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Ad/Dressing Modernism: Emilia Pardo Bazán's Later Short Stories (1901-1921)

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By

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*Ad/Dressing Modernism: Emilia Pardo Bazán's Later Short Stories (1901-1921)*

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Although her realist and naturalist novels have been widely researched, scholars have only recently begun to study the more than 500 short stories Emilia Pardo Bazán authored. The majority of her short story *oeuvre* coincides not only with the pinnacle of her feminist writings, but also with the modernist period (1880-1920). Concerned with literary as well as sartorial fashion, Pardo Bazán demonstrates a heightened awareness of her writing style, as well as her characters' style of dress and their corresponding roles as conformists or New Woman trendsetters. In this dissertation I aim to uncover how the question of "style" or "fashion" manifests itself in characters' apparel and the literary themes of Pardo Bazán's "modernist" writing.

To illustrate how Modernism allowed Pardo Bazán to experiment with form and content, I draw on the short story theories of Poe, Joyce and other critics. Virginia Woolf's and Edith Wharton's reflections provide a contemporary feminist perspective on writing during what Rita Felski deems a "feminized" modern age. I refer to what Robert Johnson describes as the "social modernism" of Spanish women writers that highlights themes related to women's changing societal roles. Additionally, I use Roland Barthes's fashion theory to interpret the significance of sartorial elements in the author's short fiction. The cultural theories of J.C. Flügel, Anne Hollander and others help delineate the importance society places on clothing, fashion and the accumulation of material goods, which are central elements in Pardo Bazán's *oeuvre*.

My research demonstrates that highlighting fashion in a modernist style allows Pardo Bazán to raise her readers' awareness of women's issues in a modernizing society, especially as they relate to education, marriage and employment. Drawing on the relative benign subjects of sewing, fashion and other interests of early twentieth-century women, the author is able to explore more "weighty" questions related to gender inequality while also demonstrating the value of women's skills and interests. By "dressing" her language in satire or parody, Pardo Bazán effectively criticizes sexism without appearing overtly feminist and thereby offending her largely conservative, bourgeois readers, thus broadening the reach of her provocative short stories.

This dissertation by Martha E. Davis fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Philosophy approved by Chad. C. Wright, Ph.D., as Director, and by Mario Rojas, Ph.D. and Mario Ortiz, Ph.D. as Readers.

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For Alice

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## INTRODUCTION

Tres acontecimientos importantes en mi vida se siguieron muy de cerca:  
me vestí de largo, me casé y estalló la Revolución de septiembre de 1868.

-- Emilia Pardo Bazán, *Apuntes autobiográficos*

Descriptions of elegant hats, long white gloves and lacy dresses may not readily spring to mind when one thinks of Emilia Pardo Bazán's fiction. Rather, it is images of poverty and violence that are more commonly associated with the Galician author's name. Nonetheless, countless references to clothing, fashion and sewing appear throughout Pardo Bazán's novels, short stories and essays, reflecting the author's lifelong passion for *haute couture*. It is in her later short fiction in particular, published between 1901 and 1921, that Pardo Bazán emphasizes sartorial fashion, especially in the development of her female characters. During this period, doña Emilia exhibits an increased awareness of her writing style, as well as her characters' style of dress and their corresponding roles as conformists or New Woman trendsetters. A number of these later short stories feature female protagonists and cast articles of clothing and fashion accessories in title roles, such as "Las medias rojas," "El paraguas," "El zapato," "El pañuelo" and others. This shift in content and form raises a pivotal question: How does the issue of "style" or "fashion" manifest itself in Pardo Bazán's short stories during the crucial decades that include the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, which is her "modernist" and last period, often considered her most complex and rewarding? In the following pages and chapters I will show that the intersection of literary Modernism and the emphasis on clothing allows Pardo Bazán not to merely uphold the Modernists' mantra of *el arte por el arte*, but to raise her readers'

awareness of fundamental issues concerning women's equality in a modernizing society, especially as they relate to education, marriage and employment.

### I. The Rise of the Periodical and the Short Story

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as Pardo Bazán's literary production grew and Spain became increasingly modernized, the appearance of weekly and daily publications, usually including short fiction, news articles and illustrations, generated demand for the publication of short stories.<sup>1</sup> Reading for pleasure, like maintaining a lawn or clothing oneself in fashionable dress, reflected what Thorstein Veblen describes in *Theory of the Leisure Class* as "evidence of pecuniary repute," an activity or object that derives its value from its uselessness or its usefulness for exclusively leisure activities. Short stories focusing on fashion and clothing, therefore, not only allowed Pardo Bazán to explore her personal interests and feminist ideology, but appealed to bourgeois readers' taste for "useless," pleasure-filled endeavors<sup>2</sup>. Publication of her modernist, feminist writings provided doña Emilia with an additional benefit, central to women's liberation: economic independence. As a result, she was able to denounce—albeit in "clothed" and, sometimes, ironic language—the bourgeois *ángel del hogar* ideal that impeded women from pursuing gainful employment outside the home, alienating them from the economic and social spoils of Industrialization.

When increased productivity of printing presses and reductions in tariffs created a boon for magazine publishing, Pardo Bazán and other authors began writing copiously for

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to the increasingly accessible photograph appearing in journals and private homes, short stories provided a "snapshot" of reality, or a framed prospective of a certain reality, effectively replacing the multi-volume novels previously in vogue. As the arrival of the steamship and locomotive and the subsequent standardization of time zones signaled the growing value of speed as well as time, the popularity of the short story reflected readers' desire to "consume" a piece of literature quickly in one sitting.

<sup>2</sup> In "La nueva generación de novelistas y cuentistas en España," Pardo Bazán maintains that the short story arises as "the consequence of laziness in both the writer and the reading public" (qtd in McKenna 79).

such publications as *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, *Blanco y Negro* and *El Imparcial*. Pardo Bazán also published several short stories in the magazine she founded, *Nuevo Teatro Crítico*, which was printed between 1891 and 1893. While they did not reach as wide an audience as the *novela por entregas*, by the beginning of 1900 Madrid's weekly, bimonthly and monthly magazines had grown from 64 in 1868 to 232 (Charnon-Deutsch, *Fictions* 4). The readership of the Madrid-based *Blanco y Negro*, for example, which was printed until 1936, included twenty thousand subscribers (9, 273).

While these periodicals varied in their prestige and success, they all catered to a readership that was overwhelmingly urban and elite. Considering the high rates of illiteracy during this time, especially among women<sup>3</sup>, the magazines' readers represented a particularly small minority of the general reading public. Although feminist publications, including *La Voz de la Mujer* and others, were in existence during this time, it does not appear that Pardo Bazán published articles or short stories in them. Rather, the majority of her short stories appeared in *Blanco y Negro*, a monarchist magazine read by men and women that, based upon advertisements appearing within its pages, also enjoyed an Argentinean readership. José Robles, in a survey of Spanish periodicals published in 1924, two years after Pardo Bazán's death, maintained that "El *Blanco y Negro* lo tira la empresa del ABC y se vende al precio de 50 céntimos. Es la revista de las familias burguesas con sus dibujos anticuados, sus cuentecillos ñoños, y sus planas en color, sabe a cosa rancia, pasada de moda, y tiene a pesar de esto, o quizás por esto mismo, marcado carácter nacional" (291). According to Robles's description, in spite of the inclusion of short fiction from an author as talented, worldly and

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<sup>3</sup> In 1900, illiteracy rates among Spaniards numbered 71.5% for women and 55.8% for men. By 1910 these figures had decreased slightly to 65.8% and 52.6%, respectively. Larger gains were seen in 1920, when 57.8% of women were illiterate and less than half of men, or 46.4% were unable to read. (qtd. in Faus 1: 476).

accomplished as Pardo Bazán, *Blanco y Negro* did not enjoy the prestige of other, more exclusively literary publications from the same time period, like *El Imparcial*, Madrid's most influential daily for more than thirty years (Salper de Tortella 286). The contributors to the liberal *El Imparcial*, which was published between 1867 and 1933, included canonical male authors such as Galdós, Clarín, Pío Baroja, Unamuno and Valle-Inclán, which may explain the magazine's high regard (280). In fact, Valle-Inclán's *Sonatas* first appeared there.

Illustrations, which proved to be more accessible to a greater number of Spaniards than the written word, provided a visual accompaniment to short fiction and drew readers' attention toward advertisements in numerous publications. Photographs of the royal family and nobility, similar to those featured in *Hola* and related periodicals that began appearing throughout mid-century Europe, could also be found in *Blanco y Negro*. The centrality of graphic images is reflected by the fact that an average weekly magazine, numbering between ten and twenty pages, usually included one illustration per page (Charnon-Deutsch, *Fictions* 5). The drawing by Narciso Méndez Bringa, included here and originally appearing with "La Manga" in *Blanco y Negro*, represents the illustrations that appeared in such periodicals.



Fig. 1. Illustration by Méndez Bringa, *Blanco y Negro* n. 999 (1910).

Penning as many as one thousand works of short fiction during her lifetime for *Blanco y Negro* and other periodicals, Pardo Bazán gained renown as the most prolific short

story writer in nineteenth-century Spain, if not in all of the nation's literary history (Paredes Núñez 7). Although doña Emilia cultivated her short story *oeuvre* during the zenith of the genre's popularity in Spain, she had begun her career as a short story writer at the age of fourteen with the publication of "Un matrimonio del siglo XIX," which appeared in the 1866 almanac of *La Soberania Nacional*. Doña Emilia's most productive years began in 1883 and continued through the last three decades of her life, during which time she devoted herself almost exclusively to short story writing, nearly abandoning the genre of the novel for which she has been best known since her death. In 1892, she began publishing her works in short story collections, including *Sud-Exprés*, *Cuentos trágicos* and others, which comprise her most widely read short fiction (7). Representing the most comprehensive collection upon its publication in 1990, Juan Paredes Núñez collected and published 580 of these works in a four-volume set. He attributes the exclusion of nearly half of the stories Pardo Bazán may have authored during her career to the difficulty in locating those published in foreign journals. Clearly, the creation of a truly complete set of doña Emilia's short fiction is far from finished.

The infinite flexibility of the short story that granted Pardo Bazán a fertile space in which to cultivate her myriad interests also contributes to the difficulty in adequately defining the genre. Most literary critics rely on comparisons between short stories and other genres, the novel in particular, to explain what the short story is not. Longer than a sketch, but shorter than a novel or novella, providing a precise and universal definition for the short story proves as elusive as defining art. While the brevity of the short story plays a fundamental role in the development of its content, by focusing on its length one

overlooksthe rich and complex character of the short story, its antecedents as old as spoken language itself<sup>4</sup>. For her part, Pardo Bazán remained aware of the oral tradition of the short story, recording and interpreting in her own way, fairy tales, legends and other, particularly Galician *relatos*. The framed tale in particular, upon which the author relies in many short stories, captures the essence of the genre's spoken heritage.

Unlike long fiction and the rich descriptions on which its writers rely, short story writers must necessarily omit superfluous details. The value of each word, therefore, is immeasurable. Similarly, as in the case of Pardo Bazán and others, omissions in the text play an equally vital role as the inclusion of other words. For example, the reader does not know with certainty what the *rapaza* in “Las medias rojas” planned to do in the faraway land to which she hoped to emigrate, or what had happened to her mother. What is certain is that she, like her cousin Mariola, is unable to escape the disfiguring physical abuse that effectively terminates her dream of a better life. Masterfully written stories such as “Las medias rojas” leave the reader with the desire to know more not only about the places and people who come to life on the page, but also about the unspoken narratives lying between the words, periods and paragraphs that appear in the text.

Short story writers, inherently familiar with the production of the genre, provide readers with extremely useful definitions of their craft. Edgar Allan Poe<sup>5</sup>, arguably short fiction's strongest advocate, begins his review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* by stating,

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<sup>4</sup> Unlike its English equivalent, the Spanish word “cuento” disregards length entirely, reminding us that, by definition, all stories are short. Furthermore, they may be transmitted by the written word or orally. According to the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, “cuento” is a “relato, generalmente indiscreto, de un suceso,” followed by “relación, de palabra o por escrito, de un suceso falso o de pura invención.” It is not until the third entry that brevity is incorporated into the definition: “narración breve de ficción” (“Cuento”).

<sup>5</sup>In enumerating the United States' accomplishments and faults, Pardo Bazán laments that American literature, “donde resplandecen nombres como el de Edgardo Poe, es prolongación de la inglesa y nada más” (“La revolución y la novela en Rusia” 765).

“the tale proper affords the fairest field which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose for the exercise of the highest genius” (“The Short Story” 565). As Poe’s *oeuvre* demonstrates, terror, passion and horror reign supreme in the short story. These feelings and effects play a vital role in Pardo Bazán’s short fiction as well, particularly in the aforementioned “Las medias rojas.” While the plot is complex, the form of this and other short stories is abbreviated and envelopes one dramatic event, such as enclosing walls, an unsolved murder or a disfiguring blow. Poe calls this trait of the short story, “unity of effect or impression” (“Philosophy of Composition” 552). Similarly, Julio Cortázar suggests that like “a successful photo,” a short story “presupposes a circumscribed limitation, imposed in part by the reduced field which the camera captures and also by the way in which the photographer uses that limitation esthetically” (May, “Some Aspects” 246). The short story writer, like the photographer, must focus on certain central details, capturing the essence of the portrait he or she wishes to produce.

While Beauty is poetry’s aim, the purpose of the short story is markedly different. According to Poe, “Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale” (“The Short Story” 567). Veracity is another trait that characterizes Pardo Bazán’s short fiction, featuring average people with often-extraordinary stories with whom her readers can relate. While some of her short fiction evolved from the oral tradition, Pardo Bazán based other short stories on real-life occurrences that appeared in the press, often in the very periodicals in which her fictional interpretations were later published (Paredes Núñez 27). Truth plays a fundamental role also in James Joyce’s definition of the short story. For the Irish author, short stories center on the epiphany, a moment when the truth is revealed. Through

epiphanies, like that which occurs to the bride in “El encaje roto,” truth about women’s situations is revealed not only to the characters, but to the readers of Pardo Bazán’s short stories as well. Indeed, providing readers with the opportunity to reflect on gender inequalities was of particular importance in periodicals whose pages reinforced gender stereotypes through advertisements for beauty pageants and other anti-feminist causes and literature.

