pursuit of power. The Anglo-Saxons were more advanced solely because they were not subject to the Catholic Church's version of

morality. She felt, however, that both Latin and Anglo–Saxon feminisms lacked an eye to the future and the advancement of humanity.<sup>112</sup>

Evolution had figured prominently in Montseny's few positive assessments of feminism, such as Turkey. It appeared again in her 1924 article on the British election. In this article, she discussed the election and the government appointment of the leading woman in the British Labor Party, Margaret Bondfield. After examining the evolutionary importance of the general election, she turned to a mixed evaluation of Bondfield. Her evaluation of Bondfield, only two months after the election, is clear evidence of the paradoxes of her ideas on women and their role in society.

Montseny first argued that the results were a clear example of the universality of evolution. She presented it as proof that evolution had an impact in all countries and on all women as well.<sup>113</sup> For her, the electoral triumph of the Labour Party was a tremendous moral advance in the field of ideas because it demonstrated the progress and the world's continuous evolution to the left. Although she was firmly convinced of the "sterility" of the

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112. Federica Montseny, "La falta de idealidad en el feminismo," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 3–4. On the reverse of this debate, Spanish feminists were happy to differentiate themselves from feminist movements abroad. In 1930, María de la O Lejárraga García (1874–1974), writing her husband's name, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, described Spanish feminism as "clear, bourgeois, practical, and transparent" and a feminism of housewives (*amas de la casa*). She added that Spanish feminism rejected the French as too "idealist, revolutionary, abstract" and the English as "too aggressive and apparently illogical," baffling to "our Latin way of thinking and feeling." Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 198. María Lejárraga served as a parliamentary delegate for the PSOE from 1933–1936. According to Jo Labanyi, it is now established she wrote all of the feminist publications previously credited to her husband, and most, if not all, of his plays.

113. Federica Montseny, "Las mujeres y las elecciones inglesas," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 18 (15 February 1924), 11.

Labour government in power — believing that it would at best seek an amelioration of the problems rather than solve them, much less achieve revolution — this was outweighed for her by its weakening the forces of the right. It showed that the left could come to power. She argued it represented a small step in progress and a major one in history and evolution. Montseny's anarchism did not blind her to this as a positive occurrence. She called for a greater solidarity amongst people for improvement in everyone's lives. She stated that the future would not be one of either labor or labor feminism. Rather it would be a synthesis, a smoothing out of the difficult path leading from the “negative values of the past” to the positive ones resulting from evolution.<sup>114</sup>

Montseny's comments on Margaret Bondfield in the article provide solid evidence that her belief in the contemporary advances of feminism did not include politics.<sup>115</sup> Bondfield was a Labour Party member of the British Parliament in 1923 and the first woman cabinet minister when appointed Minister of Labour in 1929. The daughter of a textile worker, she was active in the Women's Labour League and became the first woman to head of the Trades Union Congress General Council in 1923. Montseny knew this history and referred to Bondfield as being from the working-class. She stated that the Labour government had offered Bondfield the position of Minister of Labor in

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114. *Ibid.*, 12.

115. *Ibid.*, 10.

this first government — an offer that according to Montseny — was then withdrawn.

Montseny criticized Bondfield for focusing on the lack of employment opportunities for women at a time when there was massive unemployment for men. She believed that Bondfield should have complained that women had to work at all, rather than complaining of the scarcity of work for the sex. While Montseny did not believe women should be limited to housework, she did not advocate for higher or even equivalent wages for women. In her view, one of the causes of male unemployment was the “invasion” of previously male domains of employment by “conquering” females. Their presence in many of these sites was not only damaging to class solidarity but also to their health. Montseny argued that while it was clear that women should not engage in housework only, they should not be doing work that was onerous and damaged their body. If they withdrew from these positions, they would be reducing the numbers of unemployed men and benefitting their bodies, which, while not inferior to those of men, were distinctive.<sup>116</sup>

Montseny was not making the traditional “women are weaker” argument. Rather she was attacking politics and the impact of the desire for elected office on individuals. Her complaint was that Bondfield did not speak of the dangers and aging effects on workers of the work done in mines, factories, and the heavy labor of work in the fields. Bondfield’s failure to

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116. *Ibid.*, 10.

address these issues was even more surprising to Montseny because Bondfield had worked. To Montseny, British feminism was concerned with small problems, and she was doubtful that Bondfield's appointment to a government position would bring any real achievements, though she "applauded its significance as a moral success."<sup>117</sup> In Montseny's analysis, the breaking of the promise to make Bondfield a minister after Labour's triumph reflected a lack of confidence in her and the "innate tendency" of men to block women's progress moving away from the home. Further, it reflected men's insistence on the classic concept of feminine weakness.<sup>118</sup>

Ultimately, Montseny questioned the minor victories of Bondfield and other female politicians. Because feminism sought to be included in the status quo, these small victories perpetuated the corrupt system by extending it. Injustices enjoyed by men were no less unjust when enjoyed by women, and only served to destroy any moral value the movement had. The movement not only tolerated the restrictions of the present society — especially of class and religion — it advanced the most reactionary male forces, even when these were men who did not recognize women as equals.<sup>119</sup> Humanity needed to evolve.

#### **VESTAL VIRGIN OR NEW WOMAN**

Montseny saw this tendency of men to halt the progress of women in anarchism as well. She stated in 1924 that ideological affinity did not mean

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117. *Ibid.*, 11.

118. *Ibid.*

119. Federica Montseny, "Feminismo y humanismo," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 33 (1 October 1924), 13–14.

subjection to others.<sup>120</sup> She recognized that ideals evolve and, in the case of Proudhon's impact on anarchism, it needed to. While Bakunin may have been the person who opened up anarchism for both sexes, she lamented the impact of Proudhon's misogyny.<sup>121</sup> She fought Proudhon's notion that women always need protection, if not a whip. In this respect, she drew a distinction between the theory of anarchism as an emancipator of women and the real emancipation of women.

Montseny agreed with Engels, Paul Robin (1837–1912), and Goldman that marriage, at least as the Church–state duopoly understood it, was a form of prostitution.<sup>122</sup> She perceived that a wall had arisen made up of traditional prejudices, fears, and selfishness. This wall was the moral coercion exercised by society and men's selfishness. Men's "childish mentality," as well as by the bad faith of not a few women, sustained it.<sup>123</sup> The benefits for men of the existing structure were clear. Men showed their selfishness by their reluctance to relinquish the benefits. Montseny recognized that many women benefitted from the existing system. This was not selfishness but the bad faith of those who benefitted from the oppression of others. Even when anarchists have defended women, she argued, they have done so in defense of an ideal of "the

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120. *Ibid.*, 11.

121. Feerica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24.

122. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 63. Paul Robin, "La mujer pública," in Chaughy and Robin, *La mujer*, 9–16. Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised ed. (New York: Mother Earth, 1917, reprinted New York: Dover, 1969), 187.

123. Feerica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24.

eternal feminine” rather than out of appreciation for women’s moral or social value.<sup>124</sup> They failed to see women as a twin to men in “needs and aspirations, and with no other difference than sex.”<sup>125</sup>

In her arguments, Montseny turned again to a discussion of what this meant for women’s opportunities for love. Montseny recognized that there were few women who had a strong enough sense of individual worth. There were even fewer men who were capable of accepting such a woman. “[T]he most radical ideas are not guarantees of comprehensiveness, or of moral values or tolerance, because it is a matter of deep feelings, rather than thoughts.” She pointed out that, whether conservative or advanced, men had a hard time accepting women as equals. She found it ironic that there were more conservative men who appeared to accept independent women than there were progressive men. She explained it in part because it was not a question of ideas (ideology). It was a question of thoughts and feelings, of a cultivated sensibility, which was more prevalent among the upper classes than amongst the advanced. Her explanation played with the subjunctive case to indicate that it was a possibility, but the subjunctive also cast doubt upon it.<sup>126</sup>

She even stressed that she was casting doubt on the entire proposition that

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124. A list of Modern School publications at the back of one of the first editions of *Sembrando Flores* is clearly marketed to mothers as the educators of their children: “dedicated to the students of the Modern School. Indispensable for the mothers of the family.”

125. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara III,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24.

126. *Ibid.*, 25. She is using the present subjunctive as opposed to the present indicative to make her point by expressing uncertainty: “He dicho «es fácil se dé». No digo «se da», porque, desgraciadamente, hasta ahora no se ha visto entre los reaccionarios ni entre los avanzados tal caso.”

conservative men could be more accepting than advanced men. Was she trying to provoke men into becoming more tolerant of advanced women?

Four years later, she wrote a response to an article by Ángela Graupera about her conceptions of the ideal man.<sup>127</sup> He would have to be conscious and free, a man who existed on a superior plane, an individual who respected the individualities of all others, ready to see a woman not as a female, angel, or muse, nor only a companion, but as “yet another free individual.”<sup>128</sup> What was clear was that men needed to improve as well as women; especially in the ways they viewed women. Contemporary men failed to see women as human beings, as comrades rather than objects, finding it impossible to separate their sex from their shared humanity. Montseny sought to improve men’s views of women by combating retrograde views and practices (such as *donjuanismo*) and presenting positive portrayals of women. She argued for the active participation by women in the labor movement and for women’s self-definition. In her novels, the female characters are all active and self-defined; they do not allow men to set the boundaries.<sup>129</sup>

Montseny manipulated the tendency on the left to elevate revolutionary women into secular saints.<sup>130</sup> Her articles on anarchist women focused on this

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127. Graupera was the author of numerous novellas in both the *Novela Ideal* and *Novela Libre* series. She had been a nurse with the Red Cross in Serbia in World War I. She also wrote a book on the persecution of Hellenic culture in Turkey. I cannot find her birth or death dates. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Graupera, Ángela.”

128. Federica Montseny, “Libertad,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 457.

129. The one exception to this is Marta, the principal female character in *FloreCIMIENTO*, the first novella she wrote for the *Novela Ideal* series.

130. See Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, 14. For anarchists there were the female Russian



secularization of sacred femininity that combined classical allusions, anarchism, and Christian martyrology, such as the title “Las vestales del Ideal.”<sup>131</sup> Teresa Claramunt Creus (1862–1931), Francisca Saperas Miró (1851–1933), and Cayetana Griñó (?–1935), the first two of whom Montseny was very close to, were the anonymous sufferers of the new passion of multiple Christs.<sup>132</sup> When Claramunt died in 1931, Montseny wrote her obituary in *El Luchador*. She wrote another for Saperas in *La Revista Blanca* in 1935, calling her as “the last of the vestals.”<sup>133</sup> Others forgot these women because their struggles were early ones, yet they formed a part of the people. Montseny described them as strong model women, women to emulate and for men to learn to love and admire.

Montseny was clear what types of women were outside of her ideal woman. She was adamantly against the model of the *garçonne* (“tomboy”).<sup>134</sup> In Montseny’s writing, she comments on the figure of the *garçonne*, the eponymous title of the 1922 by French author Victor Margueritte (1866–1942).

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nihilists and Louise Michel.

131. Federica Montseny, “Las vestales del Ideal,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 161 (1 February 1930), 399. Recall that ideal is used as another word for anarchism. This was a form of anarchist women’s history where Montseny reminded her readers of the work of others in organizing.

132. *Ibid.*, 397–399. Saperas, Claramunt, and Urales were prosecuted in the 1896 Montjuïc Trial and the latter two spent a period of exile in London. A close family friend, Claramunt lost her children when they were very young and Saperas also had children, so the Vestal Virgin analogy is not meant to be exact. Claramunt was practically blind and Cayetana Griñó was her aide. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 24.

133. Claramunt died April 12, the same day as the municipal elections, and was buried on April 14, the day the Second Republic was proclaimed. Federica Montseny, “Teresa Claramunt, o una vida heroica,” *El Luchador* (April 24, 1931). Montseny wrote that Claramunt was a surrogate mother for her. Federica Montseny, “Glosas: La última de las vestales,” *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 348 (20 September 1935), 912.

134. See the article by Nash where she compares this figure in Catalonia with similar ones in Germany, Italy, and the United States: “La dona moderna del segle XX.”

Rapidly translated into Spanish the same year (and publisher) it was a *succès de scandale* in both countries.<sup>135</sup> Jacques Descleuse, their literary correspondent in Paris, reviewed it in the second issue of *La Revista Blanca* as part of a roundup of recent French novels.<sup>136</sup> He denounced the novel as “hopelessly bad” (*novela mala, rematadamente mala*). While its argument is audacious in its morality, it has no redeeming social value and is vaguely pornographic. He denied the possibility that the central female character could be a model for an emancipated woman.

In the third installment of Montseny’s six part series “La mujer, problema del hombre,” she writes about the *garçonne* and short hair.<sup>137</sup> She attacks it directly, obviously bothered by the impact of the *garçonne*. The assault was on several levels. Imported from the United States, it was a swindle or con job (*timo*) that everyone should recognize as a trick of “unmodernity” (*inmodernidad*). She repeats this in the following paragraph. Here she criticizes short hair as a style imported via France from Yankeeland (*Yanquilandia*) — a word that each time she used it embodied Montseny’s

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135. Victor Margueritte, *La garçonne, roman* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1922). The first edition in Spain was *La garzona, novela* (Madrid: E. Flammarion, 1922). On its importance in inter-war France see Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Magnien discusses how *garçonne* replaced *courtesan* and became the modern woman in Spanish literature and “reclaimed” her right to a complete sexuality. Many critics did not welcome this. Magnien, “Crisis de la novela,” in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 251.

136. Jacques Descleuse, “El arte literario francés,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 2 (15 June 1923), 5–7. Tavera suspects that the names of both of *La Revista Blanca*’s literary correspondents, Paris’ Descleuse and Madrid’s Augusto de Moncada, were really pseudonyms for Urales. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 68.

137. Federica Montseny, “La mujer, problema del hombre (III),” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 93 (1 April 1927), 658. The first part was December 15, 1926 and the final installment was November 15, 1927. *La Revista Blanca* reissued it in 1932 as a pamphlet.

complete contempt.<sup>138</sup> She attacks short hair as a uniform, both in the sense that everyone looks the same, it prevented individuality, and hid the soul. Referring to a discussion with Max Nettleau, she got to the true threat: interchangeable men and women. “It is an American type that Nettleau called interchangeable man and woman.”<sup>139</sup>

The *garçonne* did not represent modern womanhood to Montseny, but androgyny, hedonism — the egoistical pursuit of pleasure — a female lothario (*cambalachera*). Possibly, its androgyny threatened her, she clearly wanted to stress the differences between men and women, yet not ascribe any differing positive or negative characteristics to either of the sexes. Montseny wrote about her version of the new woman though hers was pointedly different from the flapper or *garçonne*. She first said what her new woman would not be: “an androgynous thing, with a head starved of ideas and hair, hair plastered to her temples by cosmetics ... cigarettes in her mouth and stick in hand.”<sup>140</sup> For her the new woman would be the one who left moral and religious slavery behind and fought herself for new rights and equal liberty for “the two sexes, for all.”<sup>141</sup> She must be a “woman–woman” (*mujer–mujer*) not “a creature without

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138. The word is pejorative and apparently of Latin American origins. The *Diccionario Real Academia Española* does not list the word, either online at <http://buscon.rae.es> or in my printed copy of the 19th edition.

139. Federica Montseny, “La mujer, problema del hombre (III),” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 93 (1 April 1927), 658. According to Heiner Becker, this is not Nettleau’s expression but from a discussion between Montseny and Nettleau over Emma Goldman’s lack of interest in children. It also brought in a comment that the noted anarchist Rudolf Rocker (1873–1958) thought that Goldman was “too American.” Heiner Becker, email to the author, August 23, 2011.

140. Federica Montseny, “La mujer nueva,” *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 65 (15 May 1926), 25.

141. *Ibid.*, 24.

personality or sex.”<sup>142</sup> She describes a woman who is conscious of her own self and who recognizes that her possibilities are limitless.

Montseny referred to the novel again in 1929 as an example of literature that reflected its society. She recognized it as an important work; however, it was not on the level of Dickens or Hugo. She wrote, “the work is but an echo of expressions of anxiety, of the inversion and profound changes in customs and consciences, without being more than the premature report of a new moral and consciousness, Margueritte’s *La garçonne*, changed things, from the hairstyles of women to the femininity...”<sup>143</sup>

In the new prologue to the 1930 reprinting of her novel *La victoria*, she would return to Margueritte’s *La garçonne* and deny it as a prototype for the protagonist of her novel.<sup>144</sup> Susanna Tavera believes that the female characters of *La garçonne*, inasmuch as they are independent and self-assured, are forbears of Montseny’s character Clara.<sup>145</sup>

Montseny believed that both men and women were equally intelligent and kind and that the reverse was true — they could be equally evil. Placing

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142. *Ibid.*, 25.

143. Federica Montseny, “La creación literaria en la vida humana,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 153 (1 October 1929), 211.

144. Federica Montseny, “Prólogo” to *La victoria*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1930), 6–10.

145. In the biography Tavera wrote “without a doubt” that it was the direct inspiration, in the latter essay she is more guarded. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 98 and Susanna Tavera, “Introducció,” in Federica Montseny, *Fons La Revista Blanca: Federica Montseny i la dona nova (1923–1931)*, ed. Susanna Tavera, *Els papers del Pavelló de la República*, 4 (Barcelona: Editorial Afers/Centre d’Estudis Històrics Internacionals, 2007), 22. If anything Margueritte’s characters are negative forbears, and Montseny’s characters are a rejection of Margueritte’s. See especially the lawyer Laura Albany in Montseny’s 1932 novella *Una mujer y dos hombres*, *La Novela Ideal* 312 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1932).

women in positions of authority and power was not a solution because it would simply replicate the real problem: the problem of power. The state and power corrupted only men because women were excluded; if they shared in power both would equally be corrupted.<sup>146</sup> Her concerns, echoing those of Emma Goldman, were that women, in emulating men, lost their individual personality and that any emancipation of women would have to begin with their souls, not the state.<sup>147</sup> Montseny stated that Goldman's pamphlet, *The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation*, was the crucial analysis of the women question for anarchist women everywhere.

Montseny based her vision of existing women's movements on a familiarity with the Spanish movements and a cursory familiarity of other European and Latin American ones. She also accepted the view that nations and their peoples were comparable on an evolutionary scale. Just as she perceived the Turks as evolving rapidly, and even surpassing many Europeans in their reforms, she saw Spain as backward and behind. For Montseny, literature was a catalyst, a tool to advance evolution. "Literature, effective auxiliary of all ideals, the creation of human intellect, generous source of ideas, aesthetic cultivation and pleasant feeling, has preserved its high educational

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146. Federica Montseny, "La falta de idealidad en el feminismo," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 4.

147. Federica Montseny, "La tragedia de la emancipación femenina," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 38 (15 December 1924), 20. The pamphlet in question is *The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1906). Montseny is using *La tragédie de l'émancipation féminine*, the French translation by Émile Armand and published by his journal *L'En dehors* in Orleans, France.

mission ...will be the protector of human aspirations, a spokesman for the evolution and the careful cultivation and aesthetic feelings and ideas of man.<sup>148</sup>

This evolutionary language was completely in keeping with the contemporary debates. Marañón argued that the aspirations of the suffragists for absolute equality in the activities of the two sexes were “in flat conflict with the eternal and immutable laws of nature.”<sup>149</sup> She adopted this and argued repeatedly that including women in power and abandoning morals could not achieve the transformation of an unjust society. In the past that had only served to oppress women and men while “deflecting the progress of the entire species.”<sup>150</sup>

To Montseny, feminism’s quest was limited to seeking amelioration and equivalence to men. This meant equality in privileges and the power of their class, rather than seeking to advance humanity. In Montseny’s perspective, humanity would advance when there was no longer a distinction between the sexes and competition for individual gain ceased. “The poverty of those below, social injustice, the possibility of a more humane state, does not exist for our *cursi* feminists.”<sup>151</sup> Spanish feminism wanted to be ahead of the masses and had turned its back on life. It was as aggravatingly reactionary as the class

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148. Federica Montseny, “La estética y la originalidad en la literatura,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 8 (15 September 1923), 13.

149. Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 220. His capitalization of nature.

150. Federica Montseny, “Feminismo y humanismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 33 (1 October 1924), 12.

151. I am at a loss for a good English equivalent for *cursi*....

whose privileges it sought to share and whom it defended.<sup>152</sup> Montseny believed that a limitation of feminism was a failure to see what should be and to work for the future.<sup>153</sup> The feminist's desire for equivalency with middle-class men's current privileges, rather than seeking to expand the rights of all, was proof of feminism's lack of idealism. Feminism's desire for power would not solve anything; it would only prolong the disease. Feminism's lack of ideals combined with its egoism was a failure of morality. She labeled this immorality perhaps feminism's most serious defect.<sup>154</sup>

The question of a woman as a discrete individual — a being by herself rather than taking her *raison d'être* from her masculine relative — so concerned the young Montseny that she devoted an entire novel, *La victoria*, more than two hundred pages, to this issue. She was adamant that women had to remain not only independent of men but also different from men; different in their capacity for childbearing and maternal sentiments. Women should have complete freedom to choose their path and live with no options closed to them. Anything else was at best reformism, or small mindedness, which was damaging, and at worst a betrayal.

Montseny advocated humanism because, aside from her beliefs that feminism was morally corrupt and the movement's demands were potentially harmful, she believed that men also suffered due to discrimination against

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152. Federica Montseny, "La falta de idealidad en el feminismo," *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 13 (1 December 1923), 3.

153. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

154. *Ibid.*, 4.

women. The demands of feminism were harmful because men could either co-opt women into the corruption of power or the pressure of feminism could worsen society, it would foment a counterbalancing cult of masculinity (*masculinismo*). Men also failed to completely develop and evolve as human beings because of their special privileges. While Montseny's complaints about the political impact of feminism are the most direct, having read her work, I see her fears include men. She worries that society is stunting their evolution as well. While her arguments are usually specifically addressed to women's issues, there are enough comments and developments in her fiction to understand that her fears are for humanity —hence her stress on humanism rather than feminism or masculinism.

If feminism became party to the state with its attendant vices — “privilege, control, moral and religious intolerance” — Montseny claimed there would be an abridgement of the freedom of men, women, and minorities who have managed to shed “intellectual obscurantism and barbarism.” She frequently reiterated that feminism would have a further negative impact by retarding the evolution of society.

I think the issue of the sexes is clear, abundantly clear: absolute equality in all aspects for both; independence for both; empowerment for two, and an open path, comprehensive and universal for all species. Anything else is reformism, relativistic, conditional and a traitor in some, reactionary, narrow-minded, uncompromising and damaging in others. Feminism? Never! Humanism always.<sup>155</sup>

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155. Federica Montseny, “Feminismo y humanismo,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 33 (1 October 1924), 13.



While Montseny's central concern was the development of woman's individual self as part of humanity, she did not neglect the material conditions of their existence. She pointed out, again echoing Goldman, that employment was the one area where women had made the greatest strides, though at the cost of what both perceived as having been a drain on women's physical well being. Even here, Montseny brought the argument back to her central concern: has this progress improved the outlook of humanity as a whole, or have a few women benefitted at the expense of the rest? Montseny argued that this liberation was not a truly profound liberation of the spirit, since for the majority of women conditions were as narrowly prescribed as before.<sup>156</sup>

Seeking to speed up the pace of change and to accelerate evolution in Spain, in 1925 Montseny wrote *La victoria*, a full-length novel offering a model of the woman of tomorrow — a woman whose sense of individuality and self-confidence Montseny hoped would raise the issue of social relations between the sexes in anarchist circles. Her exemplar could speed up the pace of change by presenting a progressive model of a woman who did not settle for less than complete freedom; a woman for whom compromise was a loss. For her, the dream of remaking women was not utopian though it necessarily involved the remaking of men as well. This was evolution and she could nudge it forward by presenting a model woman, a woman of the future. The

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156. Federica Montseny, "La tragedia de la emancipación femenina," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 38 (15 December 1924), 19.

following chapters will examine this novel, *La victoria*, and its 1927 sequel, *El hijo de Clara*.

## CHAPTER 8: “A TREE WITHOUT FRUIT, A ROSEBUSH WITHOUT ROSES”

“A woman without children is a tree without fruit, a rosebush without roses.”<sup>1</sup>

In the next two chapters, I examine Montseny’s fictional character Clara Delval, the female protagonist of Montseny’s first two novels, *La victoria* (1925) and *El hijo de Clara* (1927). Montseny used Delval to deal with the “Woman Question,” attacking the state and political feminism; moreover, she also used Clara to voice her views on the contemporary scientific debates in Spain

over the role of women in the evolution of humanity.<sup>2</sup> Montseny expressed her ideal in terms of the individual of both sexes. For Montseny, the advanced human being — the ideal man *and* woman — possessed self-knowledge, exercised self-control, and was tolerant of others who were also seeking their own individuality. An advanced person would be so self-conscious and secure that she or he would completely “respect the unlimited right of individuality of others.”<sup>3</sup>

I have chosen to discuss these two novels for several reasons. They were her first two published novels and they share the ideas she expressed in her shorter fiction and journalism. Due to cost and length, the audience for these novels was smaller than for the *Novela Ideal* subscription series, but the length was important because it allowed her to expand on her ideas past the

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1. Federica Montseny, “La mujer, problema del hombre IV,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 94 (15 April 1927), 682.

2. I have used Montseny’s journalism in the previous chapter to analyze the same questions but here I focus on her first two novels.

3. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara III,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 25.

subscription series' thirty-two-page limit. Mary Nash sees her work as part of left-wing women's formation of a new gender identity in the twenties. This new gender identity came to the fore briefly during the Republic before the Nationalists brutally suppressed it.<sup>4</sup> For Nash, this modernization was Spanish participation in the pan-European debates over the "new woman" and the changes in gender relations spawned during the First World War, especially the impact of the mass entry of women into the labor market.<sup>5</sup> Combined with the discourse of difference promoted by Spanish reformers such as Gregorio Marañón, women were becoming modern but were still limited to motherhood as their principal role in society. This in turn served as the justification by these reformers that women's principal duty was in the home, as the *ángel del hogar*. Montseny based the new gender identity not on the entry of women into the labor market but on their ability to autonomously define themselves, to be fully independent of the men in their lives. Her modernity was the ability of women to simultaneously be agents in the transformation of gender roles as well as social change. Boundaries set by men should not limit female agency, but women fighting alone could not bring about change. Rather, that would be a shared process. Ultimately, to be modern was to have a single standard of morality for men and women, and to

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4. Nash, "Ideals of Redemption," in Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, 357.

5. See Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality* and Nash, "En torno a las consecuencias sociales de la primera guerra mundial."

abandon both the *donjuanismo* of some men and the model of the *perfecta casada / ángel del hogar* for women.<sup>6</sup>

While there were some autobiographical elements in the novels, they were not as autobiographical as her third novel, *La indomable* (1928). Its central character, Vida, was similar to Clara; one advertisement called her a figurative twin. However, this novel received less attention or critical response, and thus was less controversial than the first two novels. Montseny published *La victoria* and *El hijo de Clara* in the stable period of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.<sup>7</sup> The bourgeois press reviewed *La victoria* and it drew comments from readers in Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cuba, France, and the United States, as well as Spain. The important liberal Madrid daily *El Sol*, which reflected the aspirations of liberal regenerationist élites, reviewed both *La victoria* and *El hijo de Clara*.<sup>8</sup> By 1931, the Spanish monarchy had

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6. The Brazilian anarchist Maria Lacerda de Moura clearly states this in her *Religião do amor e da beleza*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Empresa Editora o Pensamento, 1929), 85. Maria Lacerda de Moura was a Brazilian individualist anarchist, sex activist, and popular author. I found fragments of de Moura's correspondence with Montseny in the AGGCE, the first letter dated July 13, 1925 where she calls Montseny her "noble friend" and calls *La victoria* magnificent. In English see Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). I thank Barbara Weinstein for this reference. See the following chapter for Moura's critical response to Montseny.

7. The sequence is as follows: *La victoria* 1925, *El hijo de Clara* 1927, and *La indomable* (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1928).

8. Founded in December 1917, *El Sol* soon published many of the leading writers of the period, including Ortega y Gasset. It was sympathetic to labor as a force of regeneration but only to those unions of the moderate and social democratic tendency. It focused on news and eschewed coverage of bullfights and the lotteries, as well as the sensationalist coverage of crime typical of the majority of Spanish newspapers in the period. It carried a listing of *La Revista Blanca's* contents, reviewed all three of Montseny's novels, and carried presumably paid advertisements of *La Revista Blanca's* publications. For an example see *El Sol*, 12, no. 3495 (14 October 1928), 2.

collapsed and Montseny wrote no more full-length novels, devoting her time instead to political meetings and several propaganda tours.

### THE NOVELS

Montseny's work sought to describe what was wrong with the present reality while inventing and shaping a new one. Montseny did not directly address questions of making a living. The assumption was that Clara had sufficient income from her teaching.<sup>9</sup> When another character asks Clara how she supports herself, she dismisses the question as unimportant.<sup>10</sup> Romantic fiction frequently ignored mundane subjects such as work and income. In *El hijo de Clara* there was a seemingly unending availability of funds — not that Clara was rich, but financial need never intruded. *La victoria* acknowledges Clara's straitened circumstances due her father's death, which served as a partial explanation of Clara's work as a teacher. I do not see this as a weakness in her works of imagination but rather as an attempt to forge an imaginary community based on a shared ideal of individuality, regardless of the individual's sex.

The imaginary was the real so money, work, etc., were displaced in her fantasy to make way for the interpersonal; the cultural changes that Montseny foresaw in a new future. The function of the novel was to allow for presenting issues and as a forum for debate. "The novel is better placed than other public sphere institutions to air collective anxieties for it can invent its stories,

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9. In canonical works of fiction, especially by male authors, the male protagonist frequently lacks financial or other concerns. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 4.

10. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 16.

tailoring them to highlight specific concerns.”<sup>11</sup> Clara was in a liminal position, simultaneously establishing her own identity while trying to transform female identity; the modern woman alluded to earlier in the Nash reference. Women established their identity in the period through their relationship to a male relative. Because Clara had no father, no brother, no spouse, no sons, she had no identity in contemporary Spanish society. Montseny rejected the idea of defining women’s value only in relation to men. She gave Clara a subjectivity that was notable not only for its agency, independence, and conscious autonomy, but also for its rejection of dependence on men. These two novels contained the ideal woman, and the ideal man, of Montseny’s imagined future.

### ***LA VICTORIA***

Montseny was just twenty years old in 1925, when she published *La victoria*, her first novel.<sup>12</sup> The subtitle of *La victoria* conveyed her goal in writing the novel. “A novel in which is narrated the moral problems that arise for a woman of modern ideas.” The author’s note after the title page asked women to read it closely and men to read it calmly and dispassionately. Later advertisements in other *La Revista Blanca* publications framed the novel’s issues positively as based on a single woman’s struggles not to lose her identity and dignity. She was to defend her right to be an independent being who was

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11. Labanyi. *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 5.

12. Apparently there was an earlier novel, *La tragedia de un pueblo*, of which only a spectral reference remains. *La Revista Blanca* stated that it was publishing another novel by Urales in serial form rather than that of Montseny because of the official censorship. “Cambio de novelas,” *La Revista Blanca* 1, no. 1 (1 June 1923), 23.

socially equal to men.<sup>13</sup> A *La Revista Blanca* notice admitted the novel's radical critique of the conjugal contract.<sup>14</sup> A later notice in the journal added that the protagonist was a woman who wanted to enjoy the same freedoms as men and to have the same education. "We do not hesitate to say that this is the most radical defense of the intellectual and moral condition of her sex, [one] so radical that many radicals do not agree with it."<sup>15</sup> However, a month later the notices became less positive: the novel was about a woman who "struggled in vain to live a life by her own ideals in conflict with the present preoccupations of men."<sup>16</sup> Whatever the reasons behind the shift, *La Revista Blanca* continued to promote the work in its pages and on the covers of works in the *La Novela Ideal* series. The novel sold well enough to go into subsequent editions, despite being well beyond the wages of the ordinary worker.<sup>17</sup> The second edition also added a brief prologue in which Montseny responded to her critics.<sup>18</sup>

The central figure in *La Victoria* was Clara Delval, who was twenty-three years old, strong, healthy, full of illusions, hope, and with an unlimited

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13. These were notices on the back covers of Montseny's second and third novels, *El hijo de Clara*, and *La Indomable*.

14. "La victoria," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 43 (1 March 1925), 1–2.

15. "La victoria," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 44 (15 March 1925), 1.

16. "La victoria," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 46 (15 April 1925), 39.

17. The novel cost 2 pesetas, which was relatively expensive for a worker. I suspect that many of its purchasers were *ateneos* and libraries.

18. "La victoria," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 162 (15 February 1930), XI. The notice also added that because of the demands by women for her photograph, they were including one in the second printing as a gift to the readers of the publishing house. Three months later there was the added comment that the photograph was not for vanity or pedantry, but out of friendship. "La victoria," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 168 (15 May 1930), VIII.



faith in the future.<sup>19</sup> As her name implies, Clara was perceptive; she saw things clearly and with a level head.<sup>20</sup> Lest anyone missed it, Montseny declared that Clara was exactly like her name on the very first page. The novel traced several relationships between Clara and other characters as she sought not only to develop her ideals through self-discovery but also to maintain these ideals. This was in keeping with the modes of social modernist fiction in which “relationships and communication, rather than male modernist hermeticism and isolation, lie at the heart of the personal realist novel mode of the Spanish women writers.”<sup>21</sup> Each of these relationships gave Montseny the chance to expound to readers her philosophy while critiquing male types and simultaneously developing her own personality as well, paralleling the same process for Clara.<sup>22</sup>

An orphan living with her mother in a small cottage left by her father, Clara had to work to support the family.<sup>23</sup> While the father was a respected doctor, he left only the barest amount of savings (and an “overstuffed library”), so Clara had to earn her living as a rationalist educator, teaching during the week.<sup>24</sup> Sundays for Clara and her mother, as for most Spaniards, was the one

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19. This is an abridgement of the adjectives used to describe Clara. Luis Aurelio complained in his review that Montseny surrounded Clara with so many adjectives “as to make one dizzy,” Luis Aurelio, “Lecturas: ‘*La victoria*’ de Federica Montseny,” *Solidaridad: Periódico quincenal de los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo*, no. 101 (25 June 1927), 4.

20. Clara is the feminine of *claro*, clear and Delval could be “of the valley” (*del valle* in Spanish or *del vall* in Catalan).

21. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 6.

22. What was revolutionary was Montseny advocacy of a union between absolute equals, not a union based on only romance or convenience.

23. Montseny specifically refers to her as an orphan, despite the surviving mother.

24. Both of Montseny’s parents were rationalist educators.

full day of rest and of excursions since the workweek ran from early Monday to Saturday afternoon.<sup>25</sup> Sunday was the one day when they could go outside the city to a more rural ambience, to have clean and fresh air, sunlight, and nature.<sup>26</sup>

During one Sunday visit to the park Clara hears an orator expounding on anarchism and she finds both the ideas and the speaker attractive.<sup>27</sup> She discovers that the man was Roberto Montblanch, an important figure at the *Ateneo de Divulgación ideológico*, the Athenaeum for Ideological Dissemination.<sup>28</sup> The Montblanch name also places Roberto's mountain in contrast to Clara's valley. Clara writes to Roberto asking to meet to learn more about his ideology. He responds cordially, they meet, and shortly afterwards, Clara becomes a lecturer at the ateneo. There she also comes into conflict with a character named Evora, a woman described as being without morals or ideals, who criticizes Clara for her firm moral stance. Clara's attraction to Roberto is shared, but in conversing with him, she realizes that he does not want a woman who is a partner, one who can not only challenge him but who

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25. The Decreto-Ley of June 8, 1925, established Sunday as obligatory day of rest in shops and factories. Enforcing it was another matter. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974)*, 90.

26. The FAI was founded at one such excursion in 1927 on a Valencia beach.

27. Montseny, *La victoria*, 11-13.

28. Montseny also described Roberto as an orphan who lived with his mother. Montblanch is Catalan for White Mountain. Montseny is a mountain in Catalonia and in the novel this reflected the family's fondness for pseudonyms and names that referred to mountains such as her father's Federico Urales (the Urals) and Ricardo Sharfenstein (sharp stone). Montseny originally wrote her first unpublished (lost?) novel using the pseudonym Blanca Montsan, "healthy mountain." Mabel was one of her other commonly used pseudonyms, mostly in *El Luchador* in the thirties.

could also be his superior.<sup>29</sup> Instead, Roberto falls for his young, innocent — and frankly simple — neighbor, Aurora (Dawn).

Meanwhile, in the courtyard of the family of her friend and neighbor Laura, Clara meets Lucerna, a dandyish journalist to whom she takes an intense dislike. Clara not only has no feelings for him (except an angry repulsion at his arrogance, snobbery, and egoism); she flatly tells him that being with him is a waste of time. Lucerna responds by telling Clara that he wants and would take her, even against her will and, if necessary, through physical force. Clara rests assured that she is able to resist him — equally violently — with a revolver.<sup>30</sup> Lucerna, now resoundingly rejected, writes disparaging columns about Clara, portraying her as the antithesis of femininity, an anti-woman. Finally, Clara meets Fernando Oswald, a popular writer of novels who is handsome and widely perceived to be pro-woman and consequently is popular with them.<sup>31</sup> Fernando asks Clara to teach his sister. Clara and Fernando fall in love but here Montseny breaks from the conventions of romance novels in crucial ways. Rather than living happily ever after, Clara rejects a relationship with Fernando and remains single. She rejects him because of his patronizing ideas about the relationship between the sexes: that the only proper role of women was through and within the lives of their men. The novel concludes with Clara's victory as Montseny presents the

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29. Aurora became a friend of Clara's, and they all stay in touch through the two novels.

30. Montseny, *La victoria*, 110. That a woman would carry a weapon was equally shocking.

31. In Spain, writers would often take as pseudonyms foreign surnames. Jo Labanyi, conversation with the author, April 23, 2009.

rejection of Fernando as the triumph of ideals over romance, of independence over security, and of the individuality of a solitary woman against the demands of society.<sup>32</sup> Clara's assertion of independence was her victory, the victory.

### ***EL HIJO DE CLARA***

*La victoria* was followed two years later by a sequel, *El hijo de Clara*, published by *La Revista Blanca* in 1927 with the subtitle *La segunda parte de La victoria*. The advertisements presented the book as revisiting the same questions about love that caused such debates around *La victoria*. This time Montseny gives Clara a son who has the same misfortunes in love.<sup>33</sup> The notices referred to him as similar to his mother in that he was a misfit, but the son was Clara's creation, an attempt to surpass herself as a human being. The notices further stated that the son represented the overwhelming thirst and restlessness of humanity for advancement, and that like his mother he was born too soon. His problems were those of a man out of step with his times, isolated, the product of an "extraordinary maternity" by Clara.<sup>34</sup> Because the focus turned to Clara's son in this novel, so Montseny's focus turned to the development of the individual from child to adult while continuing many of the same arguments as *La victoria*.

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32. Here, as well, Montseny could be providing a counter to Miguel de Unamuno's 1914 novel *Niebla*. "By associating enthusiasm for the strong woman with the ridiculous 'mystic anarchist' uncle Fermín and the equally caricaturesque Augusto Perez, the narrator of *Niebla* begins a campaign against the independent woman that ends with her wicked betrayal of the trusting, decent, loyal Augusto." Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 81. Unamuno was a contributor to *La Revista Blanca* in its first series, 1898–1905.

33. Gómez de la Serna's 1922 novel *Gran hotel* was set in a Swiss luxurious hotel and detailed sexual adventures of a young Spaniard. Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 274.

34. "El hijo de Clara," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 107 (1 November 1927), I.

Fernando, Lucerna, and Roberto again serve as foils for Clara. The three men prove through their actions and the ideas that they articulate and illuminate why they are still unsuitable for Clara, reinforcing the power and clarity of her earlier judgments of them.<sup>35</sup> There are echoes of the earlier critique of Clara by the three men that she is too cerebral and not feminine because she refuses to allow men to guide her actions.

The sequel opens with Fernando Oswald, his mind on his dashed love for Clara, returning to Barcelona. He assumes that he will find her and she will be miserable because she had rejected him. He discovers that the Ateneo de Divulgación ideológico has closed and that Clara has left the city for a small village on the coast, where she lives with her mother, a disturbed woman named Silvia, and two children, one of whom was Clara's son. Clara stuns Fernando by greeting him with an infant in her arms, her fatherless son Nardo.<sup>36</sup> In the new novel, Clara is still perceptive and anticipates what Fernando expects her situation to be. The strength of her character and foresight demonstrates the impossibility of any relationship with Fernando, evidenced by his fantasy and her reality.<sup>37</sup> Clara rebuffs his series of questions

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35. We learn that Robert and Aurora have fled to Buenos Aires and remained together despite Fernando's infidelity.

36. Nardo's paternity is explained only at the climax of the novel and serves as a catalyst for the plot. Nardo is the Spanish name of spikenard, a medicinal plant known for its aromatic oil which is used in perfumes, sedatives, and for problems when giving birth, Andrew Dalby, "Spikenard," In *The Oxford Companion to Food*, ed. Alan Davidson and Tom Jaine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 748. It is also possibly a flower worn by Spanish women as an adornment, Jo Labanyi, conversation with the author, April 2, 2009.

37. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 7 for Fernando's expectations and 17 for Clara's riposte, which he "unconsciously" recognizes as being correct, and that is what "subconsciously" brought him to her after five years, 18. I believe Montseny is arguing that men have the capability of realizing the truth, but it will require a great deal of education and self-examination to do so.

about her living situation and eventually he tells her that he too has a child, a daughter named Blanca (whom he calls Amorosa, “Beloved”), and he wants Clara to educate her. Clara agrees and educates her alongside Nardo.<sup>38</sup> Blanca and Fernando temporarily fade from the novel, which now focuses on Nardo, who embarks on a series of adventures that detail his education in three distinct phases.

The first phase is at home with Clara (and presumably Blanca); the second with Clara as she takes Nardo on a tour through Spain; and finally, in the third phase, Nardo is on his own as he explores Europe, all reminiscent of Voltaire’s *Candide*. Nardo becomes a professor at a unique school in Paris and, more crucially, he becomes an important political figure as the leader of an international movement to prevent a war between Europe and North America.<sup>39</sup> The French government imprisons and eventually expels him. He ends up back with Clara in Catalonia where he finally learns the secret of his birth.

The death of Silvia served as the mechanism by which Montseny cleared up Nardo’s origins. Silvia, in the delirium caused by her terminal illness, mistakes Nardo for someone named Esteban. Immediately upon Silvia’s

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See her use of the subjunctive to express uncertainty in her article “En defensa de Clara III” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), examined in Chapter 7.

38. Since the body of the novel focuses on Nardo, Blanca/Amorosa is only mentioned in the very beginning and at the climax.

39. Montseny does not specify which countries are threatening war. She had a very low opinion of the United States, an opinion reinforced by the case of Sacco and Vanzetti and ironically by her positive reviews of U.S. authors such as John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair, and Sinclair Lewis. One cannot be certain that it is the United States as Montseny used America to refer to both continents.

death, Nardo asks Clara for the true story behind his birth and the mystery of his father. As Clara explains, years earlier she went to America to live in a remote community with a young doctor, Esteban, his companion Silvia, and their young son. It was a happy and peaceful community where everyone lived in harmony with each other and nature. Then the government decided it wanted to exercise its control over the area. It told everyone they had to submit to its authority, whereupon they refused and resisted. The state's army invaded and in a series of battles left only Clara, Silvia, and Esteban alive. The army had killed or captured everyone else, including their son. Because of her grief over the loss of her son, Silvia lost her mind. The three fled to the capital where Esteban assassinated the president. When the army trapped them in a house, Clara asked Esteban to spend the remaining time with her and to father a child. They had one hour of "passion," after which Clara took Silvia away and the two fled to Spain.<sup>40</sup> Nardo is the offspring of one hour of "pure and natural passion;" he is the son of Clara and Esteban. After Blanca proclaims her love for Nardo, he rejects her because he does not love her, paralleling his mother's earlier rejection of Blanca's father. To accept her love when he does

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40. This is the reverse of the usual flight by political refugees, as anarchists usually left Spain for Latin America. The role of Spanish exiles in the labor and anarchist movements in the Western hemisphere is important in Chile, Cuba, Mexico, and especially Argentina. See for example, John Mason Hart, *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860–1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978). The Spanish exile Abad de Santillán was among the leaders and an early historian of the FORA, the syndicalist trade union in Argentina. For an anarchist account of the travels through the Americas by the famous anarchists Durruti and Francisco Ascaso Abadía (1901–1936) in the mid twenties see Abel Paz [Diego Camacho], *Buenaventura Durruti en la revolución española*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 1996). Translated into English as *Durruti in the Spanish Revolution* (San Francisco: AK Press, 2006).

not share it would be wrong.<sup>41</sup> Nardo leaves Spain again to devote himself to the fight for peace.

Through all this Nardo remains politically active, yet the novel focus on Nardo's romances. These all contribute to Nardo's being in a constant state of learning and evolving. He is involved with several women who represent different archetypes. Just as none of his mother's suitors were appropriate, none of Nardo's romances led to anything lasting.

Nardo represents the positive achievement of the passion and the success of "that one hour" that resulted from the coming together of two autonomous individuals. Contrary to Fernando's fear at the beginning of the novel, Clara has experienced motherhood through love and the result is the almost perfect child, Nardo. Clara has now told Nardo his history. The telling of the tale involves several dramatic elements and it serves as the ending of the book's mystery of Nardo's heritage.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELS**

### **USE OF SPACE**

The role of physical place in Clara's meetings with the major characters in *La victoria* is significant. Clara meets the major characters outside of her home, in public or semi-public spaces, which paralleled the increasing presence of women in public during the period. She first encounters Roberto in a park, among groves of trees, as he expounds on anarchism, which links

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41. This was a weak plot device on Montseny's part in paralleling the two stories. In case any readers might have missed the parallel, Fernando remarked that Nardo breaks his daughter just as his mother broke Fernando.



anarchism with nature. She meets Lucerna at her neighbors, close friends, in a space that is simultaneously public and urban but also domestic since it is their home. Clara goes to Roberto's apartment to meet with his mother, a space gendered female and domestic, but also Roberto's. Throughout *La victoria*, no one ever enters Clara's space; she preserves that for herself alone.

Clara transgresses several gendered boundaries in dealing with Lucerna. She rejects his attentions, arms herself, and traverses the city alone, openly breaking the gendered restrictions on the flâneur, typically a masculine figure (as in the work of Baudelaire and Benjamin). Instead, Clara evokes the reality of women travelling alone and independently in the city, a constant challenge to gender boundaries and the masculinization of public space.<sup>42</sup> In seeking to protect herself, she asserts a dual independence of active resistance and self-assertion, which recalls Carmela's shotgun in *Resurrección* and Nina's switchblade in *Los hijos de la calle*. In *La victoria*, the weapon became a woman's revolver, a *revólver de señora*, evidence of her higher class standing and resources. Clara already owns the gun because of the dangers that face a woman who "goes about the city and makes an independent life."<sup>43</sup> Montseny argues in this passage that it is dangerous for a woman to travel about the city alone but that she should do it. Montseny advances the radical idea of a woman travelling independently and unchaperoned. She escalates its

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42. According to Magnien, this character was also a mark of modernity in the Spanish novel of the twenties. The flâneur is also a symbol of the transition from the tradition / countryside to the modern / urban city, itself a marker of modern life. Magnien, "Crisis de la novela," in Serrano Lacarra and Salaün, *Los felices años veinte*, 292–293.

43. After Lucerna's threat she checks to make sure it worked. Montseny, *La victoria*, 111.

radicalism by arming a woman against potential rape, treating the possession of a revolver as a matter of course. The novel is set at the very end of the period of the gun battles between the employers, supporting the *Sindicatos libres*, on one side and the CNT's *Sindicatos únicos* on the other. This was a period when an individual of the wrong class or politics was subject to severe penalties if found with a weapon.

Finally, in asserting both independence and self-determination Clara is contravening the passivity and submission expected of women in the period. The attacks on Clara by Lucerna, the epitome of a *flâneur*, were very much in keeping with similar contemporaneous critical portrayals of independent women.<sup>44</sup> “The ‘masculine’ woman, who usurps men’s role, refusing to marry and settle down to domestic life, emerges as an important figure in male-authored novels during the period when feminism was gaining ground in Spain.”<sup>45</sup> Clara rejected the domestic ideal of the *ángel del hogar*. Lucerna’s attacks on Clara made her smile bitterly, for she knew that while many respected her as a defender of an ideal, others uncritically accepted the logic of Lucerna’s attacks.<sup>46</sup>

Clara first meets Fernando as an anonymous individual in the neutral and transitional space of a train compartment where Clara and her close friend Laura are reading. This encounter is truly utopian (no fixed location, hence a reference to Thomas More's “no place”). The space of the coach is ambiguous

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44. The prevalent view was that a woman out alone at night was a prostitute.

45. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 63.

46. Montseny, *La victoria*, 114–115.

in gender, but at the same time clearly modern with railroad and its locomotive, which is traditionally gendered male.<sup>47</sup> The compartment is enclosed and hence private and yet it is public since it contains a stranger. The women are reading, a feminine domestic activity, but when discussing their reading they are joined in the discussion by the male so it becomes public. It turns out that the young man is Fernando Oswald, the author of the novel *Laura* is reading, a writer popular with women. This encounter simultaneously represents the blurring and blending of private and public spheres, and the transgressive crossing of boundaries by both men and women.<sup>48</sup>

A further encounter by Clara with Fernando occurs in the more public, political, and masculine space of a newspaper.<sup>49</sup> Fernando wants to continue the conversation begun on the train and Clara tells him that he could find her at the Ateneo, a space that was public yet has also become hers. Parallel to Clara's refusal to be tied to a less than satisfactory man is her maintenance of the privacy of her home, while she seeks and finds men in public places. In *El hijo de Clara*, she allows Fernando into her home, where he leaves his daughter — but by then, she was no longer searching for a man.

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47. *Locomotora* (locomotive) is a feminine noun in Spanish but its phallic shape, that men worked on railroads, and its symbolic link with speed and progress makes it a masculine object.