Like the aforementioned definitions, Edith Wharton believed that short fiction could depict true or fantastical events. In *The Writing of Fiction* Wharton, who, like Pardo Bazán, depicted the materialism of the upper classes in her fiction, describes the short story not as “a loose web spread over the surface of life,” but rather “a shaft driven straight into the heart of human experience” (36). Like Poe, Wharton emphasizes the importance of veracity. While improbability itself does not present a problem to the genre, she states, “the appearance of improbability” does (38, emphasis added). Wharton maintains that the author must exude confidence in the reality of the world he or she creates. If the reader senses the author’s doubt, the story will not be successful in touching its audience. Using language applicable to photography, like Cortázar, Wharton continues by stating, “The short-story writer must not only know from what angle to present his anecdote,” “but must understand just why that particular angle and no other is the right one” (48-9). A writer’s grasp on the reader must be firm, for “he must never for an instant forget what he wants to tell, or why it seemed worth telling” (53). To achieve this aim, writers must first contemplate the story repeatedly before producing the final art form.



The writings of a growing number of literary scholars supplement the definitions first provided by writers of the short story themselves. Charles May describes the essence of the short story as those situations, like the items appearing in the newspaper, when “everyday reality is broken up by a crisis” (“Chekhov” 201). Indeed, Pardo Bazán authors short stories that find everyday people leading everyday lives in extraordinary circumstances, or, alternatively, ordinary circumstances retold in an extraordinary way. That is why the short story is also “mythical and spiritual,” reflecting the “inner world of the self” (May “Nature” 133). Like the myth, folk tale, fable and romance from which the short story developed, tradition “drives it toward focusing on eternal values rather than temporal ones and sacred/unconscious reality rather than profane/everyday reality” (May, *New Short Theories* xviii). The emotional responses elicited by reading Poe, Pardo Bazán and others more than one hundred years after their first publication can be attributed to the timelessness and universality of the values and realities they embody.

Susan Lohafer describes short fiction as having “a special rhythm” and a “grammar of expectation” (6, 37). At the same time, however, “stories offer a resistance to closure” (6). Indeed, the reader as well as the writer is ever cognizant of the proximity of a story’s end, a fact that heightens suspense and maintains the reader’s interest. According to Lohafer, stories end with “a sigh or a gasp” (97). Pardo Bazán’s “En tranvía,” in which a poor woman unable to pay the streetcar fare reveals her baby’s blindness, serves as an example of a gasp-producing short story. On the other hand, the reader is apt to sigh at the conclusion of “El mundo” when Germana intimates that “hay que pedir con soberbia y para lujo; no para

comer...” recognizing that changes in societal attitudes occur slowly, if ever at all (Pardo Bazán, *Cuentos completos* 3: 68).

Whether the aforementioned writers and literary critics refer to it as an effect, a heart-piercing shaft or epiphany, producing a sigh or a gasp, they all strive to define what seems to be a certain indescribable spark, as intangible as the emotions tales inspire, which converts the daily anecdotes we share among friends into a unique art form called the short story. Short stories relate the joy, pain, fear and hope of daily occurrences in individuals’ lives, giving meaning to or, alternatively, raising questions about the human experience, which Wharton describes as “the inevitable eternal human happenings,” not only of its characters, but readers and writers as well (8). A successful storyteller or short story writer cultivates that spark into a flame as they relate the story to another or codify it with pen and paper. The difficulty in achieving this seemingly mundane aim accounts precisely for why a short story is art.

## II. Modernism, *Modernisme* and *Modernismo*

While numerous critics and writers have pondered accurate definitions of the short story as genre, Dominic Head, author of *The Modernist Short Story*, attests that the short story is quintessentially modernist (1). The growth of the genre’s popularity paralleled the rise of the literary movement, which occurred between 1880 and 1920 in Spain. When Virginia Woolf famously stated that “in or about December 1910, human character changed,” thereby marking the beginning of Modernism in English literature, writers, poets, architects and artists in Spain and Latin America had already been crafting their art in a new, modernist style for decades (4). In the Iberian Peninsula, Catalonia served as the epicenter for

modernist artistic production. While the Catalan publishing group, L'Avenç, first employed the term *modernismo* in 1884, it later appeared in the 1890s in journals published in Madrid, contrasting realist texts and Restoration values (Orringer 27, Bretz 38). Cau Ferrat provided writers and painters alike, such as Rusiñol and Dalí, with the opportunity to create their own brand of the novel artistic movement. Pardo Bazán traveled to the modernist stronghold in Sitges and gained direct exposure to the developments of writers in the region. In her Madrid home, she also hosted a young Nicaraguan Consul, Rubén Darío, a visitor himself to Sitges (Faus 2: 74).

Critics continue to argue whether 1880 or 1890 signaled the beginning of the modernist period in Spanish letters. It is without doubt, however, that with his publication of *Azul* in 1888, Darío ruptured the ties that bound Latin America to its literary colonizers in Castilian Spain. *Modernismo*, as Federico de Onís famously attests, embodies:

la forma hispánica de la crisis universal de las letras y del espíritu que inicia hacia 1885 la disolución del siglo XIX y que se había de manifestar en el arte, la ciencia, la religión, la política y gradualmente en los demás aspectos de la vida entera, con todos los caracteres, por lo tanto, de un hondo cambio histórico cuyo proceso continúa hoy. (15)

Despite Onís's characterization of the crisis as Hispanic, the disappearance of the ancient regime and the rise of the middle class occurred throughout Europe and North America as well. While *modernismo* and Modernism permitted authors to rebel against authority and the traditions it upheld, breaking with previous literary movements, the textual manifestations of this literary sea change differ between Spain and Latin America despite the common language that united authors on both continents.

Providing a clear and concise definition of the literary trend, designated as Modernism or *modernismo*, however, is nearly as difficult as pinpointing its starting date and location. According to Richard Cardwell in “The poetry of Modernismo in Spain,” literary critics were hard pressed to define the term *modernismo* when it became popularized in the early 1890s (501). He also argues that French modernists played a more vital role than Rubén Darío in influencing Spanish writers. What can be certain is that *modernismo*, inherently Latin American, embodies the experiences shared by those living under Spanish rule in the Western Hemisphere, advocating regime change and the independence that accompanied it. Moreover, *modernismo*’s prose possesses a poetic cadence that does not appear as readily in peninsular modernist texts. Modernism, on the other hand, represents the movement of the superpower, from Europe, including Spain, to North America.

The divisions within the literary movement are not solely geographical, however. Just as the term *Generación del 98* excluded female writers, male-authored texts typically serve to typify modernist literature, both in English and Spanish. While Woolf’s name is easily found in modernist criticism, female authors continue to be underrepresented or entirely missing from critical studies on the movement in English or Spanish letters. Writers associated with the melancholy surrounding Spain’s 1898 defeat in the Spanish-American War are necessarily and exclusively male, owing to the Franco regime’s exploitation of the Generation’s writing, which allowed the dictatorship to reinforce its ideals of the Spanish nation, built on restrictive gender roles supported by Catholic doctrine. Moreover, during this time period, female writers were relegated to their own category, as *literatas*, producing “ladies” literature that did not garner the respect bestowed to their male colleagues’ *oeuvres*

(Tolliver 43). Roberta Johnson attributes the continued marginalization of Pardo Bazán and her contemporaries to the fact that, rather than writing in an innovative style, as Valle-Inclán and other male counterparts did with el *esperpento*, Spanish women writers focused on issues over aesthetics. Johnson states that “literary modernism emphasized form and philosophy over social phenomena such as women’s shifting roles in the modern world. Canonical modernism, cosmopolitan and abstract, subjectivized knowledge and eschewed the realism and domesticity often associated with women” (1). Defining the genre strictly according to stylistic differences, female Spanish authors tend to be disregarded by literary theorists forming the modernist literary canon. Nevertheless, Pardo Bazán’s modernist literature shares stylistic qualities, such as incorporation of references to Spanish literary classics from Don Quixote to Don Juan, with that of Unamuno, Valle-Inclán and other male modernist writers. Rather than embodying Spanish national pride or masculinity, however, Pardo Bazán reworks the tales in a feminist manner in order to criticize sexism.

Richard Cardwell explains the gender division in a slightly different manner, stating that it was author- rather than government-constructed. Citing the negative connotations initially associated with Modernism and modernists, “by 1912,” he attests, some modernist authors “reinvented themselves as the ‘Generation of 98’ to offer a more positive and intellectually acceptable identity” (502). At this time the male authors deemed the movement a purely aesthetic one. By the 1930s, “the binary of the early 1900s was re-written in terms of Generation of 1898=good / *modernismo* = bad” (502). Such divisions resulted in female authors’ marginalization from both literary movements.

Although modernist writers and artists – both male and female – represent a diverse range of political thought during the Restoration years, Mary Lee Bretz states that:

Virtually all envision the intellectual and artist as key figures in the construction of a new culture; their differences consist not so much in the opposition between socially committed and escapist art or between ideas and their elegant expression, as later critics would have it, but rather in different conceptions of how best to transform society. (38)

Both male and female, English and Spanish authors during this time period wrote in response to the effects of modernity on their everyday lives, such as the transformation of an agrarian to industrial society, which resulted in the mass movements of populations from rural communities to ever-expanding urban centers. The corresponding changes in women's roles in and outside of the home, whether through the gainful employment of the working classes or the identification of bourgeois women as consumers, however, affected men and women in different ways. While many men felt threatened and yearned for the stability of a bygone era, women looked optimistically towards the future. The cartoons in the English periodical *Punch* as well as other print sources provide evidence of the negative reactions—of men as well as some traditionally minded women—towards the appearance of the New Woman, an iconic albeit controversial modern symbol.

As a result of the Industrial Revolution and the democratization of fashion, clothing became available to many women, not just the New Woman, in ways they had not enjoyed before. Jennifer Jones' description of seventeenth-century France, in which "clothing became the problematic emblem of modernity; in particular, the emerging Parisian culture of fashion—from hoop skirts and hats to shops and shop girls—focused attention on the difficult relationship between femininity and modernity," can be easily applied to the context

of turn-of-the-century Spain. Jones continues by stating that “an act as simple as selecting and buying a hat and showing it off in public placed the consumer in a tangled web of economic, aesthetic, erotic and even political significance” (xvii). In a similar way, Pardo Bazán’s later short stories demonstrate not only the significance clothing plays in reality and fiction, but its representation of changing sexual mores and gender inequality as well.

Modernists’ concern with apparel including cross-dressing, as well as the juxtaposition of clothing’s materiality and corporeal tactility particularly suited the Galician writer’s interest in fashion, while the new literary movement allowed her to experiment with the latest trends in writing. While other writers of the period explore cross-dressing in depth, Pardo Bazán’s short fiction reflects her characteristic restraint. Although she casts male characters in women’s clothing, she rarely permits them to do so willingly. For example, male characters dress themselves in women’s clothing as punishment and in jest, in “Feminista” and “Casi artista,” respectively, producing a light-hearted, humorous result rather than blatant feminist criticism of gender inequality. As her reluctance to portray cross-dressing characters demonstrates, the author adapted Modernism in her own unique way. Just as her naturalist writings have been dubbed “Catholic naturalism,” her modernist characteristics are uniquely her own. Indeed, she did not definitively abandon the naturalist writing for which she is best known. Naturalist characteristics appear in a number of her later short stories, particularly “Las medias rojas” and “El pañuelo,” which demonstrate an inability for young, poverty-stricken girls to escape the fate bestowed upon them by their parents.

Pardo Bazán's writings more readily adhere to a characteristic modernist form in the way her characters express themselves, using an informal style peppered with argot expressions such as *importarle un bledo*, *la cursi* and phrases like "ponían los puntos, como se decía en España, o 'flirteaban.'" Likewise, the author's prose, which includes foreign words and expressions, as well as her inclusion of fictional characters hailing from abroad, illustrate the importance of an international perspective, another typically modernist trait. Integration of modern trends in language assisted Pardo Bazán in representing the new, internationally focused, anti-Restoration vales as well as the cross-cultural exchange and contact made more accessible by modern inventions, such as the locomotive, which arrived in 1848 in Spain (*Cambridge History of Spanish Literature* xxx). This outward focus suited the author's personal interests well as she had lived, traveled and read the canonical texts of England, France, Russia, Italy and Belgium. Travel itself is a recurring theme in her fiction, emblematic of the independent, mobile New Woman.

Pardo Bazan's modernist *oeuvre*, however, is also defined by its introspection. Due to Spain's loss of its final American colonies, writers were inspired to create a new vision for the former empire. At the same time, however, doña Emilia, like many other modernist authors, explored traditional, regional stories that exalted Spain's rich literary heritage. Among the legendary figures to appear in the Galician writer's *oeuvre* is that of Don Juan. However, in a characteristic modernist style, Pardo Bazán adapts the legendary character's tale to suit a modern audience, reworking the myth to give voice to the previously marginalized female characters. In this way, the "burlador," in effect, becomes "burlado." Bretz explains this literary phenomenon by stating, "Spanish modernist writers rewrite



founding national narratives and through parody, inversion, de- or over-emphasis, defamiliarize the inherited stories and reveal them as strange and remote” (177). Unreliable authors and irony, among other modernist literary tropes, serve to destabilize formerly rigid story lines.

Inward-directed reflections and an outward exploration of the Other describe the characters in Pardo Bazán’s short fiction as well as modernist writers themselves. In addition, parody proves useful to the Galician author in questioning the traditional values—as well as fears—of Spaniards. Anti-materialism and a disdain for popular culture are other traits of modernism that we find in the Galician author’s writings. By giving voice to the realities of her rural compatriots in a number of short stories, such as “Las medias rojas” and “El pañuelo,” Pardo Bazán exalts their hard work while criticizing the dire situations in which they find themselves. In other short works, such as “El paraguas” and “Lección,” her fictional accounts serve to criticize women serving as mere adornments for their husbands. Indeed, the author relies on traditionally female interests associated with domesticity and passivity to communicate modern, feminist ideas of equality.

Pardo Bazán also relies on framing to present a number of her short stories, a method that Bretz describes as representing “a very modernist display of dual signification” (218). Framing parallels the invention of the photography and movie camera lens, presenting reality in multiple ways. Modernist writing often imitates a camera’s presentation of reality, alternatively including and excluding information in typical cinematographic fashion. However, “modernism’s more powerful lenses do not lead to domination but rather, to a greater sense of perplexity or wonder in the presence of an increasingly complex reality”

(307). Modernist short story writers show that multiple perspectives exist in all stories, symbolized by Pardo Bazán and other modernists' demonstrated interest in the use of masks and disguises. Questions regarding identity, whether gender-based or otherwise, gain importance in the modernist period. Mirrors play a similar role, on the one hand symbolizing vanity and superficial contemplation of one's beauty, but on the other, meaningful introspection.

Modernist literature is often dialogue-rich, making it accessible and familiar to its readers. Rather than a hierarchal relationship admonished by its adherents, the narrative form opens the text to participation by the reader as well as the characters themselves. Pardo Bazán, by way of dialogue, is able to give life to her characters, using an informal lexicon and colloquialisms. It is important to note, however, that she seldom allows her female protagonists to narrate their stories in the first person, favoring instead narration in the third person. In these stories narrators, as they speak to the readers in a direct, level way, carry out the role fulfilled by dialogue in other short stories.