48. Montseny's characters frequently use trains and ships places for introspection, and sometimes liberating spaces. They are enclosed and independent, sufficiently without outside interference, yet liberating from the potentially repressive possibilities of observation.

49. Female journalists were relatively recent and unusual.

## IDEAS OF WOMEN

Montseny believed that she was the first in anarchist literature to create a female protagonist with the intention of speaking to female aspirations. She stated that there had been anarchist novels with female ideals before but these rarely examined what women might want. Some had sought to validate the dignity of women, but “scarcely a few” had sought to do this and raise consciousness at the same time.<sup>50</sup> This claim of Montseny’s is exceedingly difficult to prove, as most of the literature she is referring to is ephemeral and hard to acquire. Certainly she critiqued the roles of women and men in the novels of the Colombian novelist José María Vargas Vila, but she also denied he was an anarchist — though he was popular enough among the anarchist audience for her to devote numerous essays roundly criticizing his work.<sup>51</sup> It is also clear that without the adjective “anarchist” this claim would not stand up,

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50. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara III,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 23.

51. See Montseny’s criticisms and the responses beginning in 1924 and continuing into 1925 in Federica Montseny, “La obra de los mediocres,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 30 (15 August 1924), 16–19; Ignacio Cornejo, “Vargas Vila y su obra,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 34 (15 October 1924), 1–2; Federica Montseny, “Alrededor de Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 35 (1 November 1924), 1–2; Juan Serret, “Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 40 (15 January 1925), 39; Juan Serret, “Vargas Vila (conclusión),” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 38; Federica Montseny, “Más sobre Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 42 (15 February 1925), 1–2; Ignacio Cornejo, “Vargas Vila y su obra,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 43 (1 March 1925), 37–38; Juan Serret, “Un poco más sobre Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 52 (15 July 1925), 38–39; Juan Serret, “Un poco más sobre Vargas Vila (Continuación),” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 53 (1 August 1925), 38–39; Julia Acosta, “Las mujeres y Vargas Vila: Contestando un saludo,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 56 (15 September 1925), 37; Matilde Mota, “Las mujeres y Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 56 (15 September 1925), 37–38; Federica Montseny, “Las mujeres y Vargas Vila,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 57 (1 October 1925), 1–3. Montseny attacked Vargas Vila again in 1929 in “El ideal humano en la vida y en el arte,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 142 (15 April 1929), 652–654. Finally, the advice column also dealt with Vargas Vila once each in 1935 and 1936: “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 317 (15 February 1935), 166; and “Consultorio general,” *La Revista Blanca* 14, no. 363 (3 January 1936), 1230–1231.

as Carmen de Burgos and Margarita Nelken wrote novels/novellas of female independence and the consequences of patriarchal oppression. De Burgos and Nelken also lived such lives and suffered for their independence.

Montseny contrasts Clara's personality to that of her mother; the two are described as being polar opposites.<sup>52</sup> Montseny described the stark differences not only between Clara and her mother but also between the mothers of Clara and Roberto. Clara's mother is timid, weak, and passive while Roberto's mother is determined, strong, and energetic. Clara's mother is a simple and loving companion and, while she is the ideal of contemporary men, Clara is not. Roberto's mother is a revolutionary mother, a fearless fighter for the people (*el pueblo*) as well as for her son, who had lost his father in a social conflict.<sup>53</sup> The police are often banging on the door to take one or the other of them to jail.<sup>54</sup> Roberto's mother is an exemplar for Clara.<sup>55</sup> In

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52. Montseny, *La victoria*, 9–10.

53. Frequently in her fiction social conflict orphans the children and women became widows. Antagonistic encounters with the police and state authorities was also a frequent experience for the many of the readers of the publications as well as for Montseny and her family, since her father was a frequent target of the police and the family residence was often searched.

54. Montseny, *La victoria*, 59–60. It is worth noting that here Montseny is using tropes of motherhood while contrasting them. The revolutionary mother versus the *ángel del hogar*. In creating Roberto's mother Montseny was using Maxim Gorki's *Mother*. Gorki was one of many authors that *La Revista Blanca* published in inexpensive editions. For an analysis of this theme in a contemporary group of Cuban anarchist writers (one of whom was published by *La Revista Blanca*) see Shaffer, "Prostitutes, Bad Seeds, and Revolutionary Mothers in Cuban Anarchism."

55. The temptation is to see biographical elements in the novels, but the evidentiary record is very fragmented. The Salamanca archive contains long unreciprocated love letters from Antonio Estevez, a young Spanish anarchist living in New York at the time of the letters. Estevez also told her that he knows her heart belongs to another. Unfortunately, we do not have her replies. Antonio Estevez to Federica Montseny, letters dated April 10, 1926 (five pages), June 7, 1926 (fourteen pages), and no date (nine pages, of which the first is missing). AGGCE. Estevez would come back to Spain and edit the Valencia newspaper of the Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias, the anarchist youth movement. See Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Estevez, Antonio."

Clara, Montseny created her ideal — the woman who is independent, vivacious, intelligent, and strong willed.

Montseny was contemptuous of those who appeared to be modern in their appearance and attitudes but whose social and moral vision she thought was limited to the gratification of their selfish desires. She included in the novel a scathing description of Evora, the woman who frequents the Ateneo de Divulgación, where she forces a confrontation with Clara. Montseny describes Evora as a typical woman (“and not a few men”) who think that she has “modern ideas” but only take what she serves her pleasure, such as free love.<sup>56</sup> Evora loudly and publically denounced Clara as being “so aristocratic, so honorable, and so bourgeois— you find it so disgusting to socialize with a woman like me, emancipated from all prejudices.”<sup>57</sup> Evora was free to hang about the Ateneo, which places her outside the working—classes (and made her the female parallel to Lucerna), but also removed her from comparison with those who go to the Ateneo seeking self—improvement. Evora’s reasons for being at the Ateneo were entirely egotistical and carnal. This was Roberto’s future emancipated woman, emancipated from morals and prejudices, and, in Evora’s case, Montseny depicted her as a woman of low ideals and repute.

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56. Montseny, *La victoria*, 158. From the construction of the beginning of the original Spanish sentence, I think there is something significant that I am not recognizing about the name Evora.

57. *Ibid.*, 161. Montseny and other anarchists argued that this conception was false and self-serving. Montseny made Evora and Lucerna the advocates of a false type of free love thus exposing the shallowness and selfishness of their practices. Ana Aguado uses the more applicable term “free union” (*unión libre*). Aguado, “Prólogo,” in Eulàlia Vega, *Pioneras y revolucionarias: Mujeres libertarias durante la República, la Guerra Civil y el Franquismo* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2010), 13.

Several male anarchists, including the French individualist Émile Armand, advocated this freedom from morals and prejudices. Montseny was to have an ongoing debate over Clara and Evora with Armand (see the following chapter).

*El hijo de Clara* continued the depiction of potential lovers, but parallel with the change of the protagonist's sex, it focused on women. In Nardo's travels through Europe, he has a series of romantic adventures, which are important for his education and development. *El hijo de Clara* has more types of women than there were types of men in *La victoria*. Unlike the three male types of *La victoria*, in *El hijo de Clara* there are seven distinct women. First, Nardo encounters the eminently practical Englishwoman, Mary, representing monetary and material advancement. A relationship is possible but it will be short because she will soon return home and marry someone more socially appropriate. Then there is the Greek Hellé, representing primitive bacchanalian madness, who awakens his physical senses in Athens.<sup>58</sup> The contrasting German student Gretchen and the French woman Giselle follow as Nardo attends university in Paris. The two women offer the contrast between a life of the mind and a purely physical carnality. Gretchen transforms love into a philosophical abstraction and since she wants only an intellectual relationship and Nardo wants a more physical relationship, it ends. Giselle is all about carnal pleasure, and Nardo ultimately breaks off the relationship because he finds its pure carnality emotionally unfulfilling.

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58. Hellé is the character in Greek mythology who fell off the flying ram with the Golden Fleece into the what became the Hellespont (Dardanelles). *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. "Helle."

On an alpine excursion, Nardo encounters a young woman who wishes to be left alone with her dog. A storm and the onset of night force her to take shelter with Nardo and his companions in a cave.<sup>59</sup> On parting, she allows Nardo to learn her name but tells him not to follow her. He has fallen in love with her, but obeys her wishes. Eventually, while visiting his teacher outside of Paris, he encounters her again and she tells him that she too is in love, but her love for Nardo would be so all consuming that she would lose her own identity in him, so she flees. This is Norma, who was afraid to act on love because it may tarnish her fantasy, representing the unattainable. Nardo falls in love with Emma, the Italo–Swiss consumptive who is an anarchist woman. It is Emma's ideals, self–sacrifice, and nobility that cause Nardo to fall in love. She rejects him on eugenic grounds, due to her poor health, arguing that a relationship could never work because she should never have children. Finally, there is Fernando's daughter, Blanca/Amoroso, representing the slavishly devoted woman. Blanca believes that she has to renounce her own identity and lose herself in Nardo, and Nardo rejects her for the very same reasons.

In her writing, Montseny frequently used the flower as a symbolic representation of women and in *El hijo de Clara* for a man, Nardo. In *La victoria*, Fernando admonished his sister not pick the flowers from the vine, as this will kill them. Instead, he asks her to allow them to grow, blossom, and

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59. The importance of nature and the physical enjoyment of it made strenuous pursuits such as climbing very popular. Isaac Puente wrote a pamphlet on mountain climbing to promote strenuous activities. Football however was frowned upon, especially given F.C. Barcelona's close connection to the Catalan bourgeoisie.



die on their own. Fernando was incapable of realizing this should be the metaphor for his relationship with Clara. He should allow her to develop on her own, rather than take Clara for a possession, as he admonishes his sister not to do with the roses in their garden. Nardo's romantic partners offer similar parallels, for he is as much a flower as any of the women. Montseny uses a flower for him because she wanted the symbolism of Nardo's name to enable the character to transcend gender boundaries.

Montseny uses the metaphors of flowers to describe some of the women. Mary picks wildflowers at the dig, a reference to her wish to tame Nardo, and to her eventual desire to be tamed herself (in marriage). In his letters home Nardo describes Mary as a winter flower, for she is just having a jaunt and will eventually return home to England, to make a "proper marriage" and raise children. Mary's is an artificial life. She is so unaware of and disconnected from nature and the power and unconsciousness of love that she is far from being the Ideal.<sup>60</sup> Montseny describes Mary as a flower that Nardo does not want to pick because it is of a hothouse variety and unable to exist in nature and would die outside of a controlled environment and must be nourished by a watering pail.<sup>61</sup>

In Athens, a woman named Hellé gives Nardo a bouquet of flowers, which he takes unthinkingly, and then falls desperately in love with her. She

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60. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 56.

61. Jo Labanyi points out that this is possibly a reference by Montseny to J.S. Mill's description of bourgeois women in *The Subjugation of Women*.

lived in the home of a man named Kondourioulis.<sup>62</sup> Hellé is one of the many beautiful women that Kondourioulis collects. While he is a collector of women, he does nothing either to or with them except provide shelter. The women exist only to be beautiful and to be there for his visual enjoyment. Unlike Lucerna, Kondourioulis' relationship with women is not possessive; yet, it is not free or equal either. He is not interested in these women as human beings, only as physical beauties; Kondourioulis reduces the women to being purely decorative objects. Just as picking and placing into bouquets kills the flowers, so imprisoning women as possessions destroys their souls, trinkets that Kondourioulis collects. The symbolism of both Mary and Hellé represents women as objects and not human beings in and of themselves. Nardo dreams of Hellé, he is experiencing a dream of Arcadia when Mary suddenly awakens him from this fantasy. The two extremes clash, the artificial and proper English hothouse flower and the Greek sensual wildflower — neither love is right for Nardo.

Finally, there is the symbolism of the new world for the conception of Nardo. The place is beautiful, idyllic, and covered in flowers because Silvia is a wonderful gardener. Silvia and Esteban welcome Clara and she sees her anarchist ideals in practice. It is the power of the state and the desire for control that lead to the destruction of the rural idyll. In Clara's telling of the history, there is no real reason for the state to intervene in the community and

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62. The name Hellé is a reference to classical Greece and in the novel Nardo experiences a Bacchanalian dream. For Kondourioulis I can find no inherent meaning in this name in either the Greek language or classical mythology nor could native speakers of Greek Stefanos Geroulanos and Yanni Kotsonis.

Montseny adds an anarchist moral to the destruction of rural innocence. She also creates the tumult and trauma that explain Silvia's memory loss, and why Silvia loves the flowers that she picks in Spain. In the American idyll Silvia creates life, both in gardening and in becoming a mother, and there she does not harvest the flowers. The state kills her son, in effect picking him like a flower, and tearing Silvia from nature just as she herself plucks flowers back in Spain, tearing them from life, with no memory of what lay in the past — neither what she did nor how she came to be.

### **MALE REALITIES**

*La victoria* presents men as flawed characters because they would not accept Clara on her own terms. They only accept her based on their own fantasies of women, and for Clara this is unacceptable. Because there is no possible partnership of equals, a consummated romantic relationship is impossible, although friendship is possible with both Roberto and Fernando.<sup>63</sup> In the case of Roberto, the friendship is possible because as an anarchist he is more elevated in his social ideas and because he finds the perfect — if simple — woman for him. For Fernando, the outwardly more advanced defender of women, friendship is not possible. Although they both loved each other, he seeks to dominate Clara and can neither accept nor understand her rejection of him. Unacknowledged by Montseny in this is the common assumption that since Roberto finds a sexual and physical relationship with Aurora, he could

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63. Montseny had laudatory words for intersex friendships. This was mentioned in her 1926 novella, *La última primavera*, where the female protagonist moves to Barcelona from Philadelphia. In the United States such male–female friendships were common according to Montseny.

have an intellectual friendship with Clara. Fernando is unable to have a friendship with Clara because he could not replace her with another lover. Fernando is incapable of maintaining such a relationship; his physical desires controlled him. Montseny again points out the failings of the men, their incapacity to relate to women as equals, and the limitations of perceiving women as sexual objects.

Clara blushes at the thought that romance rather than ideas is the basis for her attraction to Roberto, sexual desire rather than the companionship of the mind. Throughout the novel, we learn from Clara's introspection exactly what it is she wants in love as well as from a lover. Ideologically, Roberto would appear to be the choice, except that he cannot truly accept Clara as an equal. Roberto's heart "yearns" for her, but he is sufficiently self-conscious to realize that he was not advanced enough for Clara, and instead falls in love with the beautiful, yet simple, girl next door. Unfortunately, what Roberto wants in a woman is what Montseny believed other "men of ideas" wanted: at worst a slave, or, at best, a subordinate helpmate. Roberto articulates his ideal to Clara: he wants a woman who is more feminine than she, sweeter, less involved in ideological and theoretical debates, and full of words of love. In short, he thinks that a woman's role is to help a man be strong.<sup>64</sup> Clara's bitter response is that Roberto wants is a woman who is his possession, rather than a woman who is of and for herself. Roberto represents the typical comrade, who

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64. Montseny, *La victoria*, 67.

advocates the equality of the sexes but fails to allow for it in his own life.<sup>65</sup> Roberto wants women to be emancipated, but in some other home, not in his. He wants a woman who is submissive, obedient, weak, and docile — someone that he is able to protect and dominate.<sup>66</sup> His response to Clara is that he believes in emancipation, but all in good time and that “emancipation will be from worries, stupid morals, not from love and helping men... I want to form a family and I want a woman companion... not a man companion.”<sup>67</sup>

Lest any reader mistake Roberto’s ideas as being uniquely his or those of activists, he goes on to state that we are products of our environment and nation.<sup>68</sup> Clara acknowledges that women are weaker than men and agrees this is a product of the environment; however, she points out that it is not the nature of women that makes them so, but rather their lack of education and rights.<sup>69</sup> It is against women’s nature to be dependent; rather it is directly the result of the actions of men. Society forces women to rely upon men for support, shelter, and guidance, in the present situation. It takes an exceptionally strong man to love a woman like Clara, a woman who is not weak

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65. This problem amongst the anarchists contributed to the formation of *Mujeres Libres* in the spring of 1936.

66. Montseny, *La victoria*, 68–69.

67. *Ibid.*, 69–70. The gendered nature of the words in Roberto’s statement is clearer in the original Spanish and less cumbersome.

68. *Ibid.*, 71. Fernando will make a similar argument to Clara when he tells her that in their home they will be completely equal, but in society, outside the home, it is a different situation and that they cannot change that. *Ibid.*, 205.

69. This was in conflict with the widely known arguments of Marañón, who argued that women were biologically different than men, suited to childbearing and rearing, and anything else was to be allowed only in light of this fundamental difference. Lucia Sánchez Saornil, who would be one of the founders of *Mujeres Libres*, stated that his ideas were simply a pseudo-scientific way to control women.

and unhealthy in her body and soul.<sup>70</sup> Roberto's desire for an uncomplicated relationship, for something less than a partnership, clearly indicates to Clara that he is not the man for her.

Lucerna simply desires a plaything, representing a false idea of free love in which women are objects subjected to a man's whim. As Clara pointedly tells him, he does not love her but only desires her because she does not let him dominate her: her resistance to his charm only infatuates him, stimulating his desire. His relationship is even further from one of the mind: it is physical need, a failure to evolve beyond primitive desire. For Lucerna, Clara is a whim, he is "a man accustomed to easily triumph over women," so for her to spend any time with him is to waste time — Clara will never love him.

Roberta Johnson examined how the figure of Don Juan was ascribed different symbolic values in male and female modernist Spanish authors. Don Juan symbolized an individual for male authors and society for female authors. For male writers, Don Juan was a positive symbol of eternal Spain, while at the same time emblematic of Spain's attempts to modernize. Female authors, on the other hand, linked the metaphor of Don Juan with very specific social problems of Spain, including prostitution and social irresponsibility.<sup>71</sup> Montseny used the latter in *La victoria* in which Lucerna represents the past and traditional values where women are objects, playthings to appease the vanity of men. Clara represented a threat to tradition, a threat many observers

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70. Clara's argument and analysis continues for several pages. Montseny, *La victoria*, 28–30.

71. Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, 22.

thought women were realizing during the 1920s as more women of diverse social status moved into the public sphere and began to fully participate in economic and social life.<sup>72</sup>

Lucerna is intrusive, as the city symbolically penetrates the private and partially domestic space, and initially refuses to accept Clara's rejection, forcing his company upon her. Once he realizes that he will never succeed with Clara (and it is unclear if he knew about her pistol), he turns against her. Montseny describes him as being like the majority of men who, on having their plans dashed by the indifference or even the firm will of a woman, then speak badly of them. Lucerna rejects the independence of intelligent and cultured women, thinking of them as only worthy of conquest. In his journalism, Lucerna portrays Clara as "a type of doctor, with skirts, without femininity, feeling, grace or charms" and reserves his poisoned pen for her.<sup>73</sup>

Lucerna would also appear to be an advocate of free love. For most anarchist writers on free love, what Lucerna advocated is libertinism, with its attendant lack of social responsibility and respect for others. Lucerna benefits from open relationships because he is a male in a society where the power rests with his sex. Lucerna's sexual conquests are examples of masculine domination and authority, not love. Clara clearly distinguishes between a free love, one that involves mutual respect and an equal partnership, and entering a relationship for sexual gratification or in a subordinate status, such as

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72. For examinations in novels of what Labanyi has titled "social leakage" see Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, and Johnson, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*.

73. Montseny, *La victoria*, 114.

Lucerna desires. Lucerna is clearly unacceptable, but his *donjuanismo* coupled with his lack of respect for humanity contrasts dramatically with the novel's characterization of Clara. Thus, while Lucerna is petulant, emotional, flighty, threatening, and bounces from woman to woman, Clara is sober, rational, steady, calm, and remains on course, characteristics traditionally assigned to the male stereotype. This reversal of gender roles is not unique, however, what was unique was that Montseny did not do it to emasculate Lucerna but to empower Clara.<sup>74</sup> Montseny asks the rhetorical question of her readers: "How can men be considered superior human beings when this is regarded in the standards of the time as ideal behavior?" Clara is too firm and too clear in her ideas and thus unattainable for Roberto and Lucerna, she is too decisive to be able to accept them — lesser beings — and instead holds out for her ideal man.

#### **SCIENCE AND CHANGE**

Montseny was consciously trying to create an independent woman, one that also allowed for female desire, for women to choose the men of their dreams, for women to make their choice, and present their own ideal rather than passively respond to or accept a masculine ideal.<sup>75</sup> Even as she did this, she also struggled to make this woman a conscious partner in the forging of the new world and an active participant in the creation of the evolutionary

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74. "[A]lthough it was accepted that men could be hysterics, the symptoms of hysteria (instability, emotional excess, mimicry) constituted a caricature of prevailing misogynist definitions of femininity." Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 202.

75. Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 158.



future of humanity. Unlike those who placed a greater emphasis on the male role in selection, such as Spencer and N6voa Santos, Montseny argued that women were active participants in the evolutionary process. Women were not simple, empty vessels to be filled with seed, but conscious participants. Hence, the presence of evolutionary arguments in her work such as the role of atmosphere during the conception of a child in *La hija del verdugo* [*The Daughter of the Executioner*], and the role of the mother and her love in raising the child in *La victoria* and *El hijo de Clara*.

Evolution in the longer novels replaced nature as a key reference, though unlike nature, Montseny mostly referred to evolution indirectly, almost never directly.<sup>76</sup> Montseny's conception of social change and quasi-scientific notions of evolution, especially acquired characteristics, gave her both an optimism and an impetus to effect social change through multiple avenues. Implicit was her belief that without alternative and oppositional examples, people would have no other sources than the clerical state for information. Thus, individual evolution would be delayed – though not permanently. From the first page of *La victoria* Clara is profoundly optimistic, and that optimism persists throughout the novel and in its successor, *El hijo de Clara*. As a member of an important anarchist intellectual family Montseny was intimately tied to international currents. *La Revista Blanca* regularly published news from around the world and as an autodidact Montseny read an impressive

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76. See the following chapter where I discuss the commentary on the novels by her readers, which used ideas of evolution and the struggle for existence. There both Montseny and her critics specifically appeal to evolution and the progress of humanity through struggle.

range of books in several languages.<sup>77</sup> Clara's optimism was a reflection of the changes that Montseny read and observed occurring in the world, and wrote about in the anarchist press.<sup>78</sup> She read widely, and the novels she read clearly influenced her youthful optimism. Even when these works were critical of a culture or society, such as Sinclair Lewis' novel *Babbitt*, Upton Sinclair's works, or the host of novels and memoirs on the First World War, she praised them as works to better understand the present and as part of the irregular advance of humanity. In addition, there were the numerous correspondents that sent material into *La Revista Blanca*, from Europe and the Americas, but also from China and Japan, and her reading of publications of all types from Europe and the Americas.<sup>79</sup>

Fernando offers to "cure" Clara of her illness, her "love illness." Fernando uses a medical dialogue of protection, cure, illness, and disease throughout *La victoria*, telling Clara that she is sick, which she does not accept. Clara demands that Fernando not only recognize that she is not ill, but instead is exceptionally healthy and strong, both physically and mentally. She has no illness, so there is nothing for Fernando to cure, or any need for his

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77. Montseny reads in English, French, Portuguese, and maybe German as well as her natal languages Spanish and Catalan.

78. See my chapter 7 where events in Great Britain and Turkey are discussed.

79. There was a male correspondent in Shanghai named Lu Chien Bo publishing in *La Revista Blanca*. Another writer on imperialism in China signed his article Chang Kuniomi Kendu: "El Imperialismo en China," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 97 (1 June 1927), 9–10. According to a February 2011 email from Rebecca Karl the latter "is possibly a Taiwanese–Japanese, or a Chinese who took a Japanese name as well. Chang would be the surname for sure, which indicates Chinese, Kuniomi Kendu is Japanese, which indicates pseudonym or imperialized subject (if anarchist, then probably the former)." I appreciate her trying to help without being able to see the names in Chinese characters.

assistance. His persistence in offering unwanted aid is offensive.<sup>80</sup> Fernando echoes the continuing usage in the first third of the twentieth century of the nineteenth century medical model for the subordination of women.<sup>81</sup> Clara actively tries to create the frames of her life and refuses to allow other's desires and ideas to frame her. Clara wants mutuality, an equal partnership established by the two involved, not by others or society, and certainly not by either the state or the Church.

Significantly, the acceptance of protection by Fernando would mean that Clara is accepting a submissive and passive role. She would cease to be actively forging her own life. This would have a negative impact on evolution because it would slow down progress, whereas finding a man who accepts her and lives with her in mutuality would advance evolution.

In *La victoria* Fernando refers to children as enslaving and Clara refutes this. In *El hijo de Clara* Lucerna encounters Clara and Nardo in Toledo's cloisters where he mentions not only the pain and cost of children, but also refers to Malthus. The symbolism could not be more direct. In one of the greatest cities for religious paintings still *in situ*, in a building that houses men and women who are committed to not reproducing but instead are wedded to a possibly imaginary person, Clara, with her child, encounters the

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80. In 1925 Montseny is only twenty herself, and will be in a lifelong relationship with Germinal Esgleas within five years of this novel. They had three children and were together until his death in 1981. But this is my benefit of hindsight. Montseny may be equally concerned as Clara about whether she will find a companion.

81. Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*, 82.

man who had attacked her as being without sex.<sup>82</sup> It is he who is truly without a matured sexuality. He is consciously avoiding reproducing and prefers to have sex with a woman who exists solely for his physical pleasure; he is using her solely as an object. Lucerna is an embodiment of Marañón's definition of Don Juan, a man who does not reproduce and is a parasite on society.<sup>83</sup> For Clara not only is this far from conscious motherhood or healthy sexual activity, it is an evolutionary dead end.<sup>84</sup>

Montseny created her exemplary figures in order to effect the change she believed was evolutionary. She intended her models as positive examples, in opposition to those models of the Church, the state and Spanish bourgeois feminism, in her quest to change both gender and social relations. She does not expect these models to mirror social reality, but she did expect them to open some minds and help speed the process of change. Montseny considered the prevailing view that the woman who is the most feminine is the superior woman as archaic, and commented that most men could not see past the feminine to see the woman. Despite a certain level of cultural and evolutionary progress, some “essential voice” is still present in humans, speaking to them of “she” and “he.” The more advanced and cultured, the greater the refinements sought in a mate. The common choose the common and, in parallel, the educated and refined seek the same in their mate. Montseny’s analysis of the

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82. The historical existence of Christ is often denied in anarchist writings, but as a symbolic figure he is well used, such as in Montseny’s novella *María de Magdala*.

83. Interestingly, Lucerna has fled Spain to Turkey to be able to practice his hedonism but tells Clara he will have to move again as it too is changing. As Turkey evolves, Lucerna has to leave.

84. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 42–43.

importance of sexual selection also meant that Clara could not find a mate. None of the men that Clara meets were evolutionarily adequate; none were as advanced as Clara.<sup>85</sup> The problem of Clara persists in Montseny's third and final novel, *La indomable*, whose central character, Vida, is the same type of woman as Clara.<sup>86</sup>

### THE STATE

Marañón argued that attempts by women to have power or to exercise control were the result of an internal conflict between masculine germen, which also lay dormant in women, but could be awoken.<sup>87</sup> This led to masculine characteristics in certain women and was the product of not just a psychological struggle but also a biological one.<sup>88</sup> Thus, despite his professed belief in women's equality, Marañón continued to offer scientific arguments that supported women remaining out of politics. Montseny clearly did not accept this. Her misgivings about women entering politics were those of an anarchist. Women in politics were not going to make any substantive change by doing so — not that it was biologically and evolutionarily harmful or unfeasible.

The introduction of the character of Fernando Oswald was Montseny's opportunity for a more trenchant critique. The relationship that developed

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85. Federica Montseny, "Intermedio polémico: Armand y 'La Victoria,'" *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 99 (1 July 1927), 80.

86. "*La indomable*," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 129 (1 October 1928), II. Vida (Life), would be the name of Montseny's daughter born in 1933.

87. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a germen is "the rudiment of an organism". 2nd ed., 1989; online version June 2011. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77886>; accessed 11 August 2011.

88. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 185.

between Clara and Fernando was the crucial one in the novel. If the character of Roberto represented the inadequacy of the anarchist movement's men of ideals and Lucerna represented the failure of tradition and the past, then Fernando represented the problems associated with men like Marañón and hence with contemporary liberalism and the state. Montseny analyzed the state through Clara's arguments with Fernando. He is apparently everything a woman could wish for: handsome, intelligent, and a defender of women. His novels are extremely popular, especially with women, and he is widely known to be a defender of liberal causes, particularly feminism, like Marañón. On a train, in the discussion with an anonymous young man, Clara comments on the views of women expressed in the novels of Fernando, unaware that the man is Fernando himself. It is not Fernando's literary style and exposition that Clara objects to, but rather his patronizing and paternalistic portrayal and view of women. What most saw as a defense of women, Clara sees as a restrictive belief that women lack the capacity for self-defense. She lays this out in detail and as the train pulls into Barcelona, the young man hands her his card and introduces himself as Fernando Oswald.

Fernando is at once the illusory ideal man and, as I argue below, a stand in for the intervention of the state. Clara will not accept his support because she does not need it. Fernando bases his offer of support inaccurately; on his perception of Clara's weakness because she is a woman. Why should she accept support when she is capable of supporting herself in the struggles to make her way in the world, economically and intellectually self supporting,

independent, and strong?<sup>89</sup> She wants a love to fill her soul, not one that seeks to restrict her by providing a protective domination that would require her acceptance and submission in an inferior status.<sup>90</sup>

Clara's entire description of the issues of love and the relationship between the sexes paralleled the issue of the relationship between the subject and the state. Clara's acceptance of Fernando's proposal would negate her autonomy and independence. What is at stake here for Clara is to avoid submission and subordination to another; moreover, what is at stake for Montseny is to draw the parallel between domination in love and the domestic with domination in politics and the public. In a clearly pejorative use of the word medieval, Montseny implies that the state is a relic of the past. Clara pointedly states that Fernando is lacking in modernity and tolerance, and that his ideas are "positively medieval" while she looks to the future.<sup>91</sup> Clara's use of medieval is not because Fernando's ideas are representative of romantic and courtly love; rather, because they are relics of a past that everyone should leave behind. Clara points out that among the ideas for Fernando to abandon is the assumption that he can always find someone else. Another is the belief that Clara should accept his offer because she is reaching that "age" when, in the context of the period, she will be a spinster with no romantic hopes. She is in her mid-twenties in the novel and contemporary standards consider her

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89. In this passage and in many others the vocabulary of the struggle for life was a coded intervention in the debates over women and evolution.

90. Montseny, *La victoria*, 68.

91. *Ibid.*, 187.

friend Laura, only a year older, already past the age when she should be married, and as a spinster.<sup>92</sup>

Clara acknowledges that she is different from other women in her conversations with Fernando. She agrees that she may never find the man she wants, but insists she will not accept anything less. The last two chapters are the culmination of the discussion between Clara and Fernando on the roles of men and women, love, and their relationship. The end of the novel is Clara's victory — she maintains her independence and does not give in by submitting to Fernando's love. It is as much an external and public victory as an internal and private victory, for she is avoiding the pressures of society to accept less than she desires. She does not buckle in order to have both security and a man to father children. Love did not trap Clara Delval, unlike tragic literary heroines; rather her rejection of romantic love is presented as a major triumph.<sup>93</sup> Women seeking love on their own terms were subversive of the established order, and it was precisely that subversion Montseny sought.

The relationship between Clara and Fernando represented two related problems in Montseny's argument. First is the relationship between individual men and women; the second is the relationship between the individual and the state. The expectation between men and women was that they would form a family in marriage, with the further expectation that the man would be the dominant partner. For Montseny, marriage was the center of the suppression

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92. Laura at the outset of the novel is 24, a year older than Clara. *Ibid.*, 16.

93. These are tragic female characters from respectively Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. It is clear that Montseny read these from her frequent references to the novels and from her memoirs.



of women's individualism, and she doubly opposed it for its role in the repression of women and as an institution of the Church–State duopoly.<sup>94</sup> In Montseny's writings, women have the sole right to decide not only when they marry but also if they marry. Her insistence on the right of women to decide their own fate was a central component of her ideology of individualist anarchism. Women should choose not only about marriage, but they should have control over when they had children, and, equally important, with whom.<sup>95</sup> Montseny assumed, based on her observations of nature, that the woman bore sole responsibility for raising their children and that the father could have a role, but ultimately he did not matter.

The relationship with the state did not parallel that of free individuals because Montseny would accept no relationship with the state. Accepting the state always meant the individual accepting a subordinate position, and, as I have argued in chapter 7, this was one of her principal problems with feminism. Montseny did not believe in the need for a social contract between individuals, though she would have agreed with many of Carole Pateman's arguments, including that the sexual contract preceded the social contract.<sup>96</sup> Unlike Pateman, however, Montseny would have argued that the sexual contract was equally limiting for men, and that the sexual and social contracts distorted the nature of both sexes.

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94. In this Montseny was echoing not just her mother Soledad Gustavo but also Emma Goldman, who would visit the Montsenys in Barcelona.

95. Underlying these radical beliefs was the traditional assumption that women's "natural" responsibility was maternity.

96. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*.

The state takes the freedom of the individual, offering protection and support. Montseny's analysis and critique of the condition of women was an anarchist variant of the continental version of feminism that Karen Offen labeled "difference feminism" and Mary Nash called "familial feminism." Montseny wanted an egalitarian social structure that recognized a difference between the sexes while not discriminating and placing women in a subordinate position, and yet acknowledged their special contributions or potential as mothers.<sup>97</sup>

The relationship between the two suitors in *La victoria* is fraught with problems for Clara and almost none for Fernando.<sup>98</sup> Clara rejects any understanding with Fernando because this entails a loss of her equality and freedom. She does not want to be "put on a pedestal nor carried on his shoulders: the first is odious, the second humiliating."<sup>99</sup> She also does not want a man who would limit what she can do for the liberation of humanity, a man who wants to enslave her as an *ángel del hogar*, a domestic angel. Instead, she transforms that romantic love for Fernando into a love for humanity, a humanity that she will strive to free from the shackles of the past.<sup>100</sup> Montseny used the numerous meetings between the two and

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97. Offen, "Defining Feminism, a Comparative Historical Approach," 135–136.

98. The assumption being that, as Clara told him, he can find someone else. His loss of a lover is not the end, and upon the publication of *El hijo de Clara* and the return of Fernando, we learn that this is only partially true. He has a daughter, but Clara's rejection hurt him profoundly.

99. Montseny, *La victoria*, 188–189.

100. This debate occupies the final two chapters of Montseny, *La victoria*. These are "The Struggle" and "The Victory," pages 185–216. The struggle is less between Clara and Fernando than within Clara herself.

descriptions of the internal thoughts of Clara to convey the problems with Fernando's love and why Clara eventually rejects him. It is the combination of the dialogue between the two and Clara's soul-searching that provides Montseny's lucid arguments for a free love based on the equality of the partners and the clearest exposition of her analysis of the problems of the relationship between the individual and the state.

What stood in the way of this romance are what Clara calls Fernando's "oriental and imperialist" attitudes towards women.<sup>101</sup> This is exactly what Clara objects to in his novels and causes her to question a relationship that is based solely upon love, because in it lay a profound danger for her and thus for women.<sup>102</sup> Clara tells Fernando (before she is aware of his identity) that male defenses of women, including those of Fernando Oswald, aim at women solely as women, not as human beings. These defenses always consider the woman to be weak and in an inferior position physically and morally in regards to men. Ironically, it is the work of "gallant men" who prolong and perpetuate the ideas of female inferiority, which fail to meet the demands of women.<sup>103</sup> For Clara to accept Fernando's love would be to accept and perpetuate this inferiority.<sup>104</sup> Clearly even Fernando's promise of equality in the home is not sufficient, because the change in women's status needs to be made in larger society, not simply in the domestic, private sphere of the home. It must be an

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101. Montseny, *La victoria*, 172.

102. *Ibid.*, 143.

103. *Ibid.*, 119.

104. *Ibid.*, 181.

equality that is public. The state also promises protection, but like Fernando, it is incapable of changing and accepting women as individuals.

While Clara recognizes that Fernando is sincere in his defense of women, that he is a “paladin” and would “go into the fire” for women, this is decidedly not what she wanted in a man, or in a woman.<sup>105</sup> She is rejecting the protective basis for Fernando’s feelings for women. Fernando — and the state — only want to think of women as angels, goddesses on a pedestal, and correspondingly as fragile and delicate objects, which Montseny had rejected in her article “Libertad,” discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>106</sup> Clara needs no support and protection; she is a woman who can and does take care of herself (recall her revolver) and only wants a partnership based on independence and equality. Clara asks why women are seen as angels while men are not, and argues that she is not stupid like the Church Fathers debating at the Council of Trent whether or not women have a soul (and here Montseny has worked in another, albeit inaccurate, anti-clerical statement).<sup>107</sup> There was no difference between men and women except that of sex and the physiological differences that entails.

Clara’s analysis and dissection of Fernando’s attitudes towards women is crucial to an understanding of how Montseny used melodrama and how this

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105. *Ibid.*, 143.

106. Federica Montseny, “Libertad,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 456–459.

107. The statement about the sixteenth century Council of Trent is not true (conversations with Fiona Griffiths and Alyson Poshka, April 2009). Thus it is purely an anti-clerical creation and valuable in and of itself. There is a similar statement in Aresti Esteban’s book about the Council of Macôn: “El concilio de Macôn, en el siglo VI, en el que se debatió largamente si la mujer pertenecía o no al género humano...” Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 41.

novel departed from the literary genre of romance. While the two genres often overlap, they are neither synonymous nor interdependent. Romantic fiction traditionally involves the achievement of a romantic relationship, the finding of love and happiness with a man. Clara rejects this outcome for the reasons examined. Montseny ends the novel with Clara giving a talk at the Ateneo, content with her decision, but as it is a potentially pyrrhic victory, Montseny carefully enables the reader to not only understand, but to also agree with Clara's decision.<sup>108</sup>

In *La victoria's* sequel, Clara reinforces the point that she does not need the protection and support of a man — nor of the state. Because of the infant Nardo, Fernando asks Clara if she finally found the man she wanted and when she replies no, he bemoans that she became a mother without love. Clara adamantly refutes that idea. She quickly and pointedly questions the value of knowing who the father was. What is the need of a father, she asks, when she has and will continue to raise her son through her own nature, her force of character and strength of her own will?<sup>109</sup> This was an interesting take on the contemporary debate over the investigation of paternity.<sup>110</sup> Montseny is arguing that the father is unimportant while the mother is crucial. This is because of her belief that mothers do the child rearing, which, in turn, is

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108. We have almost no idea of the response of readers except what was published in journals. Due to the Civil War and the intentional torching of the *La Revista Blanca* warehouse little of the correspondence between *La Revista Blanca* and its readers remains. What do remain are a few scattered letters and the published response of those who critiqued the novel.

109. Montseny *El hijo de Clara*, 10–11.

110. This is discussed in my chapter 6.

important because of evolutionary progress through the acquisition of acquired characteristics.

### **MOTHERHOOD**

Montseny was in agreement with Spanish feminists on the overriding importance of motherhood, the “inescapable duty.” She referred to women without children as a “tree without fruit, a rosebush without roses.”<sup>111</sup> Nelken, in arguing for equality, stated, “Just as we do not believe that women, just for the fact of being a woman, are able to obtain any privilege in respect to their spouse, we believe that the mother, by the fact of being a mother, deserves in every circumstance to be treated with a privileged specialness.”<sup>112</sup> This view was not only held by women. The Left Socialist Luis Araquistáin stated, “a woman is a mother above all and always, and that political activity to give her greater economic independence must strengthen this rather than weaken it.”<sup>113</sup>

Clara needs a man not just to fill her soul with love but also to have a child. Her desire for a child is not so strong, however, that she will settle for any man. She does not want to merely be an “incubator” and she realizes that Fernando would not be willing to be a distant father. Clara embodies Montseny’s beliefs, expressed in her journalism as well as her fiction, that having children was a duty of humanity, an obligation that it uniquely falls to

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111. Federica Montseny, “La mujer, problema del hombre IV,” *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 94 (15 April 1927), 682.

112. Quoted in Aresti Esteban, *Médicos, donjuanes y mujeres modernas*, 236.

113. Quoted in Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868–1974)*, 236. This was not significantly different from the views of Krausists discussed in chapter 4 and the feminist movements discussed in the previous chapter. It was also the argument used against women’s civil emancipation by the Church before the First World War.

women to perform. She is not willing, however, to reduce life to a mere succession of reproductive functionality: “born, reproduce, die.”<sup>114</sup> Clara’s decision not to enter into a sexual relationship with Fernando is her “victory.” How did Montseny deal with the dilemma of the conflict between the duty to have children and the belief that it should be an individual choice and women should not settle for less to achieve this goal? Only twenty when she published *La victoria*, Montseny was able to elide this paradox by promising a change in Clara’s rejection of a man and hence of reproduction in the future.<sup>115</sup> In *La victoria* Clara acts of her own free will while in *El hijo de Clara* she appears to act out of raw passion and the emotions brought on by traumatic political struggles in America. Her response in the sequel novel to criticisms of *La victoria* was marked. In *El hijo de Clara*, the appeal to motherhood as the ultimate experience for women is not part of an appeal for intervention by others (church or state) to protect women but rather an appeal to the role of motherhood in evolution as evidenced in nature.

What Fernando views as enslavement by children, Clara sees motherhood as a natural function and as a joy, a duty to take pleasure in. According to Clara, this view of parents as enslaved to their children is only bourgeois prejudice born out of selfishness or the desire to tramp down women.<sup>116</sup> Motherhood is a natural part of a woman’s experience and thus is to

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114. Montseny, *La victoria*, 122.

115. Federica Montseny, “Dos cartas interesantes,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 105 (1 October 1927), 282.

116. Montseny, *La victoria*, 207–208.

be welcomed. As discussed in the previous chapter, Latin feminism of the period emphasized maternalism. Montseny stated that women were not only combatants against the past but also the mothers of the future, in the double sense that they carry the future in their wombs.<sup>117</sup> This future may be quite distant and it was the role of women to cultivate their children and to educate them for a better tomorrow. Montseny's view of the evolution of society was heavily dependent on the role of mothers, invariably to the exclusion of fathers.<sup>118</sup> Montseny did not ignore the question of the father; she dismissed it. Men were merely the vehicles for conceiving children and if they cannot be equal partners in the relationship, then women can exclude them. This was what happened in Montseny's 1929 novella *Frente de Amor*.<sup>119</sup> This novella focuses on the struggles of a young woman to have an anarchist relationship, a free union, with a young man of supposedly like ideals. But he fails to be an equal partner in the relationship. He is not only demanding and jealous of her, but also proves incapable of freeing himself from the dominance of his parents. After an initial breakup they reunite and have a child. When his parents' interference becomes intolerable, she asks him to set boundaries for his parents. He fails to do so; she leaves him, and raises their child by herself.

Emma Goldman's campaigns to free women from unwanted maternity were ones that the anarchist movement generally supported. However, unlike

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117. Federica Montseny, "Las conquistas sociales de la mujer," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 55 (1 September 1925), 16.

118. *Ibid.*, 17.

119. Federica Montseny, *Frente de amor*, *La Novela Ideal* 136 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1929]).



men, women like Goldman, women without children, were seen as incomplete. Montseny's statement about childless women that provides the epigraph to this chapter typifies this view.<sup>120</sup> Since Montseny was only twenty when she published *La victoria*, there was plenty of time for her to have children.<sup>121</sup> For a healthy woman to never have children was to go against nature and to refuse to participate in the advancement of humanity. It was an individual choice, Montseny realized, but not having children was a choice that she never understood. In yet another paradox of her individualist anarchism, she was bound by the maternalism of her political and scientific beliefs and unable to see the validity of childlessness as an individual's right.

Montseny's concern was for the individual and active engagement in life and nature — these were inseparable for her. Since invariably the state's central concern with motherhood was a reductive one, it focused on the reproduction of subjects, rarely concerned itself with women and certainly not with their development of a sense of self. Montseny did not make demands or point out the failings of the state or of private charities concerning motherhood.<sup>122</sup> She was opposed to any level of private intervention, even charitable, in individual lives. To accept assistance was to be open to regulation and intervention. Anything resembling the interventions by the

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120. Federica Montseny, "La mujer, problema del hombre IV," *La Revista Blanca* 5, no. 94 (15 April 1927), 682.

121. She would have three children, including one during the Second World War, which saved her life. Moreover, she may also have aborted a pregnancy in the spring of 1941. Lozano, *Federica Montseny*, 283.

122. Gruber, "The 'New Woman'," in Gruber and Graves, *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women*, and Linda Gordon, "Single Mothers and Child Neglect, 1880–1920," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1985), 173–192.

socialist city council of Vienna or private charities in the United States was oppressive and unnatural.<sup>123</sup> Montseny's maternalism thus was concerned with the individual woman and with giving her the freedom to achieve a pure and fulfilling motherhood, a conscious motherhood.<sup>124</sup>

An individualist anarchist, Montseny sought to promote the autonomy of the individual and the family, a freely formed union based in mutual agreement without the need for intervention or approval from the state and the Church.<sup>125</sup> Thus, in opposition to European governments' emphasis on the family and motherhood that facilitated the state's intervention in individual lives, she sought to promote individual achievement rather than societal equilibrium.<sup>126</sup> Montseny's fear was that women would end up not as human beings who were mothers but instead have their lives reduced to being incubators, to the purely reproductive functionality commented on earlier. Moreover, she feared that women would become collective workers for the state, as in the Soviet Union, with that product being babies.

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123. Given the circumstances of her milieu and time, of course that involved motherhood. Unlike the movement known as voluntary motherhood in the United States, the Spanish movement was not concerned with sexual purity in theory. The reality was different. See Linda Gordon, "Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the United States," *Feminist Studies* 1, nos. 3-4 (1973), 5-22.

124. Conscious motherhood was the term used by Spanish anarchists for what was known in the United States as voluntary motherhood. I use it because it was the term used in Spain and it is more active than voluntary motherhood. It implies an awareness of exactly what comes with motherhood throughout a woman's life. Montseny and most of the other anarchists I have read were adamantly in favor of children, but also pro-contraception. I have not read in Spanish anarchist writing any idea that contraception was unnatural (as opposed to sterilization), as Gordon argues was the view of American free love advocates. See her "Voluntary Motherhood."

125. This is born out in the study of nineteenth century fiction by Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization in the Spanish Realist Novel*.

126. See David L. Hoffmann, "Mothers in the Motherland: Stalinist Pronatalism in Its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 1 (2000), 35-54 for a survey of state pro-natalism during the same period.

Montseny rejected a patriotic maternalism, where women were the mothers of the nation. In contrast to Alexandra Kollontai, Montseny did not want childrearing removed from the individual and transferred to the hands of the state. Kollontai stated that the Soviet state would “lift the burdens of motherhood from women’s shoulders and transfer them to the state.”<sup>127</sup> Clara, using remarkably similar terms, states that this is humiliating.<sup>128</sup> Anarchists were very aware of events in the Soviet Union, as it was a frequent topic in the journals. Montseny was equally familiar with Kollontai’s writings and her review of a Spanish translation of Kollontai’s work in 1932 was full of praise.<sup>129</sup> Montseny stressed that the role of women was a public one, not one that was limited to the private or domestic sphere. This view was not far from that of the Soviets, except in Montseny’s conception a woman’s role was as an individual; the benefit could never be for the state, but only for that individual and the evolution of the whole of humanity. Montseny’s depictions of feminism were often paradoxical but, generally, her assertion was that feminism was solely concerned with making women the same as men, rather than with eliminating the society that oppressed them both.

Financial security not only enables Clara to be independent of all men but also to raise Nardo as she wishes. Moreover, they are free of any complications that would arise by enrolling him in a school run by the state or,

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127. Kollontai quote from *Ibid.*, 35.

128. See Clara’s comments to Fernando. Montseny, *La victoria*, 188–189.

129. Federica Montseny, “Revista de libros,” *La Revista Blanca* 10, no. 218 (15 June 1932), 61. This was a review of the anthology *La mujer y la moral sexual*.

during this period, the more likely alternative of enrolling him in a parochial school.<sup>130</sup> Clara's principal focus is on Nardo —she is the opposite of the stereotype of the neglectful single mother whose children run wild in the streets.<sup>131</sup> Clara proved wrong the future that Fernando forecast for her at the end of *La victoria*: “first, the sadness of isolation, then later neurasthenia after other diseases; and ultimately a devastating old age without consolation or protection, without help.”<sup>132</sup> While Clara recognizes this as a reality for thousands of other women who are not as strong and healthy as she is, she believes that she will be different because she has consciously chosen this path of her own independent will.<sup>133</sup> Clara embodies the exemplary life for women that Montseny called for in her 1925 essay “Las conquistas sociales de la mujer” [“The Social Conquests of Women”].<sup>134</sup> In the sequel, of course, she has a child and avoids the fate of childlessness that she had consciously chosen in the earlier work.

Many theorists have argued that states have frequently constructed citizenship as masculine in Western thought, and that connected it to a number of other concepts, including motherhood and war. Genevieve Lloyd, for example, argues: “Socially constructed motherhood, no less than socially constructed masculinity, is at the service of the idea of citizenship which finds

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130. One of the major reforms undertaken by the Second Republic (1931–1939) in Spain was to remove the Church from its commanding position in education.

131. See Koven and Michel, “Womanly Duties,” Gordon, “Single Mothers and Child Neglect, 1880–1920,” and my discussion in chapter 6.

132. Montseny, *La victoria*, 208.

133. *Ibid.*, 208–209.

134. Federica Montseny, “Las conquistas sociales de la mujer,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 55 (1 September 1925), 17.

its fullest expression in war.”<sup>135</sup> Anarchists were scornful of the calls by the state for mothers to sacrifice their sons for war. Montseny adjusts this in *El hijo de Clara* when Clara gives up her son to fight for peace, to end war. The end of the novel has Clara facing out to the Mediterranean Sea as tears come down her face. The final paragraph of the novel is Clara’s statement of abnegation and sacrifice. “I have given to Humanity my life and now I give a son, who is worth more than my life and many lives all together. What an immense debt the world has contracted with me! I will be content if I am not paid in blood: the blood of this son that is offered, that I have offered to the past, to the present, and to the future!”<sup>136</sup> Clara’s sacrifice was a mother’s sacrifice. She is putting forward her only child for the good of humanity. She sends Nardo away, out to the wider world in dangerous times to become a campaigner for the betterment of the society. The descriptions and language are evocative of a dynamic and active savior. Montseny is again using the vocabulary and emotions of religion to argue for Nardo as a Christ-like model, a secular saint. Nardo joins the character Jesus of Rigabell of *María de Magdala* and the secular saint Pedro in *Resurrección*. In the text, Nardo has become a figure like Christ, and Clara’s “sacrifice” of her son parallels that of the Virgin Mary as a sacrifice for the benefit of all.