According to Bretz, modernists demonstrate an "interest in sound, color, smell and a transgendered subjectivity" (492). Similarly, clothing, fashion, shopping and other traditionally female interests gain increased importance and, rather than be admonished, are valued as an integral piece of the cultural imaginary of the twentieth century. As Valerie Steele signals the role corsets played in empowering women, modernist female writers demonstrate how women shop to feel empowered, as an act of defiance or to cope in an imperfect reality. Pardo Bazán combines these traits by providing descriptions of clothing that appeal to the tactile and visual sensibilities of her readers. In her later short stories,

however, questions of style and fashion also assist the author in criticizing materialism, sexism and other negative aspects of a modernizing society. Moreover, her fiction shows how fashion and modernity are inexorably linked in a consumerist society. Regardless of its purpose, clothing, from its color, material and feel, is described with rich detail. Pardo Bazán also includes references to typically Spanish garments, such as *mantillas* and fans. While Modernism is usually associated with the feminine and the Generation of '98 with the male, by exalting Spanish sartorial traditions, doña Emilia demonstrates that female writers were also concerned with the future of their nation. A longing for a glorified past coupled with an anxious optimism for the opportunities a modern age represented bestow upon Pardo Bazán's short stories a unique flair.

### III. The Textuality of Texts

As evidenced in Pardo Bazán's short fiction, fabrics and stories share common, inherent qualities. While designers fashion clothing with lines, pleats and hems, writers—especially short story writers—fashion stories and characters with carefully chosen words that easily conjure visual depictions in the reader's mind as the narratives “unfold.” As with all cultural forms, fashion and clothing possess underlying narratives, most clearly exhibited by American quilts and Chilean *arepas*. This veritable palimpsest assists us in seeing how, when discussing the art of creating fiction, references to knitting, weaving and sewing repeatedly arise. Henry James employs use of the *ficelle* (a common theme or “thread”) or *el hilo conductor* as a basic concept in his literary criticism, which allows him to clearly illustrate threads that unite a story's theme. Popular speech provides us with further examples of textile and text. One may “spin a yarn,” “weave a tale” or “pull the wool over

another's eyes." Moreover, among the definitions of the verb "to fabricate," "to make something that requires skill," such as a garment or work of fiction, appears ("Fabricate"). Examining the etymology of words related to writing provides additional evidence of clothing's relationship to fiction. "Textile" and "texture" derive from the etymon meaning "to weave." Likewise, "stylus" evolved into the term "style," which relates both to articles of clothing and works of fiction. Fashion and fiction present another set of parallels. An original definition of "fiction" included "the act of fashioning or imitating" and "to fashion" once meant "to counterfeit or pervert" ("Fiction").

Stephen Greenblatt traces the history of the verb "fashion," "as a term for the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern, the word had been long in use, but it is in the sixteenth century that fashion seems to come into wide currency as a way of designating the forming of a self" (2). He continues by stating that "fashioning may suggest the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving" (2). Indeed, Pardo Bazán shows how, with a paucity of role models and an abundance of critics, she was able to fashion a niche for herself as a writer whose works continue to be read and studied nearly a century after her death.

For his part, it is "fashion," the noun rather than the verb that Roland Barthes explores in *The Fashion System*, maintaining that fashion is a sociological rather than psychological phenomenon (9). According to Barthes, the fashion system is the totality of social relations and activities that are required for fashion to come into existence. It is a pattern of relationships, rather than a one-dimensional occurrence, possesses a non-linear

time sequence and is discontinuous. As the French fashion magazines that Barthes studies attest, fashions come and go; they do not progress in a linear manner. Barthes, however, does not believe that the image is all-powerful. Rather, images in modern society usually appear accompanied by words. He believes that “image-clothing” can be fashionable, but not Fashion. Without language, pictures are too slippery and vague in the meanings they produce. It is the written word rather than the image that bestows meaning upon fashion.

As a feminist and modernist, Pardo Bazán’s fashioning of short fiction reflects Barthes’ philosophy of Fashion in a number of ways. As Barthes points out, “The Fashion text represents as it were the authoritative voice of someone who knows all there is behind the jumbled or incomplete appearance of the visible forms; thus it constitutes a technique of opening the invisible, where one could almost rediscover, in secular form, the sacred halo of divinatory texts” (14). Pardo Bazán makes sense of the image she creates of her characters, revealing intimacies and exposing social problems not readily apparent in other writers’ tales. Moreover, she displays the totality of the system, portraying seamstresses as well as consumers in the production of fashion.

It is evident that from her earliest short stories, rich descriptions of clothing play an integral role in Pardo Bazán’s short fiction, allowing the readers to create for themselves images of the characters’ fashions. The first two short stories she published, “Un matrimonio del siglo XIX” in 1866 and “El príncipe amado,” a children’s fairy tale which appeared in 1879, differ from her later stories in one key way: after learning an important and life-altering lesson, the main characters live happily ever after. However, references to clothing

serve to criticize society's preoccupation with appropriate dress and physical appearance, which is rather ironic considering the author's personal fascination with sartorial splendor.

In "Un matrimonio del siglo XIX"<sup>6</sup> descriptions of the "linda y frívola" wife, Luisa, and the husband, Carlos, a dandy in his own right, are inextricably bound to their clothing, physical appearance and dressing rituals (3: 413). The narrator begins by describing how Luisa would place "con una gracia deliciosa los adornos de sus cabellos y las alhajas, que debemos confesar que las amaba con pasión" (3: 412). Carlos, for his part, "era una verdadera perla: casi no tenía deudas, ni vicios muy marcados, y le bastaban doce mil reales para su sastre" (3: 412). Descriptions of clothing and jewelry in this story serve to provide a description of the way of life of the upper class, providing both advantages and drawbacks, such as the difficulty of traveling with numerous hatboxes and trunks during the honeymoon. However, the story's moralizing ending shows that happiness does not result from material objects, but from love and companionship. Indeed, this first story differs from the later short stories in a number of ways. Above all, through open communication and mutual respect, the characters are able to solve their differences and their story ends happily. Perhaps this is due to Pardo Bazán's youthful optimism or naiveté, representing her outlook on marriage two years prior to the start of her own, unhappy union.

The moral of Pardo Bazán's second short story, "El príncipe amado," is analogous to that of the first. Simply put, giving a young prince everything he desires serves to create an unhappy person unable to function as a productive member of society once he reaches adulthood. However, through hard work, education and determination, the prince reverses

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<sup>6</sup> Pardo Bazán lamented the alienation that increasingly characterized bourgeois marriage in an essay for *La Ilustración Española*, stating that "un marido del siglo XVIII, sin derechos políticos, se encontraba más cerca de su esposa que el burgués elector y elegible del siglo XIX" (*La mujer española* 259-60).

his destiny. Descriptions of clothing in the text mainly center on secondary characters who play key roles in educating the young spoiled prince who sleeps in “ricos encajes de las sábanas” (4: 254). A fairy appears to the king and queen “vestida con un traje de color extraño, que no era blanco ni azul, sino una mezcla de las dos cosas, algo parecida al matiz especial que tiene la luz de la luna” (4: 253). The poor lumberjack working in the woods, for his part, “llevaba bajo un traje tosco una fina camisa de batista” (4: 257). The contrast between the rough suit and the fine shirt alerts the reader to the incongruity between the lumberjack’s character and representation. Ultimately, the benevolent *leñador* reveals his identity as the prince at the story’s ending. When the prince meets Florina with her “traje sencillo y casi humilde,” he is amazed at how different she is from the queen’s ladies in waiting who “se pasaban el día abanicándose” and “lloraban como perdidas cuando el príncipe no les alababa mucho el peinado o el traje” (4: 260, 261). Pardo Bazán would continue to fashion characters whose clothing respects the content of their character, for better or for worse, throughout her short fiction.

Countless other short stories written prior to 1901 serve to illustrate the role clothing plays in Pardo Bazán’s short stories. Although “El encaje roto” and “En tranvía,” published in 1897 and 1890, respectively, were written during the modernist period, they appeared prior to the years encompassed in this study. Nonetheless, it is worth noting some of the similarities and differences they offer to the later works. “En tranvía” presents a description of well-dressed inhabitants of the Salamanca neighborhood in Madrid as a painting. However, it includes a *mancha* in its composition, created by a poor woman with a blind baby. The author compares and contrasts the poor woman using her shawl as an indicator of

wealth and status. The narrator attests to clothing's function as language when he states that "el mantón de la mujer del pueblo de Madrid tiene fisonomía, es elocuente y delator" (2: 98). The image of "eloquent" garments is one that Pardo Bazán further explores in her creation of clothing that can sometimes be considered as an additional character in her later short stories, integral to the story's plot. Indeed, headscarves, fur coats and other items of clothing further the story lines in a number of her tales.

In the framed tale of "El encaje roto," Pardo Bazán describes the difficulties women faced in a *machista* society, a topic that she greatly expands during her modernist period. The protagonist, however, recounts her woes in her own voice, a rare occurrence in Pardo Bazán's later short fiction. The bride tears the delicate *encaje* of the wedding gown, signifying the breaking of the tenuous ties that bind her to a lifelong, economically prosperous, albeit, loveless marriage. A parallel short story to "El encaje roto," representing the male perspective on a similar plot, can be found in "La niebla," published in 1908 in *Blanco y Negro*. While "El encaje roto" centers on the paramount importance of life's so-called *pequeñeces*, the narrator of "La niebla" describes "el tejido de las mínimas circunstancias," which derives its importance from its fragility (3: 29). In the case of the male protagonist of this later short story, the onset of thick fog possesses the ability to determine the characters' future, causing confusion and a mistaken identity. Unlike the bride in "El encaje roto," however, the would-be groom does not remedy his unfortunate situation, opting instead for a passive response.

Pardo Bazán relied upon fashion metaphors to express herself in her personal correspondence and essays. Giving a young lover a copy of *Jaime*, she inscribes it with the



following: “A José Lázaro Galdiano. Este ejemplar va encuadernado con un guante mío y con la intención le acompaña la mano que vistió el guante y escribió los versos. Emilia” (Faus 1: 439). Her note captures the integral relationship between text and textile as well as clothing and flesh. References to fashion also served the writer in chastising her critics. In an ironic tone, Pardo Bazán pleads with Balaguer, “mire usted que estas varas de tela que las modistas combinan y pliegan artísticamente desde la cintura al pie nos incapacitan para aspirar a las glorias diplomáticas y ministeriales” (Tolliver 31). Both in her fictional and non-fictional writing Pardo Bazán maintained that gender differences, reflected in men’s and women’s fashions, should not impede women’s rights.

References to clothing not only appear in the author’s own writings, but in other authors’ reflections on doña Emilia as well. Joyce Tolliver cites how Pardo Bazán’s contemporaries “insisted on dressing [her] in masculine clothing and then ridiculing her *marimachismo*” (29). Whether criticizing or praising her, clothing figures prominently in many of their remarks. Adding to the criticism regarding naturalism, Valera wrote that “yo no puedo ni debo combatir contra doña Emilia. Las damas deben ir vestidas según la moda. ¿Por qué he de tomar yo a mal que doña Emilia se vista de naturalista?” (qtd in Faus 1: 224). Her critics proved unable to separate her writing from her gender and clothing. In reference to Pardo Bazán’s novel, *Insolación*, Pereda is quoted as saying “todo eso está muy bien bordado, pero es trapo” (Scari 311). Like other men of his generation, he appears to advocate Pardo Bazán’s pursuit of more “womanly” interests such as embroidery over writing.

Nevertheless, the Galician author used clothing not only in fashioning her characters, but in her self-fashioning. Despite her critics' attempts to characterize doña Emilia as a *marimacho* who transgressed gender boundaries in her desire to write "like a man," she maintained a decidedly traditional feminine appearance. Although she devoted many pages to depictions of the New Woman, Pardo Bazán's personal fashions reflected a preference for traditional styles of long, elegant dresses and lengthy hair styled in a sensible bun. Likewise, Pilar Faus describes how Pardo Bazán "para disimular su falta de cuello utiliza boas de plumas en el invierno y generosos escotes en verano. A diferencia de Concepción Arenal, doña Emilia ama el lujo, los trajes y adornos elegantes y, en ocasiones, su atuendo puede resultar ostentoso y llamativo" (1: 420). Just as she relied on articles of clothing and fashion accessories to enhance, mask or adorn her physical attributes, Pardo Bazán adapted literary movements to her own interests, style and mores, fashioning female protagonists who combat sexism, regardless of how they dress.

#### IV. Conclusions

The oft-cited quote from her *Apuntes autobiográficos*, "Me vestí de largo, me casé y estalló la Revolución," illustrates the primacy of dress and dressing in Pardo Bazán's personal development as well as in her writing (706). After reflecting on the link between writing and weaving and Modernism and fashion, it should be no surprise that a female writer at the turn of the twentieth century be drawn to sewing, fabrics and clothing as themes woven throughout her stories. The short stories included in the following chapters provide a small but representative sampling of the wealth of short fiction Pardo Bazán fashioned during her prolific career, integrating cutting-edge fashions and literary and sartorial traditions, all

the while maintaining an eye towards the future filled with greater opportunities for women as well as men.

## CHAPTER ONE: FASHION VICTIMS

If a woman does not cover her head, she might as well cut her hair. And since it is a shameful thing for a woman to shave her head or cut her hair, she should cover her head. A man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man.

--1 Corinthians, 11: 6-8

Whether in the bustling streets of Madrid, mythical Marineda or rural Galicia, a number of Emilia Pardo Bazán's later short stories are set on the margins of Naturalism and Modernism, displaying characteristics of both literary movements. Like the protagonists of her naturalist fiction, those of the later works discussed in this chapter confront devastating hardships engendered by socioeconomic and gender inequality. However, they distinguish themselves from their literary ancestors in one key way: they all fall victim expressly to fashion. Their suffering is caused by a longing for acceptance at any cost, manifested through the acquisition and display of fashionable garments. Unlike the characters of Pardo Bazán's purely naturalist fiction, however, these inwardly focused protagonists are motivated by a desire to determine their own futures. Whether as actresses, prostitutes or rural laborers, the protagonists' opportunities to fashion themselves anew nevertheless prove to be as limited and confining as those provided to women in traditional, bourgeois marriage, an institution doña Emilia repeatedly criticizes in her fiction and essays. By recounting their stories in a distant, detached voice, relying on the intertextuality of literary classics as well as irony and emphasizing their sexuality, Pardo Bazán confirms the characters' marginalization in a modernizing society—as women and as the poverty-stricken—while also drawing attention to their self-alienation. While the short stories concerning the New Woman look to

modernity with hope, these short stories exist as criticism of working-class women's marginal position in a modernizing Spain.