These two novels by Montseny provoked consternation and applause in the anarchist movement. People read the novels and the anarchist press in

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135. Genevieve Lloyd, “Selfhood, War and Masculinity,” in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, eds. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Grosz (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 65. In *El hijo de Clara* Montseny rejects this as Clara’s son is struggling for peace.  
136. Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*, 254.

Europe and the Americas reviewed them. The next chapter examines the positive and negative critical responses to these novels and Montseny's detailed rebuttals. The novels of a twenty-year-old anarchist, one without a formal education, provoked debates across the Atlantic about Clara, the role of women, and evolution.

## CHAPTER 9: THE ANARCHIST ATLANTIC

“To me, Federica Montseny is one of the modern women, the forerunners of one moral for both sexes, the conscious inspiration, not wanting to bring women down to the morass where men are at the level of brutes or to exceed the savagery and our vices, but who wishes for things to be made to rise until they are the beautiful dreams of Liberty, Love and Beauty.”<sup>1</sup>

### THE DEBATES GENERATED BY FEDERICA MONTSENY’S NOVELS

Federica Montseny's novels generated an enormous public response, especially in the anarchist press. These responses help to clarify anarchist views on the gender question. Critics asked questions about Clara’s lifestyle and means of support, how she kept house, how she raised her children. The liberal Madrid daily *El Sol* reviewed the novels, while the anarchist and syndicalist press in North America debated every aspect of Clara's life and generally ignored the other characters.<sup>2</sup>

The responses from women were entirely positive while those of men varied. The men's criticism of Clara centered on four themes. First, was the debate over the use of the novel as social criticism; second, whether Clara was a character worthy of emulating; third, Clara’s early rejection of motherhood in *La victoria*; and fourth, Clara's adoption of motherhood in *El hijo de Clara*.

### EXEMPLARY LITERATURE

The critics, like Isaac Puente, had many complaints about Montseny’s style and the repetition of the plot in the second novel. Puente was an

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1. Moura, *Religião do amor e da beleza*, 85.

2. *La victoria* was reviewed by Antonio Ballesteros de Martos (1893/4–1967) on April 4, 1925; *El hijo de Clara* by Ramón Sender on December 2, 1927; and *La indomable* by a J. R. on October 17, 1928. She responded to the first two *El Sol* reviews, positively to the first with her usual acknowledgement of literary “defects” and with anger to Sender’s snide comments. See below.

anarchist physician and theorist of communist anarchism.<sup>3</sup> A physician, he advocated neo-Malthusianism (the promotion of birth and population control) and eugenics (the encouragement of “healthy” reproduction).<sup>4</sup> Puente may have been an official in the Spanish section of the World League for Sexual Reform on Scientific Principles, founded in 1928.<sup>5</sup> He rejected the organization as too reformist and argued that the workers had already surpassed the cautious League.<sup>6</sup> He was a frequent contributor to the journals *Generación Consciente* and *Estudios* using the pseudonym “El médico rural” (country doctor).<sup>7</sup> He also advocated vasectomy, a position Urales and Montseny, like many other European socialists and anarchists, strenuously

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3. Puente was executed by the Nationalists at the beginning of the Civil War. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Puente Amestoy, Isaac.” I was not able to find biographical information on all reviewers.

4. Spanish eugenics in its initial period was concerned with social hygiene, especially maternal health and conditions. Nash observed that the “hereditarian bias ... was never very strong in Spanish eugenics which was not particularly susceptible to racial explanations of the course of history nor did it, at this point in time, pay a marked attention to the idea of the superiority of the Spanish race. Nash, “Social Eugenics and Nationalist Race Hygiene in Early Twentieth Century Spain,” 743.

5. For the vexed question of Puente’s relationship with the Spanish section, see Richard M. Cleminson, “‘Science and Sympathy’ or ‘Sexual Subversion on a Human Basis’? Anarchists in Spain and the World League for Sexual Reform,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 1 (2003), 110–121.

6. The Spanish section focused on improving the status of women, the promotion of eugenics and birth control, and the legalization of divorce. The World League considered a 1921 Berlin congress as its founding but officially was organized at its second, Copenhagen congress, in 1928. Ralf Dose, “The World League for Sexual Reform: Some Possible Approaches,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 1 (2003), 1–2. Spaniards, including Marañón, participated in the 1928 and later congresses. Conflicting reports muddy the exact date of the formation of the Spanish section. According to Hildegart Rodríguez’s correspondence with Havelock Ellis, the founding was March 3, 1932 and Marañón was the president. Havelock Ellis Papers, British Library, London, Great Britain. See also Alison Sinclair, “The World League for Sexual Reform in Spain: Founding, Infighting, and the Role of Hildegart Rodríguez,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 1 (2003), 98–109

7. The *médicos rurales* were a government health service.



opposed as a negative measure used by the bourgeoisie to limit the working-class.<sup>8</sup>

Puente applauded the themes of rebellion, protest, and the strength of conviction in *La victoria*. He criticized their reappearance in *El hijo de Clara* as artificial.<sup>9</sup> Puente claimed the second novel was repetitious and opposed Clara's need for motherhood. He argued that Doctor Madeleine Pelletier (1874–1939) had already made a persuasive case that many progressive people in the future would chose to be celibate.<sup>10</sup> He opposed Montseny's replacement of Clara by Nardo, claiming that Nardo's sacrifice had no real significance.<sup>11</sup>

Germinal Esgleas (1903–1981) was an individualist anarchist who became an intimate of the Montseny family and eventually Montseny's companion. He was an orphan whose father and brother were killed in front of him in the Spain's Moroccan colony.<sup>12</sup> A member of the CNT from

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8. See for examples see Federica Montseny, "Dos palabras sobre la vasectomía," *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 358 (29 November 1935), 1121–1122 and his response. Isaac Puente, "Sobre la vasectomía," *La Revista Blanca* 13, no. 362 (27 December 1935), 1199–1200.

9. Puente first published his review in New York's *Cultura Proletaria*, followed by *Ética de Barcelona* and then reprinted in *La Revista Blanca*. According to Frank Mintz (French anarchist historian of Spanish collectivization), Puente and Montseny had a long running dispute over Puente's review of her novel (conversation, Paris, France, February 2009). The rift was not permanent however as they worked together during the CNT's 1936 Zaragoza Congress.

10. El Médico Rural, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre 'El Hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 22–23. Puente refers to Dr. Pelletier, presumably the famous French feminist and anarchist physician, Madeleine Pelletier (1874–1939).

11. *Ibid.*, 22. He is also very critical of the novel's attack on neo-Malthusianism, stating that the presentation of the doctrine was false and ridiculous.

12. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Esgleas Jaume, Germinal." There is also a great deal of information on Esgleas in Montseny's memoirs, where she claims that Esgleas' mother wanted to keep him away from "women with ideas." i.e., anarchists. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 38 and 42. There is also important information in the

childhood, in March 1929, the police arrested him alongside Urales at a clandestine meeting and imprisoned the two until late in the summer 1929.<sup>13</sup> In June 1930, he became Federica's lover. Exiled to France after the Spanish Civil War, the Vichy government imprisoned Federica and Germinal during the Second World War. He served briefly in the Resistance until his bad health made him a liability.<sup>14</sup> José Esgleas, the author of one of the novelas in the *Novela Ideal* series, may have been Germinal Esgleas.

Esgleas echoed many of Puente's comments, and Montseny responded in what may have been a public courtship.<sup>15</sup> He understood that the plot proclaimed a woman's right to manage her own life and replace conventional courtship patterns with free love.<sup>16</sup> He complained that the female characters were drawn from Ibsen while male characters were rigidly "caught in the dialectic" of her argument.<sup>17</sup> He criticized Montseny as lacking originality in her style, asserting that several passages were imitative of other writers, such as Zola.<sup>18</sup> These judgments repeat some of the stylistic criticisms of the *El Sol*

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Tavera and Lozano biographies of Montseny, and the latter is particularly strong on the exile period. Montseny's letters to Max Nettlau also contain information and from these it appears Nettlau had met Esgleas. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, 8 August 1930, Max Nettlau Papers, IISG.

13. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, 1 April 1929, Max Nettlau Papers, IISG.

14. Esgleas suffered from a series of ailments. His experiences in a Vichy concentration camp further weakened him. Lozano, *Federica Montseny*, 298.

15. Tavera states that they certainly knew each other in 1924. His first published contribution to *La Revista Blanca* was in number 13 (1 December 1923).

16. Germinal Esgleas, "Ensayo crítico – literario sobre 'El hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 460.

17. *Ibid.*, 460 and 461. Ibsen was very popular among Spanish anarchists. Montseny referred to Ibsen in her journalism, such as her four part series "Ibsen y Lenin" in *La Revista Blanca*, 7, nos. 118–121 (15 April–1 June 1928). "Hjordis and Solveig," the names of two of Ibsen's female characters, supplied the title of chapter seven of Montseny's *La indomable*.

18. Esgleas, "Ensayo crítico – literario sobre 'El hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1

review of *La victoria* and Montseny acknowledged that she was not a skilled writer.<sup>19</sup> Possibly intentionally, Esgleas' criticisms miss a crucial point, one he should have recognized, unlike *El Sol's* Antonio Ballesteros de Martos. Montseny's purpose was not to create great literature, but to present what should be, rather than what is. Esgleas was challenging her, challenging her to be a better writer, not just a propagandist.

Another reviewer, who seemed to have read her journalism and some of her fiction, disliked her portrayal of men. Luis Aurelio, writing a late review of *La victoria* in a Brooklyn, New York based Spanish language newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World, thought her novels insufficiently instructive and underestimated emotional themes.<sup>20</sup> He wanted Clara to “feel tortured by desire, uneasy at the lack of kisses” and referred to Evora as “the brazen and envious feminist.”<sup>21</sup> He liked the character of Aurora, “good, modest, and humble;” and, Lucerna, “bold, civilized, and modern.” In the novel, Aurora was a passive young woman and Lucerna was an overly aggressive Don Juan, not positive characters. Aurelio’s positive evaluation of the two revealed his own gender bias. He liked men to have the freedom and women to be subdued and quiescent. Perhaps Aurelio was a nihilist who denied morality, so the

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January 1928), 464. Zola was another popular writer, a favorite of Montseny according to her memoirs, and *La Revista Blanca* sold translations of his work.

19. The review in *El Sol* found deficiencies in her style. Ballesteros de Martos, “*La victoria*,” *El Sol*, 9, no. 2389 (4 April 1925), 2.

20. Luis Aurelio, “Lecturas: *La victoria* de Federica Montseny,” *Solidaridad: Periódico quincenal de los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo*, no. 101 (25 June 1927), 4. There is no biographical material available on him.

21. Clara is tortured in the novel I read.

denial of any moral obligations by Lucerna appealed to him. Nevertheless, in gender terms he clearly preferred the free and powerful male and the restricted and weak female.

Francisco Caro Crespo (?–1927) wrote about feminism in the novel in February 1926. Caro Crespo was an anarchist from Jerez de la Frontera who was born at the beginning of the century. He was equally renowned for his activism and literary work, which included three volumes published in the *Novela Ideal* series.<sup>22</sup> Caro Crespo complained that previously only bourgeois feminists like Pardo Bazán and Regina Opisso Sala (1879–1965), who also wrote novellas for *La Novela Ideal*, wrote about feminism.<sup>23</sup> Caro Crespo thought that Montseny's *La victoria* fulfilled the promise of feminist novels. "The feminist novel was called upon to raise the enslaved spirit and instill public dignity, to teach, educate, sharply outline the injustices of society, and speak to [a woman's] mind." He argued that, like all art, feminist novels "should be devastating and humane, rebellious and constructive."<sup>24</sup> He found all of these qualities in Montseny's work.<sup>25</sup>

In 1928, Juan Reverter Nolla (1906–1989) wrote criticizing Montseny's treatment of the relations between the sexes in *El hijo de Clara*. Reverter was

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22. He died in 1927 of tuberculosis. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Caro Crespo, Francisco." See also Puente writing as El médico rural, "Una victima de la Dictadura: En memoria de Francisco Caro Crespo," *Estudios* 8, no. 82 (June 1930), 4–5.

23. Opisso was a frequent non-anarchist contributor to *La Novela Ideal*, with fourteen novellas. Her writing career continued during the Franco régime.

24. Francisco Caro Crespo, "Juicios sobre la novela," *La Revista Blanca* 4, no. 65 (1 February 1926), 27.

25. Unfortunately, Caro Crespo died a year later so he was unable to comment on *El hijo de Clara*.

an anarchist militant exiled to Béziers, France during the Primo de Rivera régime. He financially sustained the anarchist exile journal *Prismas*, which was critical of Urales.<sup>26</sup> Reverter argued that finding sex was not difficult. He used an evolutionary vocabulary, arguing that to deny sexual needs was to deny life. Reverter's evolutionary critique was similar to other criticisms (see below). He also specifically criticized the conduct of the character Giselle, whom he claimed was only using Nardo for sexual pleasure, "like the majority of French women."<sup>27</sup>

The Brazilian anarchist and sex activist Maria Lacerda de Moura (1887–1945) devoted over ten pages of her book *Religião do amor e da beleza* to a discussion of *La victoria*. Moura wrote numerous works that went through multiple editions and had an important influence on the portion of the Spanish anarchist movement centered on sexual questions. Infertile, she adopted two children.<sup>28</sup> Moura and Montseny frequently corresponded.<sup>29</sup>

Moura reviewed the types of men found in the novel and agreed with their depiction, using examples from her own experiences in Brazil.<sup>30</sup> She argued that the dogma of female inferiority was a frankly absurd and outdated "ancestral concept." To support her views on the absurdity of female

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26. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Reverter Nolla, Juan."

27. Juan Reverter, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Para la autora de 'El Hijo de Clara.'" *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 113 (1 February 1928), 530. Exiled in France, he may have had bad personal experiences, though his comments say more about him than about the novels. See also chapter 4 for *Prismas'* attack on *La Revista Blanca* as a business venture solely concerned with money.

28. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 108.

29. The AGGCE contains some of this correspondence.

30. Moura, *Religião do amor e da beleza*, 73–85.

inferiority, Moura repeated many of the same arguments used by René Chaughi, in his *La mujer esclava*, as well as arguments about prostitution made by the French anarchist Paul Robin in *La mujer pública*. Both saw the prostitute as harassed either by customers or by the police and hygienists.<sup>31</sup> “Despite Mussolini, the Soviets, Primo de Rivera, and Brazil’s own mediocrities, female spirits will always arise, striving to achieve ‘the victory’ [*La victoria* in the original Portuguese text] of standing up to the impulses of their own instincts and holding out for true love, liberty, the ideal.”<sup>32</sup> Moura believed that the struggle for human advances would require everyone to struggle against instinct and forge new identities. There should be a new society where women would be neither private property nor vassals, and where love would be neither selfish nor carnal, but rather would contribute to the greater love of all beings. Moura found this spirit in Montseny’s first novel and highly recommended it to her readers.

The anarchist and frequent *La Revista Blanca* contributor, Adrián del Valle, reviewed both novels but offered very little by way of critical comment. Del Valle was a Catalan anarchist militant who spent most of his life in Cuba where he died. The Cuban press covered his death but with almost no mention of his anarchism.<sup>33</sup> *La Revista Blanca* republished his review of *El hijo de Clara* from the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*. He viewed the women in the novel as symbols of the different forms of love, complete with the national

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31. Robin, “La mujer pública,” in Chaughi and Robin, *La mujer*, 9–16.

32. Moura, *Religião do amor e da beleza*, 81.

33. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Valle Costa, Adrián del.”

identifiers. The Greek Hellé awakened Nardo's senses, the German Gretchen deformed love with an excess of philosophy, the Frenchwoman Gisela made it entirely sensual. Furthermore, Norma so elevated love that she was afraid to enjoy it for fear of diminishing it. Emma, the "poor humpbacked consumptive," knew she must not reproduce for the good of humanity. Blanca thought she had to renounce her own personality in order for Nardo to love her. Then there was Clara, who shaped her son to conform to her own character and mentality.<sup>34</sup> However, other than positively mentioning the novels, del Valle offered little to his readers about the debates surrounding the works and no mention of controversies over *La victoria*.

Montseny replied to Puente in the same issue of *La Revista Blanca*, stating that, while the theme of *El hijo de Clara* may not be new, neither was the common (*vulgar*) criticism of "our wise doctor."<sup>35</sup> Six months earlier Montseny had responded to Puente's critique originating in *Cultura Proletaria* by asserting that Clara was a unique figure in literature, one that she thought could never have been created by a man because Clara was too threatening. Montseny's work may have had all the defects and stylistic problems laid out by the critics, but she was proud that not one denied the originality of a new

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34. Adrián del Valle, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 119 (1 May 1928), 717.

35. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre 'El Hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 23. Urales had already commented on the construction of normality by experts. See his "En busca del tipo normal (I)," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 106 (15 October 1927), 289–291 and "En busca del tipo normal (II)," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 107 (1 November 1927), 323–324.

type of woman.<sup>36</sup> She was especially pleased that *La victoria* never suffocated or drowned in propaganda, nor did it fall into demagoguery.<sup>37</sup> Montseny made little response to Aurelio's literary critique, but she did admit that it was an immature novel with the attendant gaps and problems, that she hoped to improve in later works.<sup>38</sup>

The Spanish novelist and political activist, Ramón José Sender Garcés (1902–1982), reviewed *El hijo de Clara* in the important Madrid daily *El Sol* shortly after publication. Close to the CNT at the end of the twenties, Sender moved towards the Communists late in the Republic and went into exile in the United States in March 1939. His 1932 novel *Seven Red Sundays* is an account of an anarchist strike and one the few such works translated into English. Many literary figures considered him to the best novelist of his generation.<sup>39</sup> In *El Sol*, he dismissed *El hijo de Clara* as a “white novel,” not a “red” one.<sup>40</sup> Montseny recalled this “trick” three years later and said that this description proved that he had not read the novel, which was “sublimely scarlet.” Rather than repay him in kind, she merely stated that she had read his novel *Imán*, and would not call it anarchist, because “I did not like to lock a

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36. Federica Montseny, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Alrededor de ‘El Hijo de Clara’,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 112 (15 January 1928), 486.

37. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara III,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 23.

38. Federica Montseny, “Alrededor de ‘La victoria’,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 147.

39. See the entries in Ward, *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*, s.v. “Sender, Ramón J.” and in Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Sender Garcés, Ramón José”. Presumably Sender is the only such crossover.

40. Sender, “El hijo de Clara,” *El Sol* 11, no. 3223 (2 December 1927), 2.



child of intelligence into any creed.”<sup>41</sup> Reciprocating Sender's earlier dismissal of the political value of her own work, Montseny diminished him by referring to him as a child, albeit an intelligent one.

#### **CLARA**

Negative criticism came from male critics who generally focused on Clara's severe deficiencies. An Argentine, J.R. Forteza, and a Frenchman, Émile Armand, joined Isaac Puente, Germinal Esgleas, and Luis Aurelio as published critics.

Clara was a problem for Puente in the second novel, not because she was a masculine woman, but because she was a woman whose femininity was “switched off and her sexuality dormant.” Worse still, she had a case of “curious” sexual perversion.<sup>42</sup> She was not looking only for motherhood (ever the doctor, he points out that conception took less than a minute and did not require the hour of pleasure in the novel) but rather perversion. Puente's argument was a medical and psychological one. Because the state's attack on the peaceful community and its struggle for existence is needed to awaken Clara's libido, her earlier sacrifice lacked any value.<sup>43</sup> He also argued that rather than be celibate, the ideal female anarchist character would have found

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41. Federica Montseny, “Revista de Libros,” *La Revista Blanca* 8, no. 170 (15 June 1930), 46.

42. El Médico Rural, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 22. Compare this to Marañón's belief that “the feminine libido, by reasons of its less intensity and its less strong differentiation, is essentially passive and consequently extremely exposed to seduction.” Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 72. Clara would appear to be the opposite.

43. El Médico Rural, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 22.

a man and improved him.<sup>44</sup> Here Puente was following the gender convention that women improve men, by completing them. Puente also accused Clara of being a Celestina (a procuress), claiming that she facilitated a relationship between Blanca — Fernando’s daughter and Clara’s pupil — and Nardo.<sup>45</sup> In Puente’s account, this relationship was rejected by Nardo because, having grown up around Blanca, he thought of her as a sister. Puente used the verb “to trample” (*pisotear*) rather than “to reject” because, for him, Nardo’s rejection of Blanca was “a refined sadism,” especially since Blanca was Clara’s spiritual daughter.<sup>46</sup> Nardo’s rejection of Blanca parallels Clara’s earlier rejection of Fernando.<sup>47</sup>

Esgleas was critical only of the latter Clara in *El hijo de Clara*. He defended the Clara of *La victoria* against charges that she was inhumane and asexual.<sup>48</sup> Rather, for him, Clara was an exceptional being whose sacrifices were all the greater for her being a woman of the highest elevation. To Esgleas, however, Clara’s victory in the first novel — renouncing motherhood, “the supreme pleasure in life” — was lost in the second. Citing Ramón y Cajal, Esgleas asserted that love was a reciprocal arrangement. The Clara of *El hijo de Clara* became a lesser character when she became a mother because she

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44. *Ibid.*, 22–23.

45. This use of the name Celestina for a procuress is from the fifteenth century work *La Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas. Ward, *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*, s.v. “Celestina, La.”

46. El Médico Rural, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 22.

47. Blanca was the name of Montseny’s deceased sister.

48. Germinal Esgleas, “Ensayo crítico – literario sobre ‘El hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 461.

was not in a reciprocal relationship.<sup>49</sup> Unlike Puente and other male critics, Esgleas' criticism did not assert that Clara failed as a woman, but rather that she failed as a continuous character through the two novels. She was unable to find a reciprocal relationship in the first novel and, in the second, Clara sought only conception, not a relationship.

Esgleas also had some minor complaints that the novel failed to inform us sufficiently about how Clara handled Nardo's upbringing, as well as household arrangements.

Alongside of love, domestic, and by extension, social questions, are to be taken into consideration. As the tiniest is connected to the largest: the prosaic problem of the "stew and the neighborhood" — which is not resolved by a frugal life or by vegetarian food. If a man and a woman are capable of having an intelligent division of labor — clearly discarding the creation of a society such as those of the cloister or the barracks ...<sup>50</sup>

It becomes apparent from reading Montseny's responses that this exchange is part of a courtship. Esgleas' directed his questions more to Montseny than to Clara, part of the burgeoning romance between the author and her critic. In two years, the author and her critic became a couple and, in retrospect, Esgleas' questioning and defense of the original Clara and his critique of the second Clara are a semi-public courtship, though one wonders what contemporary readers made of them.

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49. Germinal Esgleas, "Ensayo crítico – literario sobre 'El hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 459.

50. *Ibid.*, 463.

*La Revista Blanca* reprinted Armand's short notice about *La victoria* from his journal *L'En dehors*.<sup>51</sup> Armand was the pseudonym of Ernest–Lucien Juin, a French individualist anarchist who published the journal *L'En dehors* (1922–1939).<sup>52</sup> Armand was especially concerned with sexual questions and with living in the present rather than working for the future. Two individualist anarchists, the American Benjamin Tucker and the German Max Stirner, as well as the poet Walt Whitman (1819–1892) heavily influenced him. Armand was very important in Spain, especially through his contributions on sexual questions in the journals *Iniciales* and *Ética*. He also published articles in *La Revista Blanca*. His advocacy of a version of free love, one that included multiple partners as well as his exaltation of sex without love, ensured he would collide with Montseny. He foresaw a relationship that was open to “romantic adventures” with others and without jealousy. In Armand’s view, such excursions were not different from scientific or sociological experiments and thus the relationship would be “situated outside of fidelity and jealousy.”<sup>53</sup>

Armand defended earlier comments about *La victoria* in *L'En dehors* as his attempts to bring to a French–speaking readership the news that a novel

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51. Émile Armand, “Alrededor de ‘*La victoria*’,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 143–144.

52. Armand is important enough in Spanish anarchism to be one of the few foreigners to have an entry in the indispensable work: Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Armand, Émile.”