### I. Clothes, Hair and Beauty Make the Woman

Vital to confirming difference accorded to sex, differentiation between feminine and masculine dress –or lack thereof– is one of the many commonalities that unite the short fiction examined in this chapter. While some short story characters uphold traditional norms regarding appropriate fashion for the two sexes, others challenge historically-held beliefs classifying women as naturally vain and enamored with *la moda*. Likewise, some characters test the limits of what is appropriate for their gender or time, sporting “masculine” dress or dandy fashion. The issues related to dividing normative sartorial behavior along gender lines, however, began centuries before Pardo Bazán's modernist—or, for that matter, naturalist—period.

Paralleling the increased differentiation of men's and women's dress, sumptuary laws began to appear throughout Western Europe during the Renaissance. Although the laws' primary aim was to codify socioeconomic hierarchal structures, they also proved effective in legislating normative sartorial behavior between the two sexes. Over the centuries, as women's fashion became increasingly mercurial and theories related to sex and gender further developed, notions of sexual difference intensified. In the eighteenth century, women's interest in fashion became associated with their nature, while men who sought fashionable dress were negatively classified as fops or dandies, transgressing the limits of artificially constructed normative male interests and behavior (Jones 203). Defying

established gender boundaries in the form of cross-dressing, however, was as problematic for women as it was for men.

In an essay Pardo Bazán published in the Buenos Aires periodical, *La Nación*, on August 16, 1909, in which she discusses *concursos de belleza*, we are able to discern valuable information regarding the author's opinion towards the cult of beauty. On the one hand, she lauds the foreign practice of the beauty pageant as it allows women to leave the domestic sphere to occupy a space in the public eye. "La mujer," she states, "alza su velo; se reconoce el derecho a que su beldad sea elemento de alegría y recree las miradas. La estética sonríe en sus pupilas luminosas" (*Obra periodística* 294). Nevertheless, the superficiality that beauty pageants promote nullifies the rights afforded women in the public realm. Doña Emilia concludes her essay with the following tongue-in-cheek statement:

La belleza está, no en un sonreír inquietante, ni en una ondulación misteriosa de cabellos, sino ¿en qué creen ustedes? En el esqueleto; eso es; en el esqueleto, que es como la arquitectura de nuestro físico. Así es que, sin conocer el esqueleto de estas señoritas, no sé cómo las premiaron. No negamos que tuviese razón el clásico, y únicamente dudábamos de que las señoritas aun con la mejor voluntad, consintiesen en mostrar el esqueleto dentro de su precioso estuche. (295)

Pardo Bazán's words illustrate the falsity of beauty contests' recognition and awarding of a woman's outer casing or sheath, which does not communicate nor assure that true beauty lies beneath. By referring to the skeleton, absent of sexual organs or other gender traits clearly identifiable by the untrained eye, she emphasizes the fundamental similarities among humans, regardless of sex.

Pardo Bazán strove to combat sexism in her writings as well as in her personal life. Although she did not dress in a masculine style, the author's contemporaries labeled her as *marimacho* for her desire to gain access to the rarified world of male intellectuals and

writers. Sexism manifested itself quite clearly when she was denied entry into the *Real Academia Española* and, as a *catedrática*, had to resign her post when the university's students refused to attend classes taught by a female professor. Pardo Bazán's portrayal of characters' emotions surrounding cross-dressing or sexually ambiguous dress—most notably in “La pasarela”—reflects the trepidation conservative men and women experienced in light of the burgeoning women's movement, the negative effects of which the author bore personally. Similarly, through the tragic actions of the protagonist of “El frac,” don Pedro, Pardo Bazán challenges commonly held stereotypes regarding fashion as a strictly women's affair. In a male-dominated world, men rarely are referred to as victims of societal practices. By fashioning male characters such as don Pedro, however, Pardo Bazán demonstrates the ability of fashion, serving as a metaphor for a male-dominated society at large, to victimize men as well as women.

In so doing, Pardo Bazán also appears to heed the advice espoused by Valerie Steele, author of *The Corset*. In her interpretation of the often times controversial undergarment, Steele warns against over-simplifying the meaning and motivation of women's dressing when she states that “by patronizing the women of the past as the passive ‘victims’ of fashion, historians have ignored the reasons why so many women were willing to wear corsets for so long” (2). Fitting for a feminist writer, the sole passive characters in this group of Pardo Bazán's short stories are men, including don Pedro who waits for a *frac*, and the men in the harbor in “La pasarela,” who watch the helpless Gnoqui drown in front of their eyes. Unlike other short story heroines, the female protagonists sacrifice themselves through hard work, rather than marriage, in hopes of obtaining their sartorial dreams.



Steele's warning, nevertheless, is important to keep in mind not only when discussing corsets, but in explaining the permanence of neckties, coats with tails and other men's fashions. Pardo Bazán's fictional and non-fiction writings demonstrate that fashion, like the corset Steele describes in her ground-breaking study, possesses the ability to empower men and women by promoting hygiene, aesthetic value and self-worth. Indeed, the short stories that doña Emilia authored throughout her prolific career easily lend themselves as tools in the dress reform movement, a cause she championed in a number of articles published in *La Nación*. Unfortunately, however, the characters she fashions in the short stories explored in this chapter do not survive long enough to enjoy the positive experiences fashion is capable of producing in the individual. The weight of social, economic and gender inequality ultimately renders them immobile, even in their fashionable clothing.

By questioning widely held beliefs of femininity and masculinity in "La pasarela," Pardo Bazán also pays homage to the cross-dressing female protagonist of the Golden Age, a theme she explores more in depth in "Feminista," featured in Chapter Four. The literary trope (as also seen in "La aventura," featuring a female protagonist escaping confinement dressed as a man) aligns Pardo Bazán's short fiction more easily with her Golden Age literary predecessors than with her contemporaries. In none of the aforementioned short stories does Pardo Bazán delve into the theme of transvestism as profoundly as other modernist authors, such as Virginia Woolf in *Orlando*. Cross-dressers do, however, allow the Galician author to raise questions about dress as well as to illustrate society's low estimation of women. The author's dabbling with transvestism is representative of her fashioning Modernism to suit her own style, tastes and interests, experimenting with technique, but always remaining faithful to her beliefs and values.

Doña Emilia's short stories show that fashion not only communicates gender, but status and wealth as well. Certain elements that the author emphasizes in this first group of short stories, such as dress and sexuality, draw attention to the characters' low socioeconomic status or marginality. Although the erudite don Pedro of "El frac" finally secures the Frock Coat he desires, it is a second-hand, rather than a new garment. Motivations for an elegant headscarf, characteristic of provincial rather than international fashion, drive Cipriana in "El pañuelo." Like those of countless fairy tales, the young protagonists in "El pañuelo" and "Las medias rojas," are defined by their status as orphans or at least *huérfanas de madre*. The emphasis on the female characters' sexuality aligns them with the traditional notion of sexually promiscuous lower-class women while distancing them from that of the domesticated *ángel del hogar* embodied by their upper-class counterparts. Similarly, allusions to homosexuality in the description of don Pedro cast him as a marginal figure. Whether referring to men's or women's fashion, the timeless and practical articles of clothing and the romanticized standards of beauty that the characters strive to obtain, Pardo Bazán's short stories illustrate how provincial values contrast with Spain's increasingly modernizing economic, social and sartorial landscape.

In addition to the men and women, both young and old, that comprise the "fashion victims" that give name to this chapter, Spain also figures as a fashion victim. From Madrid to Manila, the Spanish empire, at its height, extended geographically as well as sartorially into every continent of the world. Indeed, Steele credits Spain with beginning a fashion trend that has lasted for approximately four centuries: the corset. A "precursor of the corset was the *basquine* or *vasquine*," Steele describes, "a laced bodice to which was attached a hooped skirt or farthingale. The *vasquine* apparently originated in Spain in the early sixteenth

century, and quickly spread to Italy and France” (6). However, the national crisis brought about by Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898, which provided a strong influence in modernist literature, was preceded by the nation’s sartorial decline. While during the mid-sixteenth century Spanish fashions dominated Europe, France and Holland became sartorial powerhouses in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Reade 5). As a result, the popularity of Spanish fashion eventually declined both abroad and within the country’s borders. As Reade attests, “From 1630 onward the development of costume in Spain had little more than national significance and after the accession of the Bourbon dynasty in 1700 French styles were adopted by all but the country people” (5-6). By the time Pardo Bazán was writing and publishing her short stories, England and France in particular dominated the fashion industry. Fashionable Spaniards looked to Paris, rather than their own cities, for the latest trends in clothing.

Rather than lamenting the loss of sartorial power, Pardo Bazán criticizes the propagation of outdated fashions, such as long hair and beauty contests, among her countrymen. She does, however, exalt the literary heritage of Spain as well as other European countries throughout this group of short stories. In addition to allusions to Golden Age theatre, the Picaresque novel garners a nod in “La pasarela” when the narrator highlights Gnoqui’s physical similarity to the *pícaro*. Similarly, “El pañuelo” shares various, albeit subtle, characteristics with Shakespeare’s *Othello*, which also centers on the tragedy brought about by a small piece of cloth. The parallels between the bookish yet delusional don Pedro and don Quijote, likewise, cannot easily be denied. Through these literary references Pardo Bazán highlights the literary gems of Spain as well as the universality of Western literary classics. More importantly, however, she emphasizes the innate characteristics that unite

men and women as humans rather than the socially-constructed differences that distance them from one another.

In addition to the role of fashion and clothing in advancing plot and the intertextuality of Spanish and English literature, ambiguity and irony serve to identify these works as quintessentially Modernist. However, the use of direct discourse by an omniscient third-person narrator aligns many of these tales with naturalist fiction. “El frac” and “Los rizos,” although not told in the voice of their protagonists, distinguish themselves from the other short stories in this chapter in that they are both first-person accounts. The stories’ narrators serve as eyewitnesses of and, to varying degrees, participants in the accounts they re-tell. The use of the two distinct types of narration serves two purposes in the texts. On the one hand, Pardo Bazán’s use of third-person narration and eyewitness accounts allow her to reach her bourgeois readers with a language and world-view with which they can easily relate. On the other, the effect of a detached, all-knowing storyteller reflects the sense of alienation that her working-class characters experience, solidifying their marginal status. Instead of enjoying the opportunity to communicate their own stories, the protagonists depend on outside, authoritative voices to provide what, in essence, are their eulogies.

## II. “El frac” Makes the Man

“We all come out from under Gogol’s ‘The Overcoat,’” as the famous saying attests, applies particularly well to Pardo Bazán in her fashioning of “El frac,” which illustrates not only her knowledge of Russian literature but her failed quest to become a member of the *Real Academia Española* as well. Published in 1909, the short story appeared first in print between the author’s initial unsuccessful attempt to secure an Academy appointment in 1889

and her final, definitive rejection in 1912 (Faus 2: 243)<sup>7</sup>. “El frac,” therefore, exists not only as a reflection on the disparity between men and women’s opportunities, but also as a criticism of the male-dominated Spanish intelligentsia. While the author does not portray her male contemporaries as blatantly sexist, she does fashion them as iconoclasts, whose scholarly contributions are devoid of meaning or purpose.

While don Pedro shares doña Emilia’s desire to become a member of the Academy, the reader quickly learns that the outdated, rigid ideals of this passive protagonist stand in sharp contrast to those of the modern, forward-looking feminist writer. The scholar’s association with the past is illustrated by his specialization in “las épocas en que nuestra gloria nacional irradiaba como el sol, y también sobre otra en que se fue nublando... Austrias y Borbones,” which also reminds readers of Spain’s checkered political history largely ignored by nostalgic Generation of ’98 writers (4: 80). In addition to his passivity and anachronism, however, the narrator emphasizes don Pedro’s enigmatic nature. His acquaintances claim to have known him in a strictly professional sense and are not privy to details of his private life. In fact, the narrator states that “casi no sabíamos las señas de su domicilio” (4: 80). Dávalo, the narrator’s interlocutor, encounters the personal information needed to write the story from a conversation with don Pedro’s wife. While the fact that the learned man was married astounds Dávalo and the narrator, it comes as no surprise that the marriage produced no children, as don Pedro was not characterized by his virility. In fact, descriptions of the protagonist place his sexuality in doubt.

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<sup>7</sup> The first woman, Carmen Conde, would not be accepted into the Real Academia Española until 1979, nearly a century after Pardo Bazán’s initial attempt (Tolliver 18). In 2008, only three of the 24 seats in the Academy were occupied by women (“Los académicos”).

Unlike the hyper-(hetero)sexualized female characters Pardo Bazán describes in other short stories, *el sabio* is portrayed as emasculated or effeminate. While his second surname (passed down, ironically, from his mother), “las Lanzas,” conjures a phallic, bellicose image, it is preceded by the preposition “de,” which may be used by a woman to adapt her husband’s *primer apellido* as one of her own. The masculine, warlike imagery that accompanies don Pedro not only as part of his name, but with descriptions of his research interests, are neutralized by the allusion to his lack of independence. Indeed, the reader quickly discovers that don Pedro’s life depends on his wife and *la Academia* as much as on *el frac*, all of which inadvertently bring about his death. His first surname, “Hojeda,” which loosely connotes don Pedro’s passion for leafing or *hojeando* through pages of text, resembles a past participle, not only passive but feminized as adjective as well. By fashioning surnames that associate don Pedro’s mother with war and his father with passivity, Pardo Bazán playfully begins to raise readers’ suspicions about don Pedro’s sexuality.

Don Pedro is also described as a man “con enjuta y avellanada fealdad española” (4: 80). The negative characterization of a typical Spaniard and use of foreign words as well as references to foreign countries signal the importance of an outwardly-directed glance rather than insulation to further Spain’s interests after the defeat of the 1898 Spanish-American War. While don Pedro’s “Spanishness” is not put in doubt, his writings are read by only “algunos alemanes e ingleses,” a fact that bestows upon him an air of modest international respectability while concurrently hinting at the lack of interest his fellow Spaniards have for his work (4: 80).

The repetition of “frac” and the preference for this borrowed French word of Germanic origin over the Spanish word *levita* do, however, provide a notable contrast to don Pedro’s “Spanishness.” The word’s association with the English “frock,” or woman’s dress, serves to strengthen its parallel to female fashion. Moreover, by definition the “frac” contains two *faldones*, similar to a woman’s *falda* (“Frac”). Adding to the gender confusion, a frock originally existed as a garment for monks, upholders of celibacy and, as Gebler refers to them, the third gender composed of the religious. Reinforcing this image, the narrator states, “no hay estudiante que no resuelva conflictos análogos en Carnaval,” hinting at the farsical aspect of don Pedro’s self-fashioning both sartorially and intellectually (4: 82). The complete image of don Pedro that the narrator provides aligns him with women, foreigners, as well as with the past and the carnivalesque, and, as a result, serves to fashion him as the consummate Other.

While don Pedro shares in Pardo Bazán’s quest to join the ranks of the Other, albeit an esteemed one, represented by the Academy, it is explicit comparisons between *el sabio* and don Quijote rather than between the protagonist and his author that abound in the text. Indeed, both the stories of don Pedro and don Quijote share important similarities with the lives of the authors that penned the two works. Nevertheless, the two tragic literary heroes exhibit a fascination, which quickly develops into an obsession, with the printed word. While don Quijote yearns to acquire the lifestyle of the *caballeros andantes* that he admires, don Pedro pictures himself as a military leader whose histories from centuries past he studies. He believes himself worthy of an Academy membership because “los retratos de los reyes borbónicos parecían llamarle, sonriendo bajo sus empolvados peluquines” (4: 81). Just as don Quijote empowers himself when he dons the *bacillo de yelmo*, don Pedro’s full

alignment with his wigged forbearers of the Enlightenment depends upon his dressing in a Frock Coat. In don Pedro's mind, in order to become an enlightened man, he must dress the part.

Among the first descriptions of don Pedro are references to his style of dress, showing that he fashions himself in accordance with the dictates of his profession. He is "algo huraño, tímido" and "vestido con el descuido propio de los sabios" (4: 80). Likewise, the term "propio" indicates that learned men appropriate a certain type of unkempt dress as their professional uniform. Don Pedro wears the appropriate uniform for his station in life, demonstrating both his lack of interest in fashion and disregard for social norms of dress. According to the narrator, until he is presented with the possibility of inclusion into the Academy, don Pedro "no se inclinaba ante las vanidades sociales" (4: 81). Ironically, he adapts a voguish disinterest in fashion to suit his role as scholar and teacher, but becomes fashion obsessed when faced with the possibility of an Academy appointment.

Despite his timidity and apparent lack of fashion sense, however, his clothing acquires fame. *El sabio* is known to wear "aquel célebre gabán marrón amarillento y aquel cuellecito de minino pelado que no bastó para preservarle de las corrientes de aire" (4: 81). The use of "célebre" as well as "aquel" denotes the familiarity don Pedro's acquaintances have with the yellowing and worn garments, emphasizing their overuse and inability to provide protection from the elements. By describing the *sabio*'s dress in this way, the narrative *nosotros* also provides the reader with a firm interpretation of what Barthes deems the "slippery" image of don Pedro's garments, ensuring that the reader and narrator share a common view of the Frock Coat. Employing the colloquial term *minino* for *gato* further confirms the acquaintances' familiarity with don Pedro. Don Pedro's dress is not only



inexpensive and outdated, but is characterized by its ineffectiveness as well. The cat fur collar, harvested from a domestic animal and analogous to that worn by Gogol's protagonist, contrasts with the more desirable and arguably more functional fur of minks or otters, the cat's feral counterparts. The cold drafts from which his famous clothing cannot protect him, however, ultimately cause don Pedro's death by pneumonia. As descriptions of clothing serve to define don Pedro and his lack of fashion sense or wealth, he and his dress become one, an inseparable and interdependent duo.

Rather than providing protection, the Frock Coat embodies the mysteriousness of don Pedro as well as the past glory of Spain that he seeks to embody. Tracing the history of the Frock Coat, Christopher Breward outlines the garment's ambiguity as well as its multifaceted uses, stating that:

Appearing first in 1816 the coat was derived from the military greatcoat, buttoned from neck to knee and decorated across the chest with frogging. By 1850 it had been accepted as formal wear and achieved its loose, straight, undecorated appearance in the 1860s. At the close of the century, a renewed tightness associated the Frock Coat with the heightened elegance of city swells and dandies. (174)

The Frock Coat's historical use as a military uniform, at first glance, may provide a case for don Pedro's masculinity. Indeed, military uniforms, when worn in the appropriate context, provide a sartorial display of masculine bravado. By dressing like the men he admires, don Pedro hopes to assume the respectability the military heroes secured through their uniforms.

While it is difficult to classify don Pedro as a transvestite because he dresses in men's attire, he does "cross-dress" as an intellectual in a military man's clothing. Indeed, military uniforms, like nuns' habits, are a favorite of cross-dressers. Citing the "'fancy dress' aspect of soldiering," Garber points out the disproportionately high number of transvestites that

exists among military ranks (55). Considering that “the military uniform, like the corset, has long been recognized as a common sexual fetish,” the uncertainty of the unmilitaristic don Pedro’s sexual orientation remains intact (Steele 138). Don Pedro’s fetishized obsession with the Academy ultimately becomes materialized when transferred upon the Frock Coat.

Clothing and status are not the only two associations illustrated by don Pedro’s life. Dressing and writing are also closely connected. While waiting for a Frock Coat to appear, don Pedro continues writing his acceptance speech and ultimately produces a book. In this way, his story is ironically analogous to that of Penelope who weaves while awaiting the return of Ulysses. The tattered clothing and elegant, albeit used, Frock Coat serve as the text of don Pedro’s life, which, tragically, he cannot wear so long as he does not deliver his acceptance speech. The ridiculously long speech emblemizes his professional life and, existing as a parallel with the coveted garment, betrays the superficiality that a clothed appearance can represent. After his death, and once the narrator recounts his tale, don Pedro’s life story is recorded in writing, providing him with the recognition the historical figures he admires enjoy. Don Pedro’s codified story, however, stands in stark contrast to the biographies of the military men and royals he admired in life.

The narrator notes that the *sabio* was a “detestador de las ‘grandes síntesis’, que tanto *visten* en discursos y artículos de fondo” (4: 80 emphasis added). As this quote illustrates, academics like don Pedro and others, such as Pardo Bazán herself, not only dress themselves, but dress their ideas as well. Although don Pedro conforms to the sartorial expectations of a learned man, he rebels against the convention of the synthesis of ideas dressed in spoken or written words. As evidenced by his acceptance speech that demonstrates “que a los flamencos les preocupaba mucho menos la cuestión religiosa que la de los tributos...” the

specificity of his writings renders them irrelevant (4: 81). Although the narrator sarcastically claims that proving the relative unimportance of religion to the Flemish is one of the most hotly-debated issues related to Spain's administration of the Low Countries, without synthesizing his ideas, don Pedro's finding lacks meaning.

Don Pedro, however, does not exist as the sole writer in this short story. His wife, who is referred to as the possible "autora de la muerte de su marido," buys his Frock Coat and therefore "authors" his new look (4: 81). Ironically, she effectively brings about his demise when she fulfills his life's desire and purpose. Nevertheless, she, too, represents a fashion victim in the tale. Fortunately, the narrator indicates, the couple has no children because don Pedro leaves her "como herencia el día y la noche" (4: 81). The narrator also describes her as "la pobre señora," "una de tantas a quienes más le valiera, gloria y otras zarandajas aparte, haberse casado con un tendero de comestibles" (4: 81). As a nameless shopkeeper's wife she would not have had to pawn what must have been her most-prized possessions in order to dress her husband for his funeral and burial. Neither the scholarly don Pedro nor his sacrificing wife, therefore, is able to enjoy the sartorial accoutrements that they desire. The wife is left with neither her *mantilla* nor her husband, who has taken from her while leaving her with nothing but debt.

For his internment, don Pedro is dressed in "un buen traje de etiqueta, frac y corbata blanca" rather than his typical "gabán" (4: 81). Although the whiteness and elegance of the sartorial display—which also acquires modishness through its label—contrast with the scholar's normal appearance, the garments are not only previously worn, but reflect an outdated trend. Moreover, don Pedro ultimately proves unable to be "himself," appropriating instead the identity of the coat's original owner. The ambiguity of don Pedro's sexuality, as

well as his passivity, is again suggested by the image created of him as the idealized *ángel*, clothed by his spouse's earnings rather than his own.

Pardo Bazán characterizes membership in the Academy as being as superficial as the garment, communicating status, but not depth of character. The negative feelings Pardo Bazán harbors towards the Royal Academy can be noted when the narrator sarcastically states that “Y, al fin, sin intrigas previas, por sólo la fuerza de su labor constante, *caso raro*, le habían elegido” (4: 81 emphasis added). Unlike Pardo Bazán's failed candidacy, the decision to accept don Pedro hinges on his scholarly production, not on gender politics. Tragically, acceptance into the Academy inspires don Pedro's life, but also causes his death. As soon as *el sabio* secures the sartorial splendor that he, not the Academy, seeks to enter the esteemed institution—proving much more difficult than an Academy appointment itself—, his life, along with its purpose, ends.

Don Pedro's sacrificial waiting period ultimately proves to be carried out in vain; he gains admission into the Academy not by his outward appearance, but by his intellectual contributions, as questionable as those may have been. Like don Quijote, don Pedro dies in pursuit of living an antiquated, fantastical existence through books rather than reality. Ultimately, however, it is his vanity that impedes him from accepting the Academy's invitation. He chooses instead to wait years for a Frock Coat and dies before he can read his acceptance speech, which would mark his official, public entrance into the institution, preferring textile to text. Pardo Bazán demonstrates that *el sabio* would have been better served by facing reality with garments from his own wardrobe, relying on his intelligence rather than an antiquated garment. Moreover, the Spanish people would have benefited from new ideas for a new century, rife with obstacles as well as opportunities.

### III. “Los rizos”: A Woman’s Crowning Grace

“Los rizos,” a first-person narrative akin to a cautionary tale, also depicts vain characters who double as anachronistic dreamers. While don Pedro involves his wife in his quest for suitable clothing, the parents of the young girl in “Los rizos” endanger her in their quixotic fantasy of attaining unrealistic and life-threatening ideals related to beauty and fashion. Although the plot develops primarily within a working-class world, “Los rizos” demonstrates the differences between people of means and those living in the *colonia*, especially as they relate to hygiene, a central component of the dress-reform movement in vogue during the early twentieth century. Indeed, differences afforded to class play a significant role throughout the short story as the knowledge of the upper classes mixes with the suspicions the lower classes hold towards them.

The narrator solidifies class difference by immediately aligning himself with the reader through use of the first-person plural, creating a division between “us,” the presumably bourgeois readers, and “them,” or the lower-class characters. He explains how, when a small casket passes, “no volvemos la cabeza siquiera” (3: 94). Far from lauding this practice, he sadly points out the prevalence of death and the apathy of the surviving community members towards the deceased. Although “Los rizos” serves as a criticism of the uneducated upholders of beauty who endanger their daughter, the hyperbolic plot serves to demonstrate how society at large proves to be as prone to superficiality as the victims in this unbelievably tragic tale, valuing beauty above practicality, health or comfort<sup>8</sup>. Whether by donning over-tightened corsets or uncomfortable shoes, the Cult of Beauty serves as a

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<sup>8</sup> It is a theme Pardo Bazán also explores in “Sin pasión” published in 1907 in *Blanco y Negro*, which satirizes the cult of Beauty in its depiction of the incredulity of a crime of passion involving an “ugly” woman.

motivator in the pursuit of a fashionable appearance at a physical as well as monetary cost.

The author, therefore, urges her readers to examine their own sartorial excess and the risks it poses to their well-being and that of their daughters, in addition to reflecting their apathy towards the plight of the young and poor.

Apart from creating a community with the reader, from the opening line of the story divisions according to gender are emphasized. When the narrator recalls how “filetes,” or “narrow hems,” that are blue or “color de rosa” adorn the little white boxes in which children’s remains are sealed, he signals the importance gender and the corresponding colors of pink and blue<sup>9</sup>, play in defining and identifying the living as well as the dead (3: 94). Indeed, the story comprises a succession of diametrically opposed male-female pairs: the narrator and his female interlocutor, the parents of the young girl and the young girl and a future male companion who exists only as her parents’ fantasy.

Flowers are intertwined with descriptions not only of death, but of the little girl as well. Indeed, all the children in the economically-depressed classroom are associated with nature, whether flowers, plants or birds. While the young girl’s life is proven to be as ephemeral as a flower, allusions to buds represent her soon-to-be budding sexuality. Seeing the diminutive casket causes the narrator to reflect on death, describing how it marches “segando capullos con el mismo brío certero con que siega los árboles añosos” (3: 94). On the one hand, this quote illustrates the cycle of life and death, but, on the other, it represents a lack of progress in the society in which this particular death occurs. Rather than learning

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<sup>9</sup> Marjorie Garber, in her groundbreaking study *Vested Interests*, cites a New York Times article that maintains that pink and blue baby clothes in the early twentieth century, prior to World War I, were aligned according to the exact opposite gender lines that they are today. Pink, deemed stronger, was for boys while blue, a delicate color, was worn by girls (1).

from the advances of modern medicine, the poor continue to live in relative ignorance, which is compounded by high rates of illiteracy.

As the short story unfolds, the narrator's interlocutor reminds him that the body prepared for interment is that of the girl they saw when visiting a municipal school for the purposing of designating "la colonia escolar del año" (3: 94). The young child is described as an olive-skinned, dark-haired "criatura morena" whose hair resembles "la pluma magnífica, tornasolada, de un ave tropical" (3: 94, 95). While the young girl is aligned with the colonized Other, the narrator and his interlocutor represent the ruling class who make sense of and impose order from above. The narrator portrays the girl as Other in time as well as place, both a relic of a Romantic past and an exotic beauty. Almost as important as her dark complexion, eyes and hair is the abundance of dark hair in "una melena maravillosa" that provides a contrast between the girl and her classmates (3: 94). Despite their admiration for her black curls, "flotantes por los hombros" and, therefore, their adherence to the same outdated notions of beauty they criticize, the narrator and his interlocutor recognize the danger her locks pose to the girl's well-being (3: 94). Although she possesses a beautiful head of hair, her facial features appear to be "de cera," conjuring images of a corpse prepared for display at a wake and, eventually, internment (3: 94). Her mother, nevertheless, proves unwilling to sacrifice her daughter's beauty, sacrificing the young girl's life instead.

The antithesis of the New Woman with a short haircut, the young girl maintains traditional notions of beauty whose foundation springs from the Biblically inspired axiom, "a woman's hair is her crowning glory." The notion of long hair as beautiful was upheld in the Romantic period, during which time hair became sexualized as well. According to Hollander, "thick and abundant hair safely conveyed a vivid sexual message in an

atmosphere of extreme prudery, as did shapely, tight corsets under buttoned-up bodices”

(*Seeing through Clothes* 73). Long hair allows the young girl to be sexually desired while not transgressing boundaries of propriety. The protagonist’s locks also convey her availability for marriage. During the nineteenth century, “in many European cultures a woman’s hair not only represented a sign of vitality but, as a gift, signaled a promise of betrothment” (Peri 31). While the family lacks the finances and accompanying social respectability necessary to secure a bourgeois husband for their daughter, they rely on her hair, reflective of the means of an outdated past, to attract a suitor.