53. Émile Armand, “Alrededor de ‘*La victoria*’,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 143. The Armand articles at issue are “Parmi ce que se publie,” *L'En dehors*, no. 109 (31 May 1925), 7; “Notre Point de Vue,” *L'En dehors*, no. 75–76 (15 March 1926), 5; “Notre Point de Vue: L’individualisme montsenien,” *L'En dehors*, no. 126 (1 January 1928), 5; [Book review of Federica Montseny, *El hijo de Clara*], *L'En dehors*, no. 126 (1 January 1928), 7; and “Armandismo y Montsenismo,” *L'En dehors*, no. 130 (1 March 1928), 7.

had been published in Spanish that dealt with many of the same issues that his journal addressed.<sup>54</sup> He maintained that Clara was not truly victorious since the men she engaged with were not her equals.<sup>55</sup> Armand directed his attack at not only Clara but also at the male characters. His proposed solution to Clara's romantic woes was his doctrine of amorous comradeship, far from the free union version of love that Montseny wanted. For Armand, Evora represented a better model of the future woman than Clara.<sup>56</sup> In *L'En dehors*, he criticized the novel as presenting the woman of tomorrow, Clara, contending with three men of today. However, he finds these men not even true contemporaries, but backward. He wondered why Evora was not the woman of tomorrow since Clara could not fall in love.<sup>57</sup> He deflected the question of normality because, for him, love was relative and dependent on individual temperament. For him, it was no less normal to spend two hours a day “seeking romantic experiences than to play, paint or collect butterflies — but one is not ethically superior to the other.”<sup>58</sup> He saw Clara as a model of the impotent love, as Clara could not consummate her love; whereas, to Montseny's furious opposition, he saw Evora as symbolizing the potency of love. His notice in *L'En dehors* about *El*

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54. Émile Armand, “Alrededor de ‘La victoria’,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 143.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*, 144. He also wonders what a conversation between the two women would have entailed.

57. Armand, “Parmi ce qui se publie.” *L'En dehors*, 109 (May 1927), 7.

58. Émile Armand, “Alrededor de ‘La victoria’,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 143.

*hijo de Clara* was similar and Armand wrote that he viewed Nardo as a revolutionary Don Juan, a lover.

Aurelio focused on the literary value of *La victoria*, especially on Clara as poorly conceived and developed. Yet, astonishingly for an anarchist, Aurelio objected to Clara's incessant demands for freedom in her romantic relationships. Aurelio noted that he had a lover and that they did not needlessly discuss their relationship before becoming a couple. He complained further that "we have no idea what Clara, an educated woman, thought about anything but love: not politics, art, philosophy, and science, not even the simple things of the home."<sup>59</sup> Aurelio's expectation that Clara's domestic arrangements should have been explained was no doubt due to an expectation of a didactic role for the novel, but it is unlikely he made such demands of novels written by male authors.

In October 1927, *La Revista Blanca* published a letter from a J. R. Forteza, which was another attack on the character of Clara.<sup>60</sup> Based on his argument and location, Forteza was presumably an anarchist or a syndicalist since he writes from Rosario, Argentina, which was a center of the Argentine syndicalist trade union federation Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (1901–1930, FORA).<sup>61</sup> His analysis was similar to most of the other male

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59. Luis Aurelio, "Lecturas: 'La victoria' de Federica Montseny," *Solidaridad: Periódico quincenal de los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo*, no. 101 (25 June 1927), 4.

60. J.R. Forteza, "Dos cartas interesantes," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 105 (1 October 1927), 278–280. Forteza's letter is one response and Montseny's response to Forteza is the other.

61. I am unable to find much more about him and queries sent to Argentine collections and a multilingual anarchist studies list based in France got no responses. Known as "the Chicago of

critiques of Clara, but he also had the best political critique of her. Forteza criticized Clara's rejection of assistance, which he saw as part of her excessive intellectualization of her relationships with men. Rather than solely rejecting the patronizing protection of men, which Forteza saw as her right, Clara rejected all assistance. For Forteza, this assistance was indispensable not only for the household but for society at large. Clara carried her beliefs to a level that resulted in a sterile individualism.<sup>62</sup> Like most of the correspondents who attacked the character, he saw Clara's rejection of love as identical to her rejection of motherhood. Motherhood, in Forteza's opinion, was the "inescapable mission" of every woman, part of the fundamental and fatal mission of man (*hombre*) to perpetuate the species. In Forteza's view, we differ from the most rudimentary of organisms only in that we can try to place our descendants on a better footing to achieve happiness.<sup>63</sup>

It is possible that Forteza meant mankind rather than solely man (*hombre*), but his use of the word parallels his use of woman (*mujer*) in his statement. The pamphlet *La mujer esclava*, by the French anarchist René Chaughi, pointed out the linguistic problem of gender when, for instance, man and other masculine terms come to stand in for humanity and when the masculine dominates over the feminine such as when adjectives are modified

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Argentina," Rosario was an industrial city. In the twenties European immigrants were a significant portion of the population and it was an important center of syndicalist activity. Abad de Santillán, a leading figure in the Argentine syndicalist trade union, the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA), also lived there. Contrast this positive Chicago analogy to the negative one of Barcelona.

62. J.R. Forteza, "Dos cartas interesantes," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 105 (1 October 1927), 279.

63. *Ibid.*, 279–280.

for groups.<sup>64</sup> This problem of language was one of the reasons Montseny stressed her belief in humanism in opposition to feminism.<sup>65</sup>

Montseny leapt to the defense of Clara by declaring that she never pretended that Clara was perfect and that she had defects (a frequent refrain in Montseny's responses).<sup>66</sup> Montseny repeatedly responded to the attacks on Clara as an evolutionary failure and as biologically abnormal; they must have truly rankled. For her, the point was to exercise one's will and take action to improve the situation. She rejected the charge that Clara was "unharmonious" in her life. She insisted that it was anarchist men with Fernando's beliefs, who were the problem rather than Clara.<sup>67</sup> The real issue was to remove atavistic remnants and to live "our lives" with broad ideals and not under coercion.<sup>68</sup> Montseny read Marañón and in part she was responding to his statements about women. Clara contradicted his argument that a woman's sexual satisfaction comes from a man's possessing her. Marañón thought such dependence gave her the possibility of being a mother and women gained sexual pleasure and satisfaction from the "direct cares of maternity."<sup>69</sup>

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64. Chaughi, "La mujer esclava," in Chaughi and Robin, *La mujer*, 5.

65. In Montseny's arguments humanism implied both the sexes on an even plane rather than the preference for one or the other, see my chapter six.

66. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24. She also stated the women of the future were more likely to be Claras than Evoras.

67. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara II," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 47 (1 May 1925), 26.

68. *Ibid.*, 27.

69. "The real sexual satisfaction of the normal woman consists in the pleasure of feeling herself possessed by the man whom she loves; by the man who, perhaps without her realizing the fact, gives her the hope of being a mother; and it consists, later, in the moment when she embraces her child for the first time, as well as the infinite enjoyment which the direct cares of maternity represent for her." Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 80.



Montseny responded polemically to her critics and explicitly recognized that gender played a significant role in critics' responses. As she pointed out, all the negative critics were men. Isabel Hortensia Pereira (or Pereyra) Dagedo (n.d.) denounced them as male chauvinists.<sup>70</sup> Montseny believed men recognized that Clara was a threat to their privileges, whether or not they were anarchists. She claimed Clara was a unique character in literature, that no one had ever created a character like her. Men objected because they saw Clara as being the opposite of the type of woman with whom they could make a home. While she admitted that was her goal, she noted that she felt ambivalent about the fact that they all seem to have risen to the bait. However, it proved that she raised an important issue, which was her original intent.<sup>71</sup> Other writers of anarchist literature, while creating model women, had failed to address feminine concerns.<sup>72</sup> The twenty-three year old writer was proud to claim that Clara was hers with no antecedents, no "paternal factors nor ancestral line." In a gloss that combined Marx and Jesus, she wrote that Clara was "the mother of herself, the artist of herself, and the beginning and end of herself" ("*Clara «madre de sí misma, artista de sí misma, principio y fin de sí misma»*").<sup>73</sup> The misogyny of Proudhon and Nietzsche, as well as the false

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70. Isabel Hortensia Pereyra, "En defensa de Clara: Mi humilde opinión," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 51 (1 July 1925), 1-3. I examine her comments in more detail below.

71. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 23.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Atando cabos algo fuera ya de 'El Hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 115 (1 March 1928), 589.

women of the novels of Vargas Vila, infected anarchist men.<sup>74</sup> They defend women; however, not real, living women, but only an ideal of femininity, and not based on shared ideals and needs.<sup>75</sup> To Montseny, the supposed chivalry of men was a greater danger to the advancement of women than undisguised contempt.<sup>76</sup>

Montseny responded to Puente by expressing her admiration for him while dismissing the value of her own work. Montseny attempted to deflect some of Puente's criticism when she stated that her insignificant characters were not worthy of Puente's critical attention. He should save it for major literary figures such as Don Juan, Don Quijote, Hamlet, or Faust. She wrote that she would be limiting her response to the major issue of Clara's normality, as "medical terminology would have it."<sup>77</sup> Neo-Malthusianism, the similarity of her novel to the ideas of Pelletier, all these other questions, were of secondary importance. It was the concept of normal and abnormal that irritated her.

She thought it was wrong that this concept divided the world into two categories. She felt that those considered normal lived their lives passively, without complications, lives of moderation and balance. In Montseny's view, these people had lives of mediocrity. This was the bourgeois ideal family

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74. José María Vargas Vila was a Colombian author who was quite popular among anarchists.

75. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara III," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Federico Urales, "En busca del tipo normal (I)," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 106 (15 October 1927), 289–291 and Federico Urales, "En busca del tipo normal (II)," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 107 (1 November 1927), 323–324.

examined in Chapter 6. The family that follows the path laid out without question but also without hopes and ideals. In Montseny's view, the powerful persecuted and labeled as abnormal those who questioned the status quo and sought changes. They subjected them to medical examinations, "cures," and ultimately death when they truly threatened the status quo. "My Nardo and my Clara are, proudly, and with the most immense pleasure I know, exactly two such abnormal people."<sup>78</sup> Montseny turned the tables by making most anarchists abnormal. She further proudly proclaimed that her characters were abnormal. "If a doctor [Puente] said so, then they must be so."<sup>79</sup>

Montseny replied to Esgleas' domestic concerns quickly, stating that she rejected Rousseau's return to the simplicity of nature but rather sought an intelligent use of applied science and technological advances to "happily and elegantly" perform the domestic tasks of cooking and cleaning.<sup>80</sup> The limits of time and space explain the gaps in *El hijo de Clara*. If she had detailed Nardo's education, Esgleas would have complained that she had repeated *Sembrando flores*, Urales' earlier novel. Montseny mentioned in passing that she and Urales — whom she does not name — have differences on education, but she was proud of Clara as mother–educator.<sup>81</sup> This was a significant change from *Sembrando flores* where the father is the educator. As recently as

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78. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre 'El Hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 23–24.

79. *Ibid.*, 26.

80. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Alrededor de 'El Hijo de Clara,'" *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 112 (15 January 1928), 489. Jo Labanyi questions Montseny's reading of Rousseau.

81. *Ibid.*, 487.

1925, Urales wrote that one of the principal tasks of the father is to be an educator.<sup>82</sup> Montseny took that away, and was in fact completely dismissive of not only the role of the father, but even the need for one. She argued that society enslaved most women that taught them to aspire to a “gilded cage.”<sup>83</sup> Her argument echoed Chaughí’s *La mujer esclava*, which Anselmo Lorenzo retranslated and published again in 1920.<sup>84</sup> Her goal was for both women and men to “shake off the shackles of the past and live together in harmonious beauty, never enslaved.”<sup>85</sup> In her sequel novel, she “set a trap for men and caught many in it, including anarchists.”<sup>86</sup>

Clara was unwilling to change herself to live within the demands men made of women. The problem in *La victoria* was the relationship between the sexes, but in the sequel, the problem was no longer between the sexes but between human beings. Montseny broadened the issue to make it less of a problem just for the woman of the future, making it instead a problem for human beings in the present, the “tragedy of maladjustment.”<sup>87</sup> Montseny took evolutionary concepts and manipulated them in her novels to account for the issue of love. Paradoxically, she was making the same error of seeing women’s issues as secondary, less than those of the totality of humanity. If

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82. Federica Urales, “Responsabilidad, personalidad, descendencia,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 41 (1 February 1925), 12.

83. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara II,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 47 (1 May 1925), 28.

84. Chaughí, “La mujer esclava,” in Chaughí and Robin, *La mujer*.

85. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara II,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 47 (1 May 1925), 28.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Federica Montseny, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Alrededor de ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 112 (15 January 1928), 488.

Nardo's problems in the sequel represented a broadening of the question as Montseny argued, then did Clara's problems imply a narrower perspective? In this, Montseny was presenting women's concerns as lesser than those of her male character in *El hijo de Clara*.

She argued that science has only a relative value against nature and none in the face of love. An individual cannot avoid the "phenomena of love," they can only observe it. Montseny was arguing against science dictating to emotions, and the need to elevate emotions such as love over the demands of science. She was taking a firm, yet opaque, stance against questions of eugenics dictating who could and should love. This should be the decision of the individual, such as Emma in *El hijo de Clara*, and not that of scientists or, worse, the state. Nardo was not the creation of will, but of a moment of the madness that lies in the act of creation. "Love is more of an art than a science or a moral."<sup>88</sup> Montseny argued that love simply *was*, no one can say it to be good or bad, true or false, it simply was.<sup>89</sup> Montseny argued that many, including Esgleas, confused love with marriage or a union. Love was possible without concessions, but having a life in common was not. The difference between Clara or Nardo and others was that Clara and Nardo think about the concessions before they love, others think of them afterwards.<sup>90</sup>

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88. *Ibid.*, 488.

89. *Ibid.* She is using the word *locura* and I suspect the madness she intended was the loss of will and reason rather than insanity. Moral in this case is outside of the realm of the senses and an act of conscience, which she argues love is not. "Moral" in Real Academia Española, *Diccionario*. 1925. I consulted the 1914, 1925, 1927, and 1936 editions online.

90. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Alrededor de 'El Hijo de Clara,'" *La*

Montseny's response took shape over several issues. She responded first in July to the *L'En dehors* comments and then responded to Armand's *La Revista Blanca* comments in the same August 1, 1927 issue. Montseny placed her beliefs about love in contrast to those of Armand, while stating that she never demanded a love that was unique, only one that was not simply for convenience.<sup>91</sup> The two had a different conception of love itself, not the problems of love, but its essence.<sup>92</sup> Clara's decision was a victory because she stayed true to herself and it was a morally and physically healthy decision not to subjugate herself.<sup>93</sup> Admittedly, Clara was not a typical Spanish woman. Montseny wrote that a Frenchman expects a Spanish woman to always be passionate with a "medieval lifestyle and mentality."<sup>94</sup> Because Armand found Clara pedantic, dry, and vain, he described her as not much of a woman.<sup>95</sup> Montseny rejected Armand's "generous creation" of a non-existent fourth male character in the novel. If he had existed, he would have been the millstone to Clara's wheat.<sup>96</sup>

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*Revista Blanca* 7, no. 112 (15 January 1928), 489.

91. Federica Montseny, "Alrededor de 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 145.

92. Federica Montseny, "Intermedio polémico: Armand y 'La Victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 99 (1 July 1927), 80. See also Urales on love and evolution. Federico Urales, "De la mujer y del amor," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 102 (15 August 1927), 173.

93. Federica Montseny, "Alrededor de 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 145.

94. *Ibid.*

95. Federica Montseny, "Intermedio polémico: Armand y 'La Victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 99 (1 July 1927), 80.

96. Federica Montseny, "Alrededor de 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 146.

In Montseny's view, the issue was that people believe in an ideal love but place it in the future, while what she sought was to deal with the practical problems faced by women of today. Only women were able to recognize that this was Montseny's goal, and the answer was still pending, because, under present conditions, it was not possible to achieve the perfection of love. It was a problem of today presented through the woman of tomorrow, and Montseny stated — regretfully — that the answer still lay in the future.<sup>97</sup> Armand did not recognize that she was attempting to create the new mentality that he called for in a 1924 article published in *La Revista Blanca*. Armand's article argued that the desired future would not come through a change in party or class but rather through a necessary change in mentality.<sup>98</sup> Montseny wrote that Clara was not simply a creation of the novelist, but that Clara had and continued to exist in many different women. Montseny went on to state that Clara was not a visionary, but rather that her ideas were completely in line with anarchist theory, though not realizable at the present for a complex series of reasons.<sup>99</sup> But Clara's rejection of the love offered by the men in *La victoria* was the celebration of "dangerous love" in contrast to "contemporary love" that was cold and calculating.<sup>100</sup> Montseny saw the tragedy in the "sad, absurd and immoral" situation in which a woman could reach twenty-five and only know the physical need for love, rather than its ideal. She believed that it made

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97. *Ibid.*, 146.

98. Émile Armand, "Hacia una humanidad nueva (Continuación)," *La Revista Blanca* 2, no. 34 (15 October 1924), 29.

99. Federica Montseny, "En defensa de Clara I," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 45 (1 April 1925), 17.

100. *Ibid.*

perfect sense for a woman to voluntarily preserve herself in that ideal of love for the right man, deserving of her love.<sup>101</sup> Montseny challenged the accusation that Clara was vain and arrogant, already expressed in the novel by Fernando. She argued against this as the traditional response of men to women who do not fit the mold of being either female or an angel, a woman who resists being one or the other. This was Clara's refusal, and one that Montseny encouraged for all women.<sup>102</sup> Clara was one of those restless souls who struggle and advance humanity, who are the impulse for human progress. Because of what she did to promote human progress, Clara was simultaneously both a victim and a hero.<sup>103</sup> For Montseny, we all must struggle in life, we must never expect happiness to come from passivity, but rather be actively struggling to make a better life, to prevent degeneration, and refuse to submit to the imbalances of society.<sup>104</sup>

Montseny completely rejected Armand's idea of Evora, stating that his description of her is his own creation, not one from her novel.<sup>105</sup> For Montseny, Evora was an attempt to create an incidental character that was a vulgar (or common) woman, one who did not reflect "our methods," regardless of what Armand may have thought.<sup>106</sup> Montseny fell back on the weak argument of ethnicity — that Frenchmen are different than Spaniards — for all

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101. *Ibid.*, 17–18.

102. *Ibid.*, 18.

103. *Ibid.*

104. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

105. Federica Montseny, "Alrededor de 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 145.

106. *Ibid.*, 146.



Spaniards, especially Catalans, were fierce individualists in disguise.<sup>107</sup> She found Armand's later comment that Nardo was a Don Juan absurd and concluded that Armand must not have read those pages in her novel. Montseny wrote that she realized that her major crime (*pecado mayor*) in the eyes of Armand was that she did not accept his doctrine of amorous comradeship.<sup>108</sup> Oddly, at this point Montseny stopped her response, however, and begged her readers' forgiveness for not having finished and for leaving much more to say.<sup>109</sup>

A few months later Montseny pointed out that Armand and others who saw Evora as the woman of the future were equally quick to reject Clara.<sup>110</sup> Clara's impotence was only her scruples, excessive if her readers perceived it so, but Clara's was a noble, refined love that was healthy, because the sick (the hysteric, the consumptive) all demanded love insatiably.<sup>111</sup> For her this represented the problem with many of the men who believed in free love. It was free for them to take, less free for them to give, and clearly involved satisfying the sexual need more than any desire for true love and companionship with a woman, much less one who was as elevated as Clara. Clara was an essay in describing the ideal woman of the future.<sup>112</sup> Montseny

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107. *Ibid.*, 147.

108. Federica Montseny, "Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Atando cabos algo fuera ya de 'El Hijo de Clara'." *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 115 (1 March 1928), 589.

109. *Ibid.*, 592.

110. Federica Montseny, "Intermedio polémico: Armand y 'La Victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 99 (1 July 1927), 82.

111. *Ibid.*, 81.

112. *Ibid.*, 79.

believed that love was eternal, not solely a necessity for human existence, but rather something ethereal, something sacred to the human spirit. She argued for an idealistic concept of love rather than the materialistic one of many of her colleagues, especially male ones.<sup>113</sup>

In Montseny's view, the principal reason that the male critics did not like Clara was her complete refusal to allow any masculine domination. It was her refusal to be feminine and submit. Women were expected to submit first to society, then to the male (*macho*), and afterwards, to instinct. Clara's rebellion was strong and active; she would not submit and be passive. "Clara is the symbol of the sorrows and furious Desire [sic] for liberation, for dignity, for improvement."<sup>114</sup> Montseny thought Armand's view of women did not differ substantially from that of other men and that his conception of amorous comradeship was not different from that of the Anabaptists, especially John of Leiden.<sup>115</sup>

Montseny wrote in a polemical tone that she suspected that Aurelio might be like Roberto, and therefore he preferred the infinitely more manageable and docile Aurora to Clara. It is a view of the novel and of the ethics of passion and romance that she labels as "Armand's *La victoria*."<sup>116</sup> But, she was pleased with the result of her work, despite whatever literary

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113. *Ibid.*, 82.

114. *Ibid.*, 81.

115. *Ibid.*, 80. What most of Montseny's readers made of references to the Anabaptists and John of Leiden would be interesting to know. Were the Anabaptists popular in Spanish anarchist lore?

116. Federica Montseny, "Alrededor de '*La victoria*,'" *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 101 (1 August 1927), 147.

defects the novel might have and despite the moral defects of Clara, since it had created a level of discussion that was still ongoing more than two years after its publication. Montseny believed that such a work must have its good qualities to have sustained such a level of debate.<sup>117</sup>

Montseny's replies addressed the issue of the debates over Clara's character. Montseny made the key addition of "mutual" (*mutua*) to Forteza's phrase "assistance" (*ayuda*), which brings in the classic anarchist work on evolution, Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*. She agreed that people could not live without the aid of others — in order to reproduce "we need another" — that is not mutual aid, however, but rather collaboration, usually in the care of a child or interacting within society. This aid was not what Clara rejected but rather the specific type of support that was the protective attitude of men towards women.<sup>118</sup> What Forteza argued for was the need of women for masculine (*varonil*) protection, which Montseny rejected, insisting instead that what society needed was the protection, respect, and solidarity of the entire collectivity. When women are pregnant, they should be under the protection of all of humanity, "just as in nature."<sup>119</sup> "Even in the present selfish and ferocious society a pregnant woman or with a child in her arms gets consideration. In Spain men will fight fiercely for a seat in the tram but yield it

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117. *Ibid.*, 148.

118. Federica Montseny, "Dos cartas interesantes," *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 105 (1 October 1927), 281.

119. Possibly this was the protection afforded to the young by social animals that live in packs.

to such a woman.”<sup>120</sup> To guarantee women their independence, Montseny argued that society must allow women economic security and liberation from any dependence on men. A woman who is economically dependent was not truly free to love whom she pleases.

Montseny agreed that Clara’s renunciation of love dodged the unavoidable duty of motherhood. She felt that this lack of maternal sense by Clara was a defect and wanted to correct it, which was why she began to write *El hijo de Clara*, “an affirmation and ratification of the mother, moreover, with a slightly mysterious and symbolic son.”<sup>121</sup> Renouncing love was easier than renouncing motherhood, quoting Nietzsche that women only look towards men for children. “I have imposed on Clara the sacrifice of love,” but Montseny did not want to impose on her the sacrifice of motherhood. She often thought that a child born of Clara’s first sexual relationship, one that was the product of only seeking a child, would be a child that is morally disfigured, lacking the vital force present in the sentimental and spiritual pure children of love. The child would be artificial, incomplete, because of their immoral formation.<sup>122</sup> She hoped *El hijo de Clara* would satisfy Forteza’s doubts, and that she would have some new and discomfoting ideas for the readers of the book.<sup>123</sup>

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120. Federica Montseny, “Dos cartas interesantes,” *La Revista Blanca* 6, no. 105 (1 October 1927), 282.

121. *Ibid.*

122. *Ibid.*

123. *Ibid.*

Not all the men disliked Clara and some wrote to *La Revista Blanca* with positive comments about the character. Fortunato Barthe (1885?–1962) was an anarchist journalist and author who published three novellas in the *Novela Ideal* series and more elsewhere.<sup>124</sup> Barthe wrote positively about Clara as a model for the immediate future, a woman who set guidelines for living and making one's life, while fighting and resisting machismo (*masculinismo*) and society.<sup>125</sup> He felt that the character of Clara was potentially an exceptional individual, that she was superior to ordinary women in her attempt to overcome the obstacles in her path. *La victoria* was healthy, modern, and regenerating — even if one allowed for some problems in the novel.<sup>126</sup> Urales' old comrade, Adrián del Valle, published a positive review in Havana's *La Tierra*, reprinted in *La Revista Blanca*.<sup>127</sup> He recommended *La victoria* as a compelling piece of anarchist propaganda.<sup>128</sup> Just prior to publishing this article by del Valle, the editors of *La Revista Blanca* wrote that there would be no more comments published about the novel.<sup>129</sup> Then, in the second June issue, the editors announced that there had not been any female voices

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124. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Barthe, Fortunato."

125. Fortunato Barthe, "Opiniones y comentarios sobre 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 49 (1 June 1925), 37.

126. *Ibid.*, 38.

127. Palmirio de Lidia (Adrián del Valle), "Opiniones y comentarios sobre 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 49 (1 June 1925), 38–39. The article is signed Palmirio de Lidia with del Valle in parenthesis. It originally appeared in Havana's *La Tierra*. *La Revista Blanca* also reprinted his review of *La indomable* from *Revista Bimestre de Cuba* with comments on all three of Montseny's novels. Adrián del Valle, "Bibliografía," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 143 (1 May 1929), XIII–XIV

128. Palmirio de Lidia (Adrián del Valle), "Opiniones y comentarios sobre 'La victoria'," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 49 (1 June 1925), 39.