Just as long, beautiful hair defines the Romantic ideal, the “rebaño de criaturitas” in the class that the two adults visit—minus the “criatura morena”—are defined by their hair, although in a negative sense, and grouped together as indistinguishable from one another (3: 94). Specifically, the narrator refers to them as “una serie de cabecitas mal peinadas, de pelo bravío, corto y revuelto” (3: 94). Indeed, the narrator notes that “la fauna asquerosa” is often discovered in the shaven hair of the children in the *colonias* (3: 95). Not only is long hair unhygienic, but also reminiscent of fifteenth-century *pajes*, not twentieth-century school children. Novelists like himself, the narrator claims, can detect “privaciones” in “lo revejo de la tez, en la impureza de los ojos, en la naciente deformidad de los miembros” (3: 94). To him, a child “parece una flor regada y lozana, es la planta que se ahila por falta de agua y de aire” (3: 95). In addition to needing the beach and the countryside, the young girl’s need for a haircut is duly noted by the narrator whose interactions with the school children approximate those of a conquistador in contact with “savages.” The images of an immobile flower or plant further confirm the young girl’s lack of independence and her ornamental, rather than substantive, value.



From the first instance the female interlocutor reminds the narrator of the young girl, she describes her as “la chiquilla bonita que le llamó a usted la atención” (3: 94). Her beauty and young age define her while her physical appearance separates her from her peers. The narrator claims that the young girl’s hair represents the mother’s pride and the “único lujo del hogar.” In the absence of other finery, both the mother and father display their daughter’s hair for others to see, hoping that its beauty will reflect favorably on them. The narrator continues to describe how the child’s hair represents “lo que hacía sonreír babosamente al padre cuando conducía a su hija al ‘gallinero’ del teatro por horas, o al ‘cine.’” The pairing of the father and daughter appears to be more aligned with that of a courting couple. The spaces they occupy are described as “el ambiente viciado, del etéreo, cargado de olor humano.” The olfactory emphasis raises doubts about the innocence of the father-daughter dyad, aligning it with a visceral, physical relationship. The family’s house is not free from sexual connotations either. The narrator refers to the “promiscuidad y estrechez” of their domicile (3: 95). While curls represent a danger to the girl’s health, the places to which her father brings her are not appropriate for a young girl. She is led to spaces that emphasize visual pleasure, such as the cinema or “henhouse.” Indeed, allusions to hens is one that Pardo Bazán continues in “Las medias rojas,” which also depicts a young girl in danger of being used—and abused—for the pleasure of men.

The narrator refers to the young girl in “Los rizos” as “Absalona,” a feminized version of the Biblical Absalom, famous for his good looks and thick hair. As the book of Samuel states, “There was no one in Israel as famous for his good looks as Absalom; he had no defect from head to toe. His hair was very thick, and he had to cut it once a year, when it grew too long and heavy” (*Good News Bible* 2 Sam. 14. 26). As Absalom and Pardo Bazán’s

fictionalized Absalona share a pleasing physical appearance, the physical quality that most defines them causes them to die. Incest also plays a role in the Biblical story<sup>10</sup>, albeit more clearly stated than in “Los rizos,” when Absalom avenges his sister’s rape by their brother.

Another reference to antiquity is mentioned in “Los rizos” in the embodiment of “La Belleza,” “la impasible Diosa,” in whose name the dark-haired girl is sacrificed (3: 96). While the young girl remains unnamed, Beauty enjoys a position of central importance, acquiring characteristics of not only a primary character, but also a goddess worthy of worship. As a result of the Industrial Revolution “beauty was now supposed to be every woman’s ‘duty’ (or her ‘right’), by means of artifice if not naturally” (Steele 36). Women were—and in many ways continue to be—expected to be beautiful due to the existence of cosmetics and other beauty-enhancing products. Indeed beauty, youth and fashion became one in the early twentieth-century social imaginary. Youth-related sartorial themes can be explained by the fact that “even before the ‘flappers’ of the 1920s came of age, fashion was increasingly associated with youth, and this was because young unmarried women were becoming more independent” (Steele 148-9). Ironically, the young protagonist is imprisoned by the desires of the outmoded ideals of her parents—symbolized by the curls’ spiral shape—during an epoch when women began to secure more rights. Furthermore, the pretty girl, who inherently embodies youth, is constructed into an unfashionable being by her presumably middle-aged mother.

However, health figured as another central tenet to beauty. According to Steele:

For women, personal hygiene included issues of dress and practices undertaken to enhance beauty, as well as sexuality, motherhood, and ‘female complaints.’ The concept of ‘health’ broadened to include moral, spiritual,

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<sup>10</sup> Pardo Bazán clearly adapts the Biblical story in “Los cabellos” also.

psychological, and sexual health, as well as public health and the welfare of future generations. (83)

The mother's ideals can be characterized as outdated insofar as they urge her to place greater importance on beauty than health. Because of her mother's refusal to cut her curls, the daughter stays behind while her classmates are bathed, fed, and taught proper manners. Instead of progressing socially and physically as the other newly-created *señoritas*, the young girl remains stagnant, in a world that criticizes bourgeois values, including hygiene. "Vestida de percal rosa sucio," her hair as well as clothing exhibit disregard for cleanliness (3: 96). Instead of inciting admiration, the girl's appearance ultimately conjures disgust, clashing with her neatly dressed classmates.

Seduced by the possibilities embodied in their young daughter's hair, the parents ultimately prepare their daughter not for marriage, but for her funeral, converting her into an additional, anonymous fashion victim in Pardo Bazán's short story *oeuvre*. While they are unable to provide the suggested annual trips to the seaside to improve their daughter's health, the parents mistakenly believe that her long, luxurious locks are available for free, unlike costly apparel. *La criatura morena*, however, pays the ultimate price, demonstrating that she can ill-afford the expense of vanity coupled with ignorance and suspicion. In "Los rizos" Pardo Bazán points out that women deserve more than to be valued for their appearance and they should recognize the beauty within themselves, ignoring the calls of the *diosa*, *Belleza*.

#### IV. Rural Galician Fashions

While turn-of-the-century Spanish cities, such as the one in which "Los rizos" takes place, experienced large-scale growth due to the internal immigration of rural workers seeking newly created jobs, the population in the countryside was similarly affected by

Industrialization. Paralleling the economic prosperity brought about by the new economic structure, Spain's mortality rate fell drastically during the first decades of the twentieth century. Previously characterized by having one of the lowest life expectancy rates in Europe, between 1900 and 1930, the Spanish population grew from 18 to almost 24 million inhabitants (Carr 396-7). An overpopulated countryside, however, was ill-equipped to handle the dramatic increase of mouths to feed. Emigration, especially from Galicia, quickly ensued. What began in the 1870s and slowed during the tightening of national borders in World War I, Spanish emigration culminated in 1912 when 134,000 people departed from Spain's shores for ports throughout North and South America, especially Cuba, Argentina and Brazil. According to Raymond Carr, "Galicia, con su emprendedora población y sus 'parcelas-pañuelo', se convirtió en la primera región exportadora de hombres" (397). Despite legislation protecting emigrants' rights, Galician and other Spanish men as well as women were not only exported, but exploited as well.

The guiding principle of early twentieth-century immigration, dictating that exiles "han de ir sanos, válidos, y las mujeres, con sus ojos alumbrando y su dentadura completa," as stated at the end of "Las medias rojas," illustrates the objectification of rural laborers whose entry into a new foreign country depended on their physical qualities (3: 196-197). The quote also provides evidence of the disparate treatment of male and female immigrants. A woman's value is derived not by her health or might, but by superficial attributes that do not determine her ability to work and align her more readily with livestock than with her male counterpart. Framing "Las medias rojas" in the larger context of Galician emigration, the author provides additional evidence of the need for reform in dress and societal attitudes towards beauty. The disfigured protagonist of "Las medias rojas," once denied the

opportunity to escape her violent father, falls victim not only to sartorial fashion and beauty standards, but most importantly, to the fashion of leaving Galicia for South and North America at the turn of the twentieth century.

Like “Los rizos,” allusions to the sexual transgressions of the father towards his daughter can be found throughout the abbreviated text. The descriptions initially offered by the narrator serve to emphasize the differences between Ildara, desirous of modernizing herself, and el tío Clodio, representative of a barbaric past. Beginning with their names, hers containing two A’s and his, two O’s, the author focuses the reader’s attention on the gender of each. The antecedent “tío,” which also denotes the familiarity with which the townspeople interact with Clodio, and the daughter’s use of “señor padre” to address him solidify the unequal power distribution between the two characters. Nevertheless, reference to their shared “señor amo” confirms the disparity and dependency on which their lives as rural farmers are based.

Among the first physical descriptions offered of the two are those relating to their hair, as in “Los rizos,” and to fire, both from the fireplace and the father’s cigarette. Although Ildara’s hair is styled “a la moda ‘de las señoritas,’” Clodio’s beard remains “descuidada” (3: 195). Later, the narrator describes his eyebrows as “hirsutas,” emphasizing his barbaric, hyper-masculine appearance (3: 196). While Ildara prepares their meal, Clodio occupies himself with a cigarette, picking at it with an overgrown fingernail and then smoking it with a sucking motion. His fingernail is “córnea, color de ámbar oscuro, porque la había tostado el fuego de las apuradas colillas” (3: 195). His rugged appearance and disregard for polite behavior provide a stark contrast not only to the initial presentation of his

dainty, feminine daughter but to the image of a gentleman as well. Indeed, reference to fire and amber align Clodio with primitive man, motivated by primal desires.

The initial description of Ildara's touching her hair is noteworthy as the verb "atusarse," in addition to "to smooth down" or "to comb," can also mean "to overdress" ("Atusarse"). The lady-like hairstyle clashes with that of the image of the young girl "cargada con el haz de leña" for two reasons (3: 195). First, the tasks in which she engages do not require fashionable hairstyling. In fact, it not only hampers her chores, but most surely disrupts them, as evidenced by the reference to Ildara's smoothing down her hair. Secondly, the only witness of Ildara's fashion statement, more appropriate in a public context, is her father who, instead of enjoying her new, stylized image, produces a violent response to it. Indeed, Ildara's act of tidying her appearance contrasts with her father's disregard for personal grooming and lack of hygiene.

As the reader of "Las medias rojas" is astonished by Ildara's desire to style herself fashionably for domestic work, the father is astonished to see "una pierna robusta, aprisionada en una media roja, de algodón..." peeking from underneath his daughter's skirt. He describes the stockings as a "novidá," betraying his suspicion of modernity (3: 195). While far from being a novelty in twentieth-century Spain, stockings are charged with symbolism. Silk stockings, in particular, served "as a metonym of class privilege." Garber describes how stockings, particularly silk, and, after its invention in the 1930s, nylon, served as "favorite kinds of 'payment' to women, by men" (Garber 24). Ildara's stockings, neither silk nor nylon but fashioned from ubiquitous cotton, represent her "payment" by the *gancho* in the rural Galician economy. Rather than their material, however, it is the stockings' color, emblematic of prostitution that draws her father's attention to Ildara's legs.

While the narrator describes the leg as being imprisoned in the stocking, it is Ildara as well as Clodio himself who are imprisoned in the father's house without access to opportunities for betterment through education or employment. In order to buy the stockings, Ildara explains to her father, "vendí al abade unos huevos," representing both male—on a colloquial level—and female physical anatomy and, as a result, existing as an ambiguous symbol. On the one hand, the transaction implies that Ildara, having sold the *abade* her eggs, symbolic of her ovum, is no longer sexually available for other men, including her father. Claiming the *abade* as the buyer, however, she aligns herself with the holiness, purity and anti-materialism of the cloistered life. At the same time, the use of "huevos" conjures images of masculine strength and virility. In effect, Ildara emasculates her father when she sells the eggs, which presumably belong to him as the male proprietor or renter of the *parcela-pañuelo*. The father's response to this event is similar to that of a betrayed lover. When he exclaims, "¡Engañosa! ¡engañosa! ¡Cluecas andan las gallinas que no ponen!" he characterizes her as a brooding hen and takes the egg-related metaphors one step further (3: 196).

Although the omniscient narrator omits numerous details in the short story, he reveals the truth behind the red stockings to the reader, explaining how the *gancho*, not the *abade*, gave Ildara money for the trip and "hasta le había dado cinco de señal" (3: 196). Far from supporting the Church, Ildara has created a clandestine relationship with a corrupt immigration agent. As Paredes Núñez explains, "ganchos" were "agentes de emigración, oficiales y privados, que sometían al emigrante a toda clase de abusos y engaños," like the present-day *coyotes* of the US-Mexican border (3: 196 n.2). Rather than receiving payment from Ildara, the *gancho* has "hooked" her into the endless cycle of performing illegal work,

presumably as a prostitute, by providing her with a cash advance. With the five pesos, Ildara was not only able to buy herself the infamous leg-wear, but also sealed her fate as a sex worker in a faraway land. The contract implicitly represents the offering of Ildara's sexual availability and fecundity, jealously guarded by Clodio, to the *gancho*. In order to emigrate, she must necessarily assume the dress indicative of her new role as prostitute, available to all men but belonging to one *gancho* in particular.

Although Ildara hands over her body in hopes of attaining a brighter future, Clodio violently repossesses it. The narrator describes how Ildara “tanto más se defendía su belleza, hoy que se acercaba el momento de fundar en ella un sueño de porvenir.” The young girl's body ultimately becomes the recipient of her father's disfiguring blows, which leave her blind in one eye and her beauty, once commodified, now destroyed. He appropriates her egg-shaped anatomical part—her eye—for himself, ensuring that his daughter will never abandon him again for *América* or for another man. Clodio would rather see his daughter dead than leave him. Her abandonment would signify that he is not only “solo,” but “viudo,” again implying that their relationship is like that that exists between a husband and wife. The father recalls the life he shared with his wife when he asks Ildara, “¿Llevó medias alguna vez tu madre?” drawing attention to the poverty in which they live and his resistance to change (3: 196). At the same time, however, he aligns Ildara with his wife, further suggesting a possibly incestuous relationship between father and daughter. Indeed, by first noticing her red stockings, Clodio betrays the fact that he looks at her daughter as she leans towards the fire.