129. *Ibid.*, 38.

discussing the novel, and while they had had enough (“«*ibasta de cuartillas!*»“) of male critics, they had received a commentary from Isabel Pereira that they were going to print. Rather than deny “worthy” female writers, they were encouraging them to send submissions.<sup>130</sup>

There followed four substantive female contributions, all of which were positive.<sup>131</sup> As promised, the respected anarchist writer Pereira was the first published after the journal sought female replies. Isabel Hortensia Pereira (or Pereyra) Dagedo (n.d.) was publishing anarchist journals in Andalusia before World War I with her companion, the anarchist writer Salvador Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad Cordón Avellán (1887–1950s).<sup>132</sup> Pereira’s concern was the character of Clara. She said that while literary merit is worth considering, what she most looked for was what the work tried to teach and had as its core.<sup>133</sup> She thought that few [men] looked for true companionship but rather to satisfy “bestial needs.” Pereira’s commentary on the novel sprang from the common contemporary idea that the conditions of the sexual act defined the children it produced. A union driven by desire and lust — rather than the union of hearts — and did not think about the children that might be conceived was only a “bestial act,” which resulted in poor offspring, both morally and

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130. “La victoria,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 50 (15 June 1925), 38. The notice ended with the statement not to abuse the opening.

131. As they printed negative comments and letters from men, I assume they would have printed women’s negative comments as well.

132. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Cordón Avellán, Salvador Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad” and “Pereira Dagedo, Isabel Hortensia.”

133. Isabel Hortensia Pereyra, “En defensa de Clara: Mi humilde opinión,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 51 (1 July 1925), 1–3.

eugenically.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, Pereira argued that men who only viewed a woman as a “beast of pleasure,” could only envision women through a conception of male freedom, and thus did not truly seek the liberation of women.<sup>135</sup> This was almost identical to Montseny’s criticisms of Spanish feminism and of anarchist men.

Joaquina Colomer lauded the figure of Clara and said she lay within each woman. Colomer (1910–?) was an anarchist educator, ran a school in the Barcelona suburb of Manresa, published a jointly authored novel in the *Novela Ideal* series, and became a militant in *Mujeres Libres*.<sup>136</sup> For Colomer, the problem was that people were used to reading about feminine plastic figurines, a type of woman that Clara decidedly was not. Colomer believed that women needed to continue to teach and work for the day when society would consider women solely as human beings.<sup>137</sup>

Antonia Maymón wrote that readers should defend Clara as an emancipated and cultured woman. Antonia Rufina Maymón Giménez (1881–1959) was an anarchist teacher in a Modern School in Zaragoza in 1907. She published three works in *La Novela Ideal* and was a frequent contributor to several anarchist publications including *La Revista Blanca*, *Generación*

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134. *Ibid.*, 1–2.

135. *Ibid.*, 2.

136. If Iñiguez is correct about Colomer’s birth date, she was publishing with *La Revista Blanca* when she was a teenager. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Colomer, Joaquina.”

137. Joaquina Colomer, “En defensa de Clara,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 42 (1 February 1925), 28.

*Consciente, Estudios, and Iniciales*.<sup>138</sup> For her, we need destroy the myths and falsehoods that had built up over generations about women and Clara was doing this. Clara's victory was indisputable, a symbol of female emancipation, based on her own worth and by her own free will. *La victoria* should be admired by all, and emulated. Maymón wrote that readers should all be happy that the novel caused such a debate. Readers could discuss and ponder it, and *La victoria* would give women an idea that they came into the world to be more than instruments of pleasure.<sup>139</sup>

Ángela Graupera continued the praise of Clara after the publication of *El hijo de Clara*. Graupera (n.d.) was a Red Cross Nurse in Serbia during World War I and later wrote forty novellas for the two *La Revista Blanca* series.<sup>140</sup> For her, Clara was the symbol of the strong, industrious, and intelligent woman, freed through her own efforts, whose soul is open to the sorrows and progress of humanity. She "lights the destiny of women to a dawn colored with beautiful hopes, of sexes and categories, freedom and the leveling of the duties of love."<sup>141</sup> The book was a testimony to Montseny's ardent faith that a better and more humane civilization was coming.<sup>142</sup>

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138. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Maymón Giménez, Antonia Rufina."

139. Antonia Maymón, "En defensa de Clara: mi humilde opinión," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 53 (1 August 1925), 1.

140. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. "Graupera, Ángela."

141. Ángela Graupera, "Meditación sobre las páginas de un libro: 'El Hijo de Clara'," *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 113 (1 February 1928), 535. I am not sure what Graupera meant by "sexes and categories" unless she was heralding a dawn of new categories assigned to each sex. The definition of *sexo* from the 1914 *Diccionario de la Real Academia* is "Organic condition which distinguishes the male from the female, and the rational from the irrational, even in plants. The fair sex, all women." The 1925 edition inserted immediately after plants the terms



Even while many of the critics appear to have been either middle–class (Graupera) or déclassé journalists (Armand, Sender), others had an ambiguous class status, especially Esgleas and Maymón who taught in workers’ schools. It was anarchism’s strategic essentialism to use class distinctions against opponents but rarely internally. In the mix of rhetorical strategies used, the anarchists, especially those associated with *La Revista Blanca* and in this internal criticism, never counter–attacked with charges or claims based on class. Montseny featured as positive characters members of the upper classes, the self–employed, peasants, schoolteachers, etc. for the essentials of their characters, rather than purely for symbolism of their class. The positive characters in traditionally oppressive classes come to recognize the role of their class in oppression and take the moral steps to repudiate and work against oppression. At the same time, class was a distinguishing characteristic of negative characters, such as factory owners, landlords, and priests. Montseny emphasized their negative traits through class–based descriptors, such as those applied to the Catalan bourgeois Roure in *Los hijos de la calle*. Montseny used these essentialisms, along with those of national and ethnic characteristics, to fashion arguments that her readers could quickly

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“Weak, figurative for women. Ugly or strong, figurative for men” and then simply *sexo bello*, *sexo débil*” the fair sex, the weak sex. Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana por la Real Academia Española*, 14th ed., Madrid: Imprenta de los sucesores de Hernando, 1914 and Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 15th ed. (Madrid: Calpe, 1925).

142. Ángela Graupera, “Meditación sobre las páginas de un libro: ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 113 (1 February 1928), 536.

grasp. If many of her critics failed to understand her novels or attacked them for spurious reasons, she never ascribed this failure to class origins.

María Ferrer asked whether Clara was not in fact a symbol of the future, but also represented present possibilities as well as the convictions of her creator.<sup>143</sup> Montseny expressed her pleasure that all the women who wrote approved of Clara, calling them all “cultured and educated women of ideals,” and pointed out that they all expressed absolute confidence in the figure of Clara.<sup>144</sup> Almost all of those who wrote were people who existed on the permeable border of the working class; they were lay educators working in ateneos and unions, and journalists publishing in the anarchist press. In the case of Puente, they also included those consciously choosing to work with the poor and indigent.

## EVOLUTION

Esgleas’ central problem was that *El hijo de Clara* allegedly ignored evolutionary laws, which he saw as moving forward in a steady progression, requiring that the future surpass the present.<sup>145</sup> Esgleas argued that Clara’s actions were contrary to instinct and to her own wellbeing.<sup>146</sup> Citing Charles

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143. María Ferrer, “En defensa de Clara,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 56 (15 September 1925), 1–2. All that is known about Ferrer is that she contributed three articles to *La Revista Blanca*. Iñiguez, *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, s.v. “Ferrer, María.”

144. Federica Montseny, “En defensa de Clara III,” *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 48 (15 May 1925), 24. She also stated these women are more likely to be Claras than Evoras.

145. Germinal Esgleas, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Algo más alrededor de ‘El Hijo de Clara.’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 114 (15 February 1928), 563. This could have been influenced by an argument advanced by Marañón, among others, that “maternity blocks intellectual progress.” Marañón, *The Evolution of Sex and Intersexual Conditions*, 86.

146. Germinal Esgleas, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Algo más alrededor de ‘El Hijo de Clara.’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 114 (15 February 1928), 562.

Darwin, Esgleas wrote “[t]he true nature of instinct, according to Darwin, is to be followed independently of reason.”<sup>147</sup> Clara failed to adapt to her environment. Her exaltation of an unrealizable love is contrary to the laws of sexual selection: “If a great love leads to sterility, and the purpose of love, as Nardo says, ‘is the reproduction of the species’ — the supreme requirement of selection — is not discussed as a right nor as a actual natural occurrence but rather imposed, aside from biological predispositions. Further, if it is sublimated by an ethical and aesthetic conception of life, pure abstraction, therefore, is it desirable?”<sup>148</sup> Esgleas assertion that instinct is beyond reason and consequently it should have triumphed over Clara’s will. If she were truly an evolutionary progression, evolution would force her to act on her instincts, not reason (and it would have been the same for a man). Reverter wrote along similar lines in criticizing Montseny’s treatment of sexual relations in the *El hijo de Clara*, making an evolutionary argument, that if Nardo was really to advance the evolutionary progression, he had to have a child.<sup>149</sup>

Montseny argued that Clara’s rejection of the love men offered her served as a moral protest against the contemporary social and moral tyranny but not a rejection of motherhood. The child was not a child of reason or will but one born because Clara was a profoundly human female. “It is not logical,

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147. *Ibid.*, 562.

148. Germinal Esgleas, “Ensayo crítico – literario sobre ‘El hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 111 (1 January 1928), 463–464.

149. Juan Reverter, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Para la autora de ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 113 (1 February 1928), 530.

natural, nor right that she reject motherhood.”<sup>150</sup> Nardo was born not out of Clara’s desire for a proper superior child of the future but out of the instinctual need of the mother at that moment. Nardo’s father might have been any man; only circumstances dictated that Nardo was conceived because of the one hour of passion rather than Clara’s quest for a perfect father. It was the advanced evolution of Clara and her personal will and force that led to the gifted child.<sup>151</sup>

What must have struck Montseny in Puente’s comments was that he stated that Clara was devoid of maternal feeling for her child.<sup>152</sup> Montseny maintained that Clara’s mother–love was so great that it transcended the typical boundaries. It was a mother’s supreme love for her child, an ideal love. When that love was reflected back by the child for his mother — well if the “supremely normal *El Médico Rural* desires to see it as incestuous, as abnormal, sadistic, then that is a reflection of his clinical narrow–mindedness.”<sup>153</sup>

In her response to Esgleas, Montseny posited a fluctuating evolutionary trajectory rather than a linear one. She claimed not to deny the force of natural laws, but then rejected their absolute power and asserted individual determination of one fate. “I do not deny the determinism or physical fatalism

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150. Federica Montseny, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Alrededor de ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 112 (15 January 1928), 486.

151. *Ibid.*, 486–487.

152. *El Médico Rural*, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 22.

153. Federica Montseny, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Un poco más sobre ‘El Hijo de Clara,’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 122 (15 June 1928), 24.

of natural laws, but I do not consider myself as a slave to them.”<sup>154</sup> Determinism is a theory, and like all theories, it changes in the realization that the world is so complex — “infinite relativities” make up the world, so that nothing is truly absolute. Clara’s was an anarchist reflection on the struggle for survival: that the individual must make his or her own destiny. She stated that without struggle, without the assertion of individual will, one gives way to inertia, which is death. Rather than follow instinct, as Esgleas would have it, Clara struggles against a predetermined fate based on instinct, and thus places herself beyond determinism, beyond instinct.<sup>155</sup>

Unlike the novels considered in Mary Louise Roberts’s *Civilization without Sexes*, Montseny was more concerned with Clara’s individual autonomy and freedom in relation to men than with presuming that Clara had a biological need for motherhood.<sup>156</sup> I would stress that Montseny’s concern was liberation alongside motherhood, anarchist liberation was a crucial ingredient of Montseny’s maternalism. This anarchism trumps maternalism in *La victoria*, but in *El hijo de Clara*, it succumbed to an overwhelming combination of gendered ideas of the organic function of women. Even as Clara triumphs in *La victoria*, she follows what many prescribed as the intertwined demands of nature and evolution in the sequel.

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154. Federica Montseny, “Tribuna de criterios opuestos: Atando cabos algo fuera ya de ‘El Hijo de Clara.’” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 115 (1 March 1928), 588–589.

155. *Ibid.*

156. Roberts, *Civilization without the Sexes*, 170–182. I wonder if Roberts had included anarchist authors and publications whether she would not have found a more complex picture.

The fierce exchanges between Montseny and her critics, especially Armand and Puente, did not prevent them from continuing to work together. In fact, Armand published French translations of an article by Montseny and a chapter of *El hijo de Clara* in *L'En dehors*.<sup>157</sup> But then a few years later, in 1932, Armand wrote a commentary “Three Words on Cultural Dilettantism” and targeted Montseny and Urales for criticism — not by name, but by referring to fathers and children. In the margins of the copy of Armand’s journal that belonged to Max Nettleau, devoted friend and colleague of the family, he wrote “Hands Off!” To the end, Nettleau defended the Montsenys and their projects.<sup>158</sup>

Puente was correct that the second book weakened the message of the first. The change of gender of the principal characters diminished the value of the sacrifice, unless in the second novel it is Clara’s sacrifice of her son. However, Nardo himself does not sacrifice: he is still in sexual and romantic relationships, is active politically and a well-known peace campaigner whom governments fear. By making Clara a mother in the second book and denying her a sustained and serious free love relationship, Montseny fell back on an

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157. “From the depths my soul came a kind of rapture when I see with dazzled eyes any piece of paper printed in French and fill with emotion, every day, the generous and hospitable pages of *L'En dehors*.” Federica Montseny, “Nobleza obliga,” *La Revista Blanca* 7, no. 118 (15 April 1928), 694–695.

158. Émile Armand, “Trois mots sur le ‘dilettantisme culturel’,” *La voix libertaire* 4, no. 194 (11 December 1932), 1. The copy I saw was from Max Nettleau’s personal collection at the IISG. I am always, indebted to the staff at the IISG, and in this case, they pulled this material and made arrangements for me to look at it at a point in time when they were closed. Jaap Kloosterman identified the marginalia as being in Nettleau’s handwriting. Nettleau also wrote Montseny to praise *El hijo de Clara*. Max Nettleau to Federica Montseny, 22 March 1932. AGGCE. Tavera also refers to letters from Charles Malato, the eminent French anarchist, to both Urales and Montseny in praise of the novel. Tavera, *Federica Montseny*, 85–86.

essentialist view of motherhood, that Clara must be a mother. Because Montseny saw the raising of children to be the role of mothers, she freed Nardo of any possibility of responsibility for children. Montseny had flipped the roles and ended up with a male who has no familial obligations, and whose relationships with women — though from a different starting point — were not that different from Lucerna's. Judging the second novel in Montseny's evolutionary terms, it is an evolutionary dead end. This was the critique offered by several of the male critics. All the same, Clara was a character who Montseny saw as challenging traditional female roles, even as Montseny herself was unable to see past an essentialist vision of motherhood. Montseny's closing pages show the eternal mother sacrificing her child for humanity, in terms reminiscent of the sacrifice of Jesus.<sup>159</sup>

Maria Lacerda de Moura wrote an interesting plaudit to Montseny that summed up Montseny's goal. "To me, Federica Montseny is one of the modern women, the forerunners of one moral for both sexes, the conscious inspiration, not wanting to bring women down to the morass where men are at the level of brutes or to exceed the savagery and our vices, but who wishes for things to be made to rise until they are the beautiful dreams of Liberty, Love and Beauty."<sup>160</sup> Montseny's discourse on gender was empowered through the very part that restricted it. Her maternalism was a powerful contemporary

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159. What is intriguing is that Vida, the protagonist of *La indomable* [*The Untamed*] represented a return to the Clara of *La victoria*.

160. Moura, *Religião do amor e da beleza*, 85.

argument, even if today we see it as narrow and restricting for women.<sup>161</sup> Montseny created her exemplary figures in order to effect the change she believed was evolutionary. For the ideas of a twenty-two year old to have contradictions and paradoxes is not surprising. The models she offered were intended to create a positive example, in opposition to those of the Church, the state, as well as Spanish feminism, in her quest to change both gender and social relations. She did not expect these models to mirror social reality, just to present the possibility of change. The characters in the novels were types, idealized, and, as Esgleas wrote, less well-rounded. However, she did want them to be heroic exemplars that other women could use as models and windows on the possibilities in their own lives. Montseny wanted it to be possible for each woman to make their own decisions, to decide what path to tread, to move into the future on their own.

Montseny was a very young anarchist who sought to propose fictional characters as models of good or bad personalities. She engaged in contemporary gender debates by adapting contemporary ideologies to fit her individualist anarchism. This included augmenting the traditional anticlerical attack on the Roman Catholic Church as unnatural by modifying contemporary arguments on evolution. In her work, she described the positive characteristics and emotions as natural, while depicting the Church morality that she found oppressive as unnatural. In the period between her eighteenth

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161. Scanlon, *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974)*, 256.



and twenty–fifth years, she adopted and then abandoned vocabulary as it suited her.

The 1931 proclamation of the Second Republic would represent a new stage in her life. Pulled away from her fiction by an active participation in anarchist and syndicalist politics, she took on more public roles. She wrote a few more novellas but no more novels. She made several propaganda tours to different regions of Spain while continuing her journalism. She also shifted her concerns from the Woman Question to the hypocrisy and political struggles of the Republic. Ironically, the greater freedom and rights accorded to women was not the reason for the shift in focus but the persecution of the CNT and anarchism which continued during the Second Republic. The Montseny's brought out a weekly for two years but censorship soon made that an unviable endeavor. Manuel Azaña Díaz (1880–1940), the first Republican Prime Minister sued her for slander due to the book she and her father produced on government barbarity in Andalusia. She was never sent to prison, though several of her friends and comrades were. Here, she undoubtedly benefited from the gender double standard.

This greater public presence culminated in the position of Minister of Health and Social Services in the government of Largo Caballero. The fall of his cabinet, defeat in the Civil War, and the subsequent exile and imprisonment in France, made her stauncher in her anarchism, even after the death of her mother and then of her father. She remained an anarchist until

her death in 1994. What did modify and subtly shift was her view of feminism. In interviews she gave from her home in Toulouse, she praised the feminists of the Transition. Of course, these were not the same type of women as the feminists of her youth and in her seventies, Montseny embraced the radicalism of the Spanish feminists.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

“Every book, especially if it is about history, is useful.”  
Antonio Gramsci, April 22, 1929<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation focuses on Federica Montseny in the 1920s because it was then that she perfected her voice and sharpened her skills. Between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, she stepped out from the shadow of her parents to stand fully on her own. Her concerns with gender (though she did not call it that), motherhood, the family, and evolution would continue into the Second Republic. While these were still integral to her anarchism, her greater participation in the immediate and public sphere of politics consumed most of her energy and efforts.

Vernon Lidtke argues for the importance of the history of the culture of German Social Democracy. In his *The Alternative Culture*, he makes the following observation about tracing the influence of this culture: “it could manifest itself in a slightly altered vocabulary, in sharpened social (and political) preferences, and in vague notions of about how to reform society, all extremely difficult phenomenon for historians to discern and present systematically.”<sup>2</sup> Montseny’s novels portrayed independent women carving out their own space and in so doing carving out a space for libertarian ideology in the world. Their agency and resistance took a multiplicity of forms because

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1. Antonio Gramsci to Tania Schucht, April 22, 1929, in *Letters from Prison*, ed. Frank Rosengarten, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

2. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture*, 20.

people who lived through the same moment “see” the current system in disparate ways.<sup>3</sup>

I examine how knowledge and power interact in her work and activities within the conditions of her historical period. Montseny drew upon symbols and patterns in fiction that would be familiar to her readers, but from which each reader can draw his or her own judgments. Montseny argued for a secular society while manipulating a shared religious vocabulary. Montseny’s conversion narrative was one of independence and breaking of gendered norms for both sexes through a process of Lamarckian evolutionary change. She used romance fiction to argue for women being independent; they should sacrifice love rather than their individual selves. Familial relationships were formed around the imagined community of similar ideas rather than blood. Yet the only true family was between mother and child. Clara, the hero of her first novel, voluntarily chose a maternalist “martyrdom” when she rejected love and submission for independence and her own will.<sup>4</sup>

To completely do justice to Montseny’s ideas, I should go past the twenties and closely examine her work during the Republic, especially the local press coverage of her speaking tours to Andalusia, Asturias, Galicia, Levante, and the Basque country. I would need to review the debates within the CNT over its relationship with the Republic and the continuing vexed question of anarchism in the Civil War. I need to trawl through the documents of her

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3. Rofel, *Other Modernities*, 187.

4 Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 49–50.

wartime ministry and the reports of the mission the League of Nations sent to Spain to investigate disease and health conditions during the Civil War. This work I intend to do beyond the thesis.

Montseny's novels contributed to the memory of Spanish anarchism. Her independent women and models for a more "moral" life showed up the contradictions of her contemporary society. They created memories, albeit fictional ones, which gave people something to look forward to and create when the Civil War opened the possibilities of a revolutionary change in society. Born into an exceptional literary household, Montseny was building an imagined community and a shared collective anarchist past.<sup>5</sup>

For Montseny, unlike the majority of her compatriots of the Left, there could be no social revolution without a concurrent gender revolution. Educating people on this topic was the fundamental objective of her fiction, and a very significant and important component of her journalism and propaganda tours. Many scholars argue that "[g]ender is never simply a preexisting, transparent, and independent sign; it is one part of an interlocking system of social and cultural control."<sup>6</sup> Montseny recognized this and sought to weaken that society by upending one of its primary supports, the division of life into private and public spheres and the relegation of women to the first. Montseny foresaw the entire structure collapsing if she could destabilize

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5. Jo Labanyi, "The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Spain," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 9, no. 2 (2008), 121.

6. Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 181.

gender relations by transforming the view of women from being man's problem into humanity's concern. She used melodramatic fiction because it offered to her the ability to reach audiences that she would not otherwise reach through her journalism or propaganda campaigns.

Throughout, I have been searching for the impact of Montseny's ideas, the subtle transformations of thought and practice that would provide evidence of influence. Montseny's work challenged the contemporary construction of women and sought the liberation of the woman as an individual. Yet, she still valorized that individual woman principally as a mother. Montseny's maternalism focused on the transformation of mentalities and ignored material concerns. Economy was never a concern in her anarchism, economic relations would work themselves out given the proper libertarian social relationship. While her characters worked, the focus of Montseny's writing was their social relationships and subjectivity, never their material life.

Montseny's goal was a didactic one, to awaken in her readers the possibility of a new society, to sow in their minds the seeds of a better life. She truly believed that a libertarian society would achieve her goals: free love, conscious motherhood, and human liberation. For this offense, the Vichy government arrested, tried, and sentenced Montseny to prison.

three police forces, the French, the German, and the Spanish ran after a woman whose single offence, whose only crime, was to have dreamed of a better world, to show others in an unceasing effort of liberation and

improvement. ... For the SS, for the mercenaries of Francoism, for the *Milice française* of Vichy, what was a woman? Less than a thing, less than an object.<sup>7</sup>

Montseny attributed her survival in Occupied France to her skill at writing fiction.<sup>8</sup> She devoted her life to the practice and propagation of these beliefs and in doing so, she helped create the social revolution of July 1936. Her melodramas of love and motherhood “hastened the revolution we all desired, but no one had expected so soon.”<sup>9</sup>

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7. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 206. She survived because when she was finally captured and tried, she was several months pregnant and could not be executed or deported. The Catholic maternalism of Vichy saved her. This is also a reference to her 1935 novela *Nada más que una mujer* (*Nothing More than a Woman*). This in turn played on the title of one of Miguel de Unamuno’s novellas, *Nada menos que todo un hombre* (*Nothing Less than a Man*) first published in the Novela Corta series in July 1916, and in 1920 republished in *Tres novelas ejemplares*.

8. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 194.

9 . Montseny speech quoted in *Solidaridad Obrera* (22 December 1936).

## EPILOGUE: “LYING, WITH GREAT SKILL AND VERVE”<sup>1</sup>

Montseny's rose to even greater prominence in the libertarian movement during the Second Republic. Montseny's fiction and journalism became more aggressive steadily in the thirties, parallel to the political climate in which the anarchists operated. She became closely associated with the most radical forces in the anarchist movement, and a friend of one of the most famous anarchists, Buenaventura Durruti.<sup>2</sup> In April 1931, while mourning the death of Teresa Claramunt, Montseny quickly turned to criticism of the Second Republic. Her tone became sharper and more pointed, as the Second Republic never ceased to provide Montseny with opportunities for scathing criticism.

Montseny became an active propagandist for the CNT, travelling all over Spain to deliver talks and encourage participation in activities organized by CNT locals and promoting an anarchist consciousness. Because of these attacks on the government, *El Luchador*, the family's new weekly, suffered.<sup>3</sup> Police harassment increased and the authorities banned or seized the weekly, often without judicial authority.<sup>4</sup> The arbitrary application of law against *El Luchador* became the norm.<sup>5</sup> The Montsenys stopped publishing and sent a

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1. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 194.

2. Hugh Thomas describes him as “a man of violence”, with the addition of “anarchist warrior” in his revised edition. Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: New York & Brothers, 1961), 44 and *The Spanish Civil War*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 68. Her friendship with Durruti did not translate into a friendship with García Oliver, who appears to have hated her intensely.