Ildara's disfigurement represents, paradoxically, both her salvation and her demise. While her physical impairment prevents her from escaping the cycle of extreme poverty that



has encircled the family for at least two generations, it also saves her from almost certain mistreatment abroad. Although she mourns the loss of her passage in the “entrañas del barco” to a land where gold reportedly runs in the streets, she would presumably be indebted to *el gancho* for an indeterminable length of time (3: 196). As a victim of Clodio’s abuse, Ildara is protected from all other men, unable to emigrate or, presumably, marry, but, at the same time, endangered by her violent, controlling father. She enjoys safety neither at home nor overseas, demonstrating the lack of possibilities for women like her, with or without *una dentura completa*.

“Las medias rojas,” which illustrates the plight of rural Galicians, especially women, marginalized by the advancements of Industrialization and its corresponding population growth, represents one of Pardo Bazán’s shortest short stories. Considered a clear example of a naturalist text, the tragic short story, published in 1914, also belies a quintessential trait of modernist fiction: enigma. The reader participates in the tale, not only as a sympathetic listener, as in “Los rizos,” but as a detective, piecing together the sparse information presented between the descriptions and dialogue reflective of the Galician dialect. The reader knows that Ildara initially tells her father that she sold the eggs to the *abade*. However, he does not provide an explanation for her lie. Rather, the reader can assume that the daughter knows her father will not approve and thus fears his reprisals. This does not explain, however, why Ildara dons the stockings for her father to see. Does she wish to taunt him, believing that she will be able to escape his rage? Or is she ignorant of the consequences that her self-fashioning represents?

Contrasting the modernist style of the short story with the naturalistic plot of its characters, the author illustrates the continued marginality of rural Galician farmers. Unable

to escape the determinism that binds them to their *parcelas-pañuelos* and the abusive relationships that reside on them, they prove ill-equipped to join the modernization occurring beyond their reach. By raising questions and providing few answers, Pardo Bazán demonstrates the complexities inherent in the “simple life” of the rural poor and illustrates the difficulty in solving the poverty from which Ildara fails to escape.

## V. The Price of a Handkerchief

The *parcelas-pañuelos* referenced by Carr in his description of Galician emigration commonly refer to the diminutive plots yielded by the division of scarce land throughout the overpopulated region. The *pañuelo* in the short story of the same name serves as a metaphor for the scarcity of resources in Galicia—not only natural resources, but other consumer goods—and marginalized people’s lack of accessibility to them. The handkerchief, both timeless and universal, symbolizes utility as well as luxury. By focusing on a piece of cloth that typically covers the part of the body that produces ideas, in the form of a headscarf, Pardo Bazán criticizes the lack of thought offered by blindly following certain fashions. Indeed, nature and fashion work against the protagonist in “El pañuelo,” rendering her unable to survive their demands and allowing her to succumb to her destiny. Cipriana exists as an enigmatic character, however, portrayed as both Christ-like and narcissistic, a brave martyr and vain victim.

The handkerchief, representative of provincial fashion, unites Cipriana with other individuals and groups worldwide and throughout the ages. Its history is embedded with practicality, fashionability, work, political and religious meaning, romance and even murder. Both high and low culture is readily associated with the rectangular or square-pieced fabric

whose roots can be found in Asia and Europe. Blowing one's nose, wiping sweat from one's brow and guarding one's face from the sun figure among its most utilitarian uses. The symbolic meanings are similarly wide reaching. Such disparate groups as fascists and Boy Scouts have adopted the handkerchief as symbols of their associations. Habits and the *hajib* communicate membership in the Catholic religious orders and adherence to the tenets of Islam, respectively, while a cloaked nose and mouth are emblematic of bank robbers and other criminals. Handkerchiefs, too, are important elements of folkloric dances in Spain, Argentina, and beyond.

Throughout time, the handkerchief has traveled not only around the globe, but on the wearer's body as well. Specifically, during different fashion trends, it has moved from the hand to sleeve to breast pocket and from the inside to the outside of the pocketbook. The handkerchief and its derivations have also moved across socioeconomic lines. According to Peri, the neckerchief, common among working class men in Europe and beyond, "can also be seen as the forerunner of the modern tie" (25). In certain epochs, handkerchiefs accompanied a person through his or her life span, appearing initially at the time of birth as nursing handkerchiefs, then comprising a part of the wedding trousseau and, finally, serving as death scarves. During the nineteenth century, the handkerchief became solidified as an essential element of the bourgeois woman's toilette throughout Europe. The silk handkerchief gained prominence as a wedding gift from the groom to the bride in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the number and material of the gift proving to be of vital importance in the wedding custom. According to Peri, "a half a dozen silk handkerchiefs embroidered in floral patterns, or a printed silk handkerchief case made the ideal gift on betrothment" (41). In effect, the silk handkerchief represents the antithesis of silk stockings, embodying longer-

lasting agreements between men and women. Historically, a woman could also use a handkerchief to attract the attention of a young man or as a gift to express her interest in being courted by him. In Spain the handkerchief “served to wrap coins symbolising the dowry” and “the silk handkerchief was absolutely essential with the frock coat” (Peri 35, 32). Handkerchiefs also became associated with parting or even death, however, as they were waved to those leaving for war or to emigrants departing for foreign lands.

The development of the headdress in Spain is also noteworthy. The black mantilla, the “far-famed national headdress” of Spain “was a diminutive version of the old ‘manto’, or mantle, worn indoors as well as out of doors by women of all classes, and varying in length according to whether carried by a virgin, a matron, or a widow” (Reade 9). The widow’s mantle was the longest, reaching the ground. Unmarried women’s *mantos* were “supposed to be held on the inside in such a way as to leave no more than a loophole for her to see the world” (Reade 9). However, Reade also notes that such practices were less prevalent in Northern than in Southern Spain.

Although the size, shape and use of handkerchiefs has varied from ancient to modern times, handkerchiefs, like fans, have been used throughout the ages as a means to communicate nonverbally. In literature and painting, too, from Shakespeare to Honoré de Balzac and Goya to Picasso, handkerchiefs, in their multitude of significations, figure prominently. In “El pañuelo” Pardo Bazán renders homage to Shakespeare’s *Othello*, whose action centers on the symbolism, duplication and misplacement of a handkerchief. Nevertheless, the motivations of the two main female characters mark an important distinction between the two works. While Desdemona receives her handkerchief as a gift from her husband, Cipriana works to secure the financial means to purchase a headscarf

herself. Pardo Bazán re-fashions Shakespeare's legendary character to conform to a more realistic, and less romantic, depiction of women.

Unlike the silk handkerchief that figures so prominently in *Othello*, the *pañuelo de cabeza* in "El pañuelo" classifies it as part of a rural working-woman's wardrobe. However, it is with a silk headscarf that Cipriana<sup>11</sup> aspires to adorn herself, demonstrating the hierarchy of fashion not only among socioeconomic classes but within them as well. In addition to describing its material, the narrator informs the reader that Cipriana desires a *pañuelo* "de colorines" (3: 225). As Peri indicates, "for the less well off, colours were not always a matter of taste; availability frequently played a more important part in effective choice" (Peri 53). Although the availability of a colored silk head-covering does not present a problem, Cipriana's ability to acquire it does.

The association of Cipriana's name with the goddess Venus as well as the island of Cyprus carries various meanings. In Shakespeare's work, Cyprus represents the setting for Desdemona's supposed sexual liaison and where Emilia stitched a copy of her handkerchief. Cipriana's alignment with Venus bestows upon her power and beauty and foreshadows her death in the water. Parallels between the protagonist and the goddess of love connote not only amorous, but sexual images as well. While Venus is depicted by Raphael as a nude standing in the water, Cipriana is defined by her dress, but ultimately returns to a naked, womb-like state in her death by drowning.

The struggle to obtain the handkerchief in "El pañuelo" represents the love between father and daughter as well as the cause of their tragic deaths. After the initial description of

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<sup>11</sup> Cipriana is also the name used for the store owner-cum-murder victim, "señá" Cipriana in "El mascarón," published in *La Esfera* in 1915. She dies during *Carnaval* at the hands of a masked client who asks her to fit him with gloves.

the shipwreck, the narrator informs the reader that Cipriana's father had promised her a handkerchief for "el primer lance bueno." He then exclaims, "¡Y quién sabe si el ansia de regalar a la hija aquel pedazo de seda charro y vistoso había impulsado al marinero a echarse a la mar en ocasión de peligro!" The tactility of the luxurious silk is superseded by its appearance, both "charro," in the eyes of the narrator, and "vistoso," among the inhabitants of the port of Areal. When she becomes an orphan, Cipriana begins working in others' homes in order to earn enough money to feed herself, leaving behind her previous chores of "lavar y retorcer la ropa" and "coser los desgarrones de la camisa del pescador", representative of "women's work." Nevertheless, in her free time, she collects crabs, mussels and other seafood by the shore and "en un andrajo envolvía su tesoro" (3: 225). The utilitarian rag in which she wraps the shellfish contrasts with the silky, fashionable headscarf she—and her father before her—strive to obtain.

In Shakespeare's work, the handkerchief itself, passed down in Othello's family, contains a narrative of love and fidelity and produces envy, betrayal and death. It signifies the priceless bond between Desdemona and her husband, its material serving as the currency not only of love, but also honor and fidelity. Iago and Othello discuss the integral relationship that binds honor to the handkerchief:

*Iago.* So they do nothing, 't is a venial slip;  
 But if I give my wife a handkerchief, --  
*Oth.* What then?  
*Iago.* Why, then, 't is hers, my lord; and, being  
       hers,  
 She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.  
*Oth.* She is protectress of her honour too:  
 May she give that?  
*Iago.* Her honor is an essence that's not seen;  
 They have it very oft that have it not:  
 But, for the handkerchief, -- (82)

Cipriana, too, tragically and mistakenly believes her honor is intertwined with the handkerchief.

In typical naturalist fashion, Cipriana proves unable to escape the destiny bestowed on her family. However, Pardo Bazán raises suspicion in the reader's mind about the protagonist's own role in her demise. Having already lost her mother, her father perishes in an accident at sea, described as "aquella vulgar desgracia" in which "cinco infelices" drowned (3: 224). While the shoddy construction of their boat is partly to blame for its capsizing, the narrator describes "la racha" that "dejó sin padres a más de una docena de chiquillos" (3: 225). The use of "racha," meaning both "gust of wind" and "run of luck," implies that culpability for the shipwreck lies in nature or fate, not as the result of men's actions ("Racha"). Regardless, drowning is a fate that awaits many of *la gente del mar*, whether by their own doing or through acts of God.

According to the narrator of "El pañuelo," the handkerchief, symbolic of the rural working-class Spanish woman, "es la gala de las mocitas en la aldea, su lujo, su victoria" (3: 22). Similar language related to war or struggle is commonplace in Pardo Bazán's other, later short stories. Victory for characters in other tales, however, is represented by an economically- and socially-beneficial marriage, secured with fashioning oneself in the latest styles. In Cipriana's village, however, a headscarf represents the spoils of a struggle against nature and the fatigue associated with labor. She envies the other girls for the pieces of silky cloth with which they adorn their heads. The *pañuelo*, for which the protagonist sacrifices her life, becomes the narrative of her brief existence, emblematic of her inability to break the cycle of poverty that drowns her. She is ultimately betrayed not by fashion, but by her own courage and vanity.

The narrative style of “El pañuelo” assists the reader in identifying Cipriana’s faults as well as catching a glimpse of the insular life of the rural working class. Although her reality is characterized by solitude, “El pañuelo,” like other stories included in this chapter, is communicated in the third person by a narrator who establishes a close, informal relationship with the reader, converting him or her into a virtual conversational partner. Dispelling any romantic notions of Cipriana’s reality, he asks “¿Qué se habían ustedes figurado? ¿Qué no tenía Cipriana sus miasmas de coquetería? Sí señor” (3: 225). She, like other girls, desires to attract boys her age and in order to do so, must fashion herself accordingly to flirt as well as to bond homosocially.

In the clear waters, Cipriana “se había visto cubierta la cabeza con un trapo sucio” (3: 225). Like Narcissus, she places undue emphasis on her reflection. However, unlike the mythical character, Cipriana rejects what she sees. She reflects instead on the beauty of the “piñas de percebes” that represent the “dos reales” and therefore “el pañuelo de colorines,” ignoring the danger posed by the rising tide. As the young protagonist of “Los rizos” favored her hair above her health, Cipriana places more importance on the handkerchief than on her well-being. Nature provides her a clue with “el frío glacial del agua,” but she ignores the warning, believing she is able to outwit nature in favor of fashion (3: 226).

To contribute to the enigmatic nature of “El pañuelo,” Cipriana’s tale shares certain characteristics with Christ’s crucifixion. The short story takes place prior to Easter, during which time the demand for seafood in Marineda sharply increases. Cipriana essentially walks on water when traversing the reef to collect the ocean’s harvest. The townspeople ask Cipriana to perform the miraculous feat for “dos reales,” enough money to buy the headscarf. Harvesting the barnacles’ fruits, “se ensangrentaba Cipriana las manitas” (3: 226).



Nevertheless, Cipriana's sacrifice does not exist as a model for others to follow. Pardo Bazán fashions her death to show others the dangers of vanity and *coquetería*. Cipriana possesses a strength of character few girls her age exhibit. When she bows to the dictates of fashion, however, she also plunges to her death.

## VI. The Catwalk as Plank in "La pasarela"

In addition to commonalities among dress and modernist traits, "El pañuelo" and "La pasarela" both feature female protagonists who meet their end by drowning. As in other short stories authored by Pardo Bazán, in "La pasarela," the relationship between language and fashion is highlighted. However, oppositions also abound: men versus women, thin versus heavy, and old versus young. The ultimate divide, nonetheless, exists between men of valor and cowardice. The "macho" male characters who derive pleasure from observing women descending a gangplank prove unable to summon the courage to dive into the dark waters to rescue the object of their visual affections. Through the typically modernist use of a heightened awareness of senses, Pardo Bazán creates a short story with a gasp-producing final and a corresponding lucidity for the main characters as well as her readers.

The *vapor*, which the men along the shore anxiously await, represents modernity in its ability to transport people rapidly by sea. This technical advancement also symbolizes the blending of cultures that Pardo Bazán and other modernists laud in their writings. While the harbor embodies cross-cultural exchange, the *italoaustriaca* operetta, to which the ship's passengers belong, further confirms contact between various cultures. Incorporation of foreign words, such as *super* and *pierrot* in the story's text, and allusions to the five senses provide further evidence of its modernist style. La Gnoqui's name embodies both

characteristics as it communicates her origin, but, as the name of an Italian pasta, also represents the sense of taste.