3. *El Luchador* had a press run of 25,000. Siguan Boehmer, *Literatura popular libertaria*, 25. Saiz, “Prensa anarquista en el primer bienio republicano,” in García Delgado, *La segunda república española*, 315–334.

4. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, December 12, 1931. Max Nettlau Papers, IISG.

5. Ealham describes the law as draconian, it allowed the occupation of working-class districts by police, denial of constitutional rights, banning meetings, censoring publications, and people



notice to subscribers squarely laying the closure to the government's harassment under the *Ley de Orden Público*.<sup>6</sup>

Montseny adherence to a position of revolution and evolution was in the mainstream of the Spanish libertarian movement. She continued to struggle for its ideas, believing that this struggle would not only hasten its eventual victory, but also ensure it. This was the basis for the larger movement's much-maligned "revolutionary gymnastics."<sup>7</sup> Success was not the sole criteria of launching a strike, revolt, or even publications. Montseny and other anarchists viewed this as a process of ebb and flow, advances and retreats; yet, ultimately as one of forward movement. Montseny argued that the evolutionary process was elliptical, not one of direct and straightforward progress.<sup>8</sup> For anarchists, the Second Republic was merely a continuation of the past system. A common refrain was that the government was the same old dog, but with a new collar. The anarchist experience of the Second Republic paralleled their experiences during the Restoration régime. The same class conflict, state repression, economic and social problems. Montseny was typical when she complained that the repression was the same under the Republic's Menéndez as it was under the monarchy's Arlegui.<sup>9</sup>

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detained or exiled internally without need for a judicial order. Chris Ealham, "In Search of the Spanish Republic," *Historical Journal* 38, no. 1 (1995), 217.

6. Federica Montseny to Max Nettlau, October 2, 1933. Max Nettlau Papers, IISG. Fredricks, "Social and Political Thought of Federica Montseny, Spanish Anarchist 1923–1937," 77.

7. Romero Maura, "The Spanish Case," in Apter and Joll, *Anarchism Today*, 72.

8. Federica Montseny, "Problema de la serenidad y de esperanza," *La Revista Blanca* 3, no. 39 (1 January 1925), 12–15.

9. Federica Montseny, "Revista de Libros," *La Revista Blanca* 10, no. 228 (15 November 1932), 384. "When speaking of the victims of the Barcelona Police Department, it is the same with the

In November 1933 Montseny gave birth to Vida, her and Esgleas' first child. Motherhood did not reduce her political activity, it never would. Unlike Ibárruri, Montseny never used her own motherhood as a political tool; she kept it within the family.<sup>10</sup> As Tavera points out, in all the photographs of Montseny, there is a solitary photograph of Montseny with one of her children at a political meeting, and that was during the war. Montseny tried to keep the two separate, and to enjoy spending her time with her children by doing very "normal" things.<sup>11</sup>

She and her father published a fierce attack on the government after the 1933 Casas Viejas massacre. The full title provided some of the locations where the anarchists felt the velvet gloved iron fist of repression.<sup>12</sup>

She reduced her production of novellas, with just nine contributions to the *Novela Ideal* subscription series during the Republic and eight in the new

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monarchy as with the republic: Down with Arlegui and down with Menéndez!" General Arlegui and Captain Arturo Menéndez (?–1936) served as Barcelona police chiefs. Arlegui served during the monarchy from 1920–1922 while Menéndez served in 1931 for just a few months before becoming the national Director–General of Security. Later accused of ordering the massacre at Casas Viejas, Menéndez was a target of anarchist criticism. He was executed by the Nationalists at the start of the Civil War. Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931–1939* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1965), 513–514.

10. See Carrie Hamilton, "Activism & Representations of Motherhood in the Autobiography of Dolores Ibarruri, Pasionaria," *Journal of Romance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001), 17–25.

11. There are numerous photographs in the collections of the IISG of the family enjoying Barcelona's Parc Güell with friends.

12 *La barbarie gubernamental en Barcelona, Tarrasa, Sardeña, Ripollet, Lérida, Sallent, Ribarroja, Bugarra, Pedralba, Bétera, Tabernes de Valldigna, Valencia, Arcos de la Frontera, Utrera, Málaga, La Rinconada, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Cadiz, Alcalá de los Gazules, Medinasidonia, Casas Viejas* (Barcelona: El Luchador, 1933). For Montseny's criticism of Azaña and Casas Viejas she was tried, she never forgot this and it was constantly in her thoughts when Azaña chaired the cabinet meetings. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 66. None of the biographies of Montseny mention this case, nor do the biographies of Azaña by his brother–in–law Cipriano de Rivas Cherif, *Portrait of an Unknown Man: Manuel Azaña and Modern Spain* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1995) and by Frank Sedwick, *The Tragedy of Manuel Azaña and the Fate of the Spanish Republic* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964). The relations between Montseny and Azaña, unlike those between her and Largo Caballero, would always remain hostile.

series *Novelas Libres*; moreover, there would be no new novels.<sup>13</sup> The tone of the fiction also became harsher, and the action more violent. Her 1932 *Novela Ideal*, *La rebelión de los siervos* [*The Rebellion of the Serfs*], centered on a peasant revolt; 1934's *Aurora roja* [*Red Dawn*] focused on the revolts of December 1933, and the 1935 novella, *Heroínas* [*Heroines*], involved the events of October 1934 in Asturias and the violent repression.<sup>14</sup> The demands of the immediate and violent political struggles of the Second Republic pulled her attention and focus away from her concerns about motherhood, evolution, and the family — so prominent in the twenties. It switched to the seemingly more pressing concerns of the cycle of violent government repression and reaction from the libertarian movement. However, in each of the novellas she did publish during the period, there is a continuation of the message of a woman's right to autonomy and choosing to love or not. The protagonist of *Heroínas* is a schoolteacher wooed by a local Socialist leader. He dies in the Asturian repression and she takes to the mountains and becomes the leader of a group of guerrillas.<sup>15</sup>

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13. The count for Montseny novellas published in the *Novela Ideal* series is three novellas after March 1931, two in 1932, none in 1933, one in 1934, and finally three in 1935. Her eight contributions to the series *La Novela Libre* are harder to date. The first is, at the earliest, late in 1933, followed by four in 1934 and 1935, and then three undated, seemingly 1935 and after, on the evidence of the series numbering.

14. *La rebelión de los siervos*, *La Novela Ideal* 294 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, 1932); *Aurora roja*, *La Novela Libre* 8 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1934]); *Heroínas*, *La Novela Libre* 20 (Barcelona: La Revista Blanca, [1935]). *Aurora roja* was also the title of the third volume of Pío Baroja's *The Struggle Life* trilogy (Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé, 1904). Baroja is a perfect example of Lida's "anarquista literario." Lida, "Literatura anarquista y anarquista literario," 361–381.

15. Note that she is the leader of the group. This due not to military experience and superior skills in violence, but because of her high moral character and respect she commanded in the area.

Montseny completely abandoned fiction writing during the Civil War.<sup>16</sup> Instead, she spent a great deal of time during the initial months of the war propagandizing for the CNT–FAI and the popular revolution. Her work before the outbreak of the war had made her a popular and effective speaker, and she became a prominent militant. This prominence propelled Montseny to a position of authority like few other novelists. The CNT and FAI met and after much internal debate, decided to enter the government, nominating Montseny alongside García Oliver, López, and Peiró. In November 1936, the four entered Largo Caballero’s government where she became Minister of Health and Human Services. She served until a cabinet crisis in May 1937.<sup>17</sup>

As minister, she sought qualified women and appointed them to positions of responsibility, improved conditions in orphanages and the children’s colonies, provided prostitutes a way out of sex work, and emphasized maternal and pediatric services.<sup>18</sup> Her cabinet colleagues did not welcome her presence, either as an anarchist or as a woman and her tenure

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16. After 1936 Montseny would write only one new piece of fiction that dealt with occupied France, though her journalism continued.

17. Montseny’s post was created for her, as previously it had been a directorate. President Azaña opposed Montseny’s entrance into the cabinet. The obvious parallel, and one that Montseny was very conscious of, was Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952). Kollontai wrote on similar topics as Montseny and was a member of an early Bolshevik government for about the same length of time.

18. Largo Caballero instructed Montseny to include Marañón as the junior minister of Sanitation. She hesitated because she wanted more women and she doubted his loyalty. So she appointed a doctor affiliated to the UGT to the post. Marañón confirmed her doubts about his loyalty to the Republic (“as a scientist there were none”) when he promptly went on a mission to Paris and remained there. “He preferred bourgeois order to social justice. For him, his ideas were better represented by Francoist Spain than a Republic flooded by ‘uncultured masses.’” Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 106–107. The American historian, Stanley Payne, remarks in the Spanish edition of *The Spanish Revolution* that Montseny is the possible exception to a lack of interest in specifically women’s issues on the left. Stanley G. Payne, *La revolución y la guerra civil española* (Madrid: Júcar, 1977), 57. Even though this is apparently a translation of the original U.S. edition, I have not found this passage in the original.

was brief, just six months.<sup>19</sup> She knew that it was a provocative gesture by the libertarian movement to put her forward as a ministerial choice. “I realize that it was really for ‘dramatic effect’ [*una golpe de efecto*] to nominate a woman for this post. And if this woman represented the most traditional and intransigent anarchist tendency, all the better.”<sup>20</sup> Montseny believed her time as minister had modified Largo Caballero’s attitude towards women, though he did not sign her decree authorizing abortion because of the opposition of the majority of the government.<sup>21</sup> Largo Caballero was always after her to spend more time administering to her ministry and less time in Madrid at the front.<sup>22</sup> Montseny passed a review by delegates from the League of Nations investigating sanitary conditions. She was proud the final report stated that conditions were satisfactory in the Republican zone. Montseny remarked in her memoirs that the men were smug having performed their duties as experts.<sup>23</sup>

Montseny left the government, along with the three other anarchists and supporters of Largo Caballero, after the May Days of 1937. Despite the earlier rupture with her father, she moved back into the house in Guinardó. She continued to agitate and fight for the libertarian movement, and grew closer to the *Mujeres Libres*. After she left the ministry, she became the Secretary of Propaganda for the CNT’s National Committee. She organized

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19. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 105.

20. *Ibid.*, 102.

21. *Ibid.*, 132.

22. *Ibid.*, 112–113.

23. *Ibid.*, 113.

rallies including one presenting the achievements of the four libertarian ministers.<sup>24</sup> In June 1938, her son Germinal was born. Nonetheless, she soon resumed propaganda work.

With the pending defeat of the Republic, on January 28, 1939 she took her family into exile in France. Just over a week later, on February 5, her mother died.<sup>25</sup> Montseny survived the dementia and death of her father, a lost pregnancy, and her eventual discovery, trial, and imprisonment during the Second World War and Vichy. Incarceration was significantly better than the alternative: deportation to Spain and certain death, pregnant or not.<sup>26</sup> She was one of only three women sought for extradition from France by Spain, the other two found refuge in Latin American embassies.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, her ability to create credible characters in her fictional writing enabled Montseny to preserve the safety of her extended family and literally saved her own life. As a refugee in Vichy France, her fictional melodramas became lived experience as

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24. *Ibid.*, 130–131.

25. Montseny's diplomatic passport spared her problems at the border but others in her extended family had problems. Her sixty-five year old father ended up in a French jail when, in a typical gesture, he responded to the question of to which political party he belonged to with a firm, "None, I am an anarchist." A response guaranteed then, as well as now, to excite border guards and other customs officials.

26. The likelihood is that if Montseny had been deported she would have been allowed to give birth before she was executed. The Franco authorities would then give her child to an *Inclusa*, or worse, the *Auxilio Social* orphanages run by the Falange's *Sección Femenina*. See Ángela Cenarro Lagunas, *Los niños del Auxilio Social* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2009). The child would have never known her mother. There has been a massive and ongoing investigation into the collusion in illegal adoptions between the state authorities and the Church, which continued until 1987, well past Franco's death, and possibly sent children overseas. See the articles by Jesús Duva and Natalia Junquera published in the Spanish daily *El País*, collected on the web in special section at <http://www.elpais.com/especial/vidas-robadas/#>.

27. Montseny, *Mis primeros cuarenta años*, 190. The other two were Victoria Kent and the widow of Marcelino Domingo, who is unnamed. Montseny indicated that Kent was in the Argentine embassy; another source puts her in the Mexican Embassy and then living in Paris under a false identity until the Liberation. In 1948, Kent went to Mexico before moving to New York as a staff member of the United Nations. She died in the United States in 1987.

she created shifting identities. Fiction became a necessary way of life, a form not for propaganda but for survival. “I became accustomed to lying, with great skill and verve, thanks to being a novelist; I had to follow various roles according to circumstance of the moment. Here, I was wife of a Jew, there the widow of a war hero killed on the field of honor; for others I was a hairdresser ... a scatter brained female ...”<sup>28</sup>

She did come to regret her government service. In an interview with John Brademas in the 1950s, she expressed her regret and the reasons:

“If you had it to do over again” I asked, thinking how strange for an anarchist to have held political office, “would you still take a post in the Government?” She snapped back immediately, “No, I would not! If you are in the Cabinet you cannot be in the street!” Anarchist revolutions, she explained, are made in the street, not from a government office in Madrid. The way to change society, she added, is by direct violent action, not by wasting time at the polls.<sup>29</sup>

As Montseny argued, it is the constant struggle for improvement, the fight for a better life for all, not just for a few, that is important. She was visited Spain until after the death of Franco. Her views on feminism softened, she recognized that the post-Franco Spanish women’s movement of the seventies represented something different from what passed for feminism before the war. Yet, fundamentally, she remained even truer to her ideal of individualist anarchism and vision of female independence. In 1977, finally able to visit the country of her birth and greatest achievements, she received a tumultuous reception. She continued to argue for an anarchism based in

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28. *Ibid.*, 194.

29. Stephen John Brademas, “The Spanish Anarchists,” *Oxford Angle* 1, no. 3 (1952), 36. Note her advocacy of not just direct action but violent direct action.

individual liberty, promoted the CNT, and opposed the 1977 Pacto de Moncloa.<sup>30</sup> Montseny remained an anarchist, continuing to speak and agitate for that better world until her death in 1994.

Memorialized throughout Spain, numerous public buildings and streets bear her name.<sup>31</sup> In Barcelona, there is a park located just above her street in Guinardó, a newly (2011) dedicated neighborhood social center, and another social center in nearby Valdecans. There are streets throughout the country, and two medical facilities in Madrid, one appropriately named the Federica Montseny Center for Health. Ironically, given her fierce anticlericalism and harsh portrayal of nursing nuns, at Madrid's Hospital Virgen de la Torre, there is the Centro de especialidades Federica Montseny (Federica Montseny Center for [Medical] Specialties at the Hospital of the Virgin of the Tower).<sup>32</sup> I believe she would have been amused.

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30. The Pacto de Moncloa was an agreement between the government political parties, employers, and unions. Initially, the UGT and the CNT refused to sign. The UGT eventually did sign, while in 1979 the CNT split, which resulted in the formation of a new group, the Confederación General del Trabajo (General Labor Confederation, CGT). The CGT signed the pact and, therefore, the Spanish state gave the CGT the "historical patrimony" of the CNT, recognizing the CGT as the "legal heirs" of the Civil War CNT.

31. The new building standing where she had lived in Guinardó bears no mention of her or the significance of the site. When I first visited the park at the end of Escornalbou, I spoke with two women who complained about the dog feces and that it was no way to remember Montseny (though one spat as she said this).

32. See

[http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?cid=1152602558630&language=es&pagename=Hospital VirgenTorre%2FPage%2FHVTO\\_pintarContenidoFinal](http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?cid=1152602558630&language=es&pagename=HospitalVirgenTorre%2FPage%2FHVTO_pintarContenidoFinal). The Hospital was built under Franco. I am not sure when the Center was dedicated, but clearly after his death.



Montseny's articles in *La Revista Blanca*

1923-1929

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1923	junio	1	1	1	8-10	El futurismo
1923	junio	15	1	2	10-12	La tragedia de Barcelona en la literatura
1923	julio	1	1	3	4-6	El individualismo
1923	julio	15	1	4	12-14	El naturismo
1923	agosto	1	1	5	12-14	El sindicalismo y los intelectuales
1923	agosto	15	1	6	3-5	El movimiento femenino internacional
1923	septiembre	1	1	7	1-3	Dos enigmas históricos
1923	septiembre	15	1	8	11-13	La estética y la originalidad en la literatura
1923	octubre	1	1	9	6-8	Renovaciones
1923	octubre	15	1	10	3-5	Epicurismo e idealismo
1923	noviembre	1	1	11	5-8	El despertar de la mujer turca
1923	noviembre	15	1	12	3-6	Crisis de vida
1923	diciembre	1	1	13	3-4	La falta de idealidad en el feminismo
1923	diciembre	15	1	14	7-8	Lo viejo y lo nuevo

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1924	enero	15	2	16	9-10	La derrota de la reacción
1924	febrero	1	2	17	4-6	Dos vidas y dos homenajes
1924	febrero	15	2	18	10-12	Las mujeres y las elecciones inglesas
1924	marzo	1	2	19	5-7	La barbarie moderna
1924	marzo	15	2	20	3'5	Por una vida
1924	abril	1	2	21	5-7	El pesimismo en la literatura
1924	abril	15	2	22	15-17	Comentando a un hombre
1924	mayo	1	2	23	19-20	De la vida que pasa
1924	mayo	15	2	24	6-8	La 'élite' y las multitudes
1924	junio	1	2	25	15-17	El horror de matar
1924	junio	15	2	26	17-19	Verdeguer, el místico
1924	julio	1	2	27	11-13	La duda y el misterio
1924	julio	15	2	28	14-16	Problema de estética y de sentimiento
1925	octubre	1	3	57	1-3	Las mujeres y Vargas Vila
1925	octubre	15	3	58	10-12	Will Jaggers, escultor de la paz
1925	noviembre	1	3	59	11-13	Dos mujeres, dos frases y dos libros

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1925	diciembre	1	3	61	16-18	Los crímenes sociales
1925	diciembre	15	3	62	17-20	Libros
1926	enero	1	4	63	21-23	Max Nettlau y su obra
1926	enero	15	4	64	16-18	Culto al amor
1926	febrero	1	4	65	14-16	Libros
1926	febrero	15	4	66	17-19	Eclecticismo
1926	marzo	1	4	67	11-13	Ante el gran libro abierto
1926	abril	1	4	69	15-17	Las errores de la justicia
1926	abril	15	4	70	11-12	La quimera humana
1926	mayo	1	4	71	17-19	Los tiempos bárbaros
1926	mayo	15	4	72	24-25	La mujer nueva
1926	junio	1	4	73	I-III	Libros
1926	junio	15	4	74	48-50	Pedagogía homicida
1926	julio	1	4	75	76-78	Miguel Bakunin
1926	julio	15	4	75	108-110	La ciudad muerta
1926	julio	15	4	75	V-VI	Historia del movimiento machnovista
1926	agosto	1	4	77	144-146	Martirio
1926	agosto	15	4	78	174-176	Elegía a un perro
1926	septiembre	1	4	79	217-218	Libros
1926	septiembre	1	4	79	196-198	Por la humana y la justicia
1926	septiembre	15	4	80	XIII-XIV	Libros
1926	septiembre	15	4	80	228-230	El problema del siglo

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1926	octubre	1	4	81	268-270	Filosofía del heroísmo
1926	octubre	15	4	82	V-VI	Libros
1926	octubre	15	4	82	295-297	Figuras de la tragedia: La madre
1926	noviembre	15	4	84	366-368	Por las vidas enjauladas: Las alas rotas
1926	diciembre	1	4	85	399-401	El último romántico de la política burguesa
1926	diciembre	15	4	86	423-426	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	enero	15	5	88	503-506	Libros
1927	febrero	1	5	89	527-530	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	febrero	15	5	90	564-566	Lecturas
1927	marzo	1	5	91	582-585	Han Ryner o la filosofía de la sonrisa
1927	marzo	15	5	92	609-612	Jorge Brandés
1927	abril	1	5	93	656-659	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	abril	15	5	94	679-682	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	mayo	1	5	95	714-717	El fin de la tragedia: Los mártires de Dedham
1927	mayo	15	5	96	760-761	Lecturas
1927	mayo	15	5	96	740-744	Naturismo y naturalismo
1927	junio	1	6	97	9-12	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	junio	15	6	98	50-52	Lecturas

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1927	julio	1	6	99	79-82	Intermedio polémico: Armand y "La Victoria"
1927	julio	15	6	100	108-110	Naturismo y naturalismo
1927	agosto	1	6	101	146-148	Alrededor de "La Victoria"
1927	agosto	15	6	102	167-170	Lecturas
1927	septiembre	1	6	103	198-201	La canción de las horas
1927	septiembre	1	6	103	204	Matilde Serao
1927	septiembre	15	6	104	228-231	Aquella noche
1927	octubre	15	6	106	298-300	Isadora Duncan, o una tragedia clásica
1927	noviembre	1	6	107	328-331	Un capítulo de 'El hijo de Clara' La Madre
1927	noviembre	15	6	108	366-368	La mujer, problema del hombre
1927	diciembre	1	6	109	391-394	Frases nuevas e ideas viejas
1927	diciembre	15	6	110	X-XII	Lecturas
1927	diciembre	15	6	110	425-427	Mi individualismo
1928	enero	1	7	111	456-459	Libertad
1928	enero	15	7	112	486-489	Alrededor de "El Hijo de Clara"*
1928	febrero	1	7	113	517-519	Los grandes olvidados
1928	febrero	15	7	114	555-558	Ha muerto un novelista

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1928	marzo	1	7	115	588-592	Atando cabos Algo fuera ya de "El Hijo de Clara"*
1928	marzo	15	7	116	617-619	El centenario del romanticismo
1928	abril	1	7	117	658-661	Lecturas
1928	abril	15	7	118	673-676	Ibsen y Lenin
1928	abril	15	7	118	694-695	Nobleza obliga
1928	mayo	1	7	119	707-711	Ibsen y Lenin
1928	mayo	15	7	120	740-743	Ibsen y Lenin
1928	junio	1	7	121	790-793	Lecturas
1928	junio	1	7	121	771-775	Ibsen y Lenin
1928	junio	15	7	122	1-4	Goya, Taine, Fray Luis de León
1928	junio	15	7	122	22-26	Un poco más sobre "El Hijo de Clara"*
1928	julio	1	7	123	39-41	Impresiones sobre Max Nettlau
1928	julio	1	7	123	V-VI	Para un amable comunicante
1928	julio	15	7	124	73-76	Vision retrospectiva: Un mundo en crisis
1928	agosto	15	7	126	137-139	Una vida de mujer
1928	septiembre	1	7	127	184-186	Lecturas

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1928	septiembre	15	7	128	200-203	La tracion de los escribas
1928	octubre	1	7	129	232-235	Tolstoy y Nietzsche
1928	octubre	15	7	130	279-281	Lecturas
1928	octubre	15	7	130	265-269	Fragmento de "La Indomable"
1928	noviembre	1	7	131	294-296	Ignacio Iglesias
1928	noviembre	15	7	132	327-330	El placer de la lucha
1928	diciembre	1	7	133	364-366	Plataformismo o reformismo libertario
1928	diciembre	15	7	134	389-393	La defensa del ideal
1929	enero	1	7	135	432-435	Lecturas
1929	enero	1	7	135	422-426	La defensa del ideal
1929	enero	15	7	136	458-460	La defensa del ideal
1929	febrero	1	7	137	488-490	Por nuestros viejos
1929	febrero	15	7	138	533-537	Lecturas
1929	febrero	15	7	138	537-539	La libertad de la Tierra
1929	marzo	1	7	139	549-551	España y el problema de los sexos
1929	marzo	15	7	140	586-588	El sentimiento solidario en la conciencia contemporánea
1929	abril	1	7	141	627-631	Lecturas

Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1929	mayo	1	7	143	690-692	Paginas vividas: El dolor Humano
1929	mayo	15	7	144	715-717	Ha muerto un mujer"
1929	mayo	15	7	144	XIV	Un ruego
1929	junio	1	7	145	18-21	Bajo el signo de Afrodita
1929	junio	15	7	146	40-42	Concepto heroico de la vida
1929	julio	1	7	147	73-76	Vanguardismo literario y vanguardia moral
1929	julio	15	7	148	93-96	La creación de la personalidad en la literatura moderna
1929	agosto	1	7	149	V-IX	Lecturas
1929	agosto	15	7	150	141-142	Adaptarse o morir
1929	septiembre	1	7	151	III-V	Lecturas
1929	septiembre	1	7	151	163-165	La resurrección de Isadora
1929	septiembre	15	7	152	182-185	El sentimiento de la libertad en la Naturaleza
1929	octubre	1	7	153	209-212	La creación literaria en la vida humana
1929	octubre	1	7	153	VIII-X	Lecturas



Year	Month	Day	Volume	Issue	Pages	Title
1929	noviembre	1	7	155	IV-VII	Lecturas
1929	noviembre	1	7	155	259-260	Niños hombres y hombres niños
1929	noviembre	15	7	156	290-292	Simon Radowitzki
1929	diciembre	1	7	157	308-311	Lecturas
1929	diciembre	15	7	158	333-336	Pacifismo herorica y pacifismo mercantilista

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