The use of onomatopoeic words provides an additional illustration of the male characters' heightened senses. When Gnoqui falls into the water, she does so with a "plaf" (3: 189). The sound, while on the one hand lending credibility to the tale, on the other, draws attention to the ungraceful—and typically unfeminine—way in which the star dies, an image contrasted with that of the other stars' pleasing scents and appearances as well as the sounds of their petticoats. Indeed, the narrator initially explains how the men are seduced by "las enaguas de seda que 'frufrutan'" (3: 188). They are also attracted by "los olores de esencias caras" (3: 188). While literally communicating through the sound it produces, the petticoat figuratively communicates status and femininity. The sense of smell is another way that the stars draw the men to them, indicating the proximity with which the male observers have placed themselves in relation to the women they desire.

The atmosphere is charged with the desire to not only smell and hear the women in person, but to see them as well. According to the narrator, the men along the shore normally contemplate the printed image of the stars. The women's arrival, therefore, is filled with expectation and wonder. The fact that no women are waiting for them in port illustrates that their "performance" is specifically targeted to a male audience. The Cyclops-like eye of one man suggests that the women are objectified and provide visual pleasure for the men (3: 188-189). Synesthesia serves to further illustrate the importance as well as confusion of the heightened senses. When the narrator states that the star "les llenaba el ojo" he blends the sense of taste with that of sight, expressing the fact that visual consumption satisfies the men's appetites, but also overwhelms them (3: 189).

Whereas the *vapor*, transnational operetta and synesthesia denote the blending of disparate parts, other images serve to express divisions among the characters according to age, weight and purity. “Señoritos” and “pipiolos” contrasts with older “solterones,” the male version of the negatively charged “solteras.” Arising around the fashionability of youth, a youthful virginal body—or lack thereof—provides a division among the female characters. In addition to Gnoqui’s association with the Italian dish, another star is described as “ajamonada,” denoting her large stature (3: 188). Integrating the sense of taste into his tale, the narrator also demonstrates the dehumanization the female characters face in the eyes of the spectators. They are valued for their “meat” rather than other, more meaningful qualities. Unlike the oversexed spectators, however, Gnoqui embodies innocence and is described as a “mancha blanca,” ironically both pure and sullied (3: 189). As in “En tranvía,” Pardo Bazán refers to a stain to provide contrast between Gnoqui and the dark waters that engulf her. She sullies the water’s darkness with her presence but her whiteness is indicative of her innocence as well as the rapid disappearance of color from her face in death by drowning.

The description the narrator provides of Gnoqui points to her embodiment of both masculine and feminine fashions as well as her internationality. Her depiction as a boy-like figure represents the perspective of the all-male observers. Like medieval and Renaissance performers and playwrights who responded to sumptuary laws with an increased prevalence of transvestism “to mark and over determine this crisis of social and economic change,” Pardo Bazán’s cross-dressing protagonists embody the changing roles of men and women in Spanish society (Garber 17). While many people viewed the New Woman and her outfits of split skirts with trepidation, Gnoqui’s apparel reflects her embrace of relaxing social mores

surrounding the theretofore-strict differentiation of men's and women's dress. Her male spectators, however, view her with pleasure, fear and confusion. Gnoqui, like Ildara, pays for the consequences of dressing herself without concern for gender or class boundaries.

The narrator's interpretation of the short story's events, however, lends it a carnivalesque air. He characterizes the star's clothes as worn and both boyish and manly. The actress runs "sobre los altísimos tacones de sus zapatos americanos, que le hacían pie de niño" (3: 189). Her *gorra*, while Scottish, causes her to appear "graciosa como un muchacho," transgressing both behavioral and sartorial limits (3: 189). Nevertheless, the male spectators perceive her appearance as comical and causing confusion. Gnoqui's dressing in fashionable "masculine" attire is perceived to be funny, like men's dressing as women during Carnival. The men's laughter, however, betrays their unease when confronting a woman who transgresses sartorial gender boundaries. The environment in the harbor, too, acquires a carnivalesque ambience. The "mímica" of the clowns after Gnoqui's fall "aumentaban la confusión" (3: 190). Her *bucles*, similar to those of a medieval page, further define her as boyish, but also serve to cast her as anachronistic. The fact that her curls are blonde and appear to float once she hits the water's surface also lends her a romantic air. Although Gnoqui is identifiably a woman, and therefore not a cross-dresser, she appropriates men's as well as women's garments, seemingly destroying the boundaries that serve as obstacles to her advancement in society.

She tops the outfit with a very feminine accessory, though, that associates her with the spectacle of cabarets or the operetta. The narrator describes her as "sumida" in an enormous "boa de piel rizada" (3: 189). Her submersion in the boa serves not only to announce her death in the choppy waters below, but also illustrates her lack of freedom. Her

life as an operetta star defines her as much as it confines her. From the boat, her “nariz picaresca” peeks out (3: 189). The *pícaro* to which she is compared emphasizes Spain’s literary tradition of the picaresque novel and shows again her masculinity. The *pícaro*’s nose, in particular, signals his nosey, observant and sneaky personality. Ironically, however, the spectators, rather than the protagonist, embody the negative qualities of the picaresque.

Just as Gnoqui’s appearance embodies opposition, the operetta’s arrival incites the awaiting men to argue about the merits of thin or heavy women. Indeed, the women disembarking appear to be on trial. In a freestanding paragraph referring to the arguments about which types “valen más,” the narrator explains how “si recogiesen las disertaciones sobre este punto controvertible, llenarían varios abultados tomos.” Referring to the genre of the dissertation satirically emphasizes the absurdity of the long-standing argument, but points, too, to the profundity of each side’s opinion. At the same time, however, this quote illustrates how the oral is codified and thereby granted value, just as Pardo Bazán grants value to the oral tradition of storytelling in her modernist writings. The narrator similarly points to how visual cues of fashion acquire value in society and express meaning. Gnoqui’s audience, however, proves unable to interpret the meaning her fashion expresses. The narrator mentions how “se repetían por millonésima vez los chistes, las pullas, los comentarios” (3: 188). Although the outside world, embodied by Gnoqui’s appropriation of masculine attire, progresses, the men’s discussions fail to evolve, much less arrive at a conclusion.

Even the *pasarela* itself becomes wrapped up in Bakhtinian confusion. First a gangway, then a veritable catwalk, it ultimately serves as a plank, reminiscent of those depicted in pirates’ adventures. Gnoqui’s marginality is emphasized from the beginning,

when the short story begins with the words “en el muelle,” which mark the tenuous border between land and sea. Nevertheless, the “estrecha tabla” connecting the ship to the shore becomes a “«pasarela»” both “angosta” and “resbaladiza” when the women from the company traverse it (3: 189). The metaphor of the gangplank as catwalk explains the inherent dangers in parading for the pleasure of an audience. Moreover, the image of la Ñoquita on the catwalk illustrates the role actresses and singers play as models of fashionable attire, communicating and distilling the latest trends to their audiences.

The marginal space Gnoqui occupies manifests itself not only in her physical location, but, more importantly, in her clothing. Pardo Bazán’s dressing Gnoqui in typically masculine attire demonstrates a literary trope shared by other modernist women writers such as Woolf in *Orlando*. Unlike their male contemporaries whose characterization of cross-dressers betrays their fear and unease surrounding the sartorial “confusion,” female writers fashion female protagonists in men’s clothing to express a desire for power. Gnoqui, with her male and female garments, indicates a yearning to erase strict binary gender identifiers in order to be viewed – and valued – as an individual.

Gnoqui is ultimately unable to save herself or be saved due to the lack of space between the ship and the pier. Just as Ildara’s legs are imprisoned in the red stockings, Ñoquita dies “presa en la carcel de paño de su abrigo” (3: 190). Her fall from grace in society, marked by an occupation traditionally associated with prostitution, precipitates her physical fall into the sea. After raising her body from the water, “entre blasfemias” the narrator describes that “nunca había realizado más pesetera faena... Todo para traer arriba ¿qué?...” (3: 190). Although the narrator tries to express the disregard of the male characters

for Gnoqui's life, Pardo Bazán plainly illustrates that it is the *señoritos* who lack true character.

## VII. Conclusions

The ocean plays a fundamental role in “El pañuelo,” “La pasarela” and “Las medias rojas.” Literal drowning, in particular, is a fate that awaits the protagonists of the two former short stories, just as it did in the myth of Narcissus. However, Cipriana, Gnoqui and Ildara are all figuratively smothered by the weight that bears down upon them in an oppressive society. The sea (and, in the case of Ildara, what the sea represents) captures the three protagonists in its violent grasp just as society claims them victims in socioeconomic ways. Whether or not they are described in relationship to water images, the characters' bodies figure prominently in all of these short stories. Sometimes worshipped, other times disregarded, the female form never exists in parity with the male body. It instead exists solely for the pleasure of men.

Pardo Bazán, nevertheless, exhibits great care in not faulting her main characters—doubly marginalized as poor and female—for their plight. Rather, she shows, as she stated in the 1893 “Advertencia preliminar” of Augusto Bebel's *La Mujer en el Pasado, en el Present y en el Porvenir*, that women, unlike the proletariat to whom Bebel compares them, do not enjoy the ability to escape their situation. According to Pardo Bazán, “es que el proletariado PUEDE salir de su condición de proletario, porque no pesa sobre él ninguna incapacidad legal, y la mujer NO, porque pesan sobre ella muchas.” She continues by stating that “El obrero no es siervo; la mujer sí” (7). Fashion, like men, exudes power. Without proper legal rights, Pardo Bazán demonstrates, women and men who do not uphold typical notions of masculinity will continue to drown in oppression.

## CHAPTER TWO: UN/DRESSING FOR MEN



“Dress of velvet, belly of bran,” a popular eighteenth-century French proverb, captures the tenuous reality of the petit bourgeois characters of Pardo Bazán’s later short stories whose threatened economic standing necessitates the surrendering of bodily nourishment for corporeal adornment (Jones 146). Despite the un/dressing protagonists’ efforts to fit themselves into traditional bourgeois gender roles symbolized by restrictive, impractical or unsuitable clothing, they consistently fail to secure the mate they desire and on whom their families’ prosperity depends. Although the short stories focus scant attention on dialogue, the narrators’ own “undressed,” direct discourse serves to chastise imitators, lending a didactic ending to the stories’ plots. The author, in turn, dresses her female protagonists’ thoughts in free indirect speech, further illustrating the women’s subjugation in a male-dominated society. Through her emphasis on sartorial and linguistic dress and undressing as well as visual elements, particularly mirrors and flowers, Pardo Bazán criticizes the commodification of young women. She also upbraids the female protagonists themselves for falsifying their appearances in order to uphold patriarchal traditions that limit their opportunities to marriage and motherhood, just as a tightly-laced corset or high heels restrict their physical movement. By doing so, she urges readers to support women who think, act and dress for—and as—themselves.

### I. Dress, Undress and Dressing

To more fully understand Pardo Bazán’s use of linguistic and sartorial dressing in her later short stories, it is helpful to examine the theories of Barthes and Flügel as they relate to dress, dressing and display. According to Barthes, dress, which must be described as institution, comprises easily-isolated social components according to age group, gender, class

and geographic location. Consequently, dress possesses a strong form of meaning that notifies society of the relation between an individual and her group, serving as a social model. Barthes also points out the existence of a constant movement between dress and dressing, the latter serving as a weak form of meaning. As the personal mode, dressing expresses an empirical fact, such as scruffiness or dirtiness and, therefore, possesses no sociological value.

Flügel points to the inexorable relationship among clothing, nakedness and display, stating that “We are trying to satisfy two contradictory tendencies by means of our clothes, and we therefore tend to regard clothes from two incompatible points of view—on the one hand, as a means of displaying our attractions, on the other hand, as a means of hiding our shame” (20). To illustrate his findings, Flügel employs the example of children, who, by initially rejecting clothing, must be socialized to cover themselves. As a result of this forced dressing, Flügel attests, men and women displace their exhibitionist instinct onto their clothing. A fashionable outfit, whose practical functionality as well as longevity are minimal, serves instead as a display of wealth. As a result, the lack of adequate dress, such as clothing that is out of fashion, a less expensive imitation of fashionable clothing and worn clothing, or, alternatively, the complete absence of clothing, draw attention to an individual’s vulnerabilities, whether social or economical, and confirm his or her status as Other.

Although integral to an individual’s dress or dressing, regardless of socioeconomic class, image played a particularly vital role in validating and solidifying the Spanish middle class’s social standing in the anonymity of the modern city at the dawn of the twentieth century. Unlike the inherited titles of nobility, their lifestyle could, according to Michael

Miller, be bought with material goods. The term relegated to the middle class, “bourgeois” signified not “sharing a certain lifestyle but rather buying certain goods in order to live that way of life.” Consequently, “identity was to be found in the things one possessed. Consumption itself became a substitute for being bourgeois” (185). Upholding one’s middle-class status or, alternatively, fashioning oneself as such, relied upon not only the purchase, but also the visual display of consumable goods.

Together with the appearance of the department store display, magazine illustrations disseminated a visual feminine ideal to the middle class. In a number of the publications in which Pardo Bazán’s stories were published, Charnon-Deutsch points out that:

...the focus of graphic interest was largely on women’s ideal rather than on their real living and working conditions. The ideal woman was portrayed as a willing, contented participant in an illusory domestic scene that promised her, in exchange for her sacrifices, tranquility, physical protection, economic stability, and lasting values that contrasted with the ruthlessness, uncertainty and turbulence of an uncertain world. (*Fictions* 270)

Like medieval manuals of conduct, magazines indoctrinated women to act—and dress—according to society’s demanding standards.

Indeed, feminine magazines filled a void left by the sumptuary laws that had exerted sartorial control throughout Renaissance Europe. As Marjorie Garber states:

The term ‘sumptuary’ is related to ‘consumption’; the laws were designed in part to regulate commerce and to support local industries, as well as to prevent—or at least to hold to a minimum—what today would be known as ‘conspicuous consumption,’ the flaunting of wealth by those whose class or other social designation made such display seem transgressive. (21)

Sumptuary laws prohibited wanton materialism as they codified class boundaries. Like the bourgeois ideal propagated in periodicals, sumptuary laws relied upon the power of image as well as text. Garber add that “the ideal scenario—from the point of view of the regulators—

was one in which a person's social station, social role, gender and other indicators of identity in the world could be *read*, without ambiguity or uncertainty" (26).

Since sumptuary laws have fallen into disuse, the male gaze has assumed the responsibility of normalizing female dress and assists in explaining why women dress and undress for men in the absence of specific regulations dictating their behavior. In "'Sor Aparición' and the Gaze: Pardo Bazán's Gendered Reply to the Romantic Don Juan," Tolliver describes that:

A key concern in the current elaboration of feminist gaze theory is the perpetuation within cinema and literature of a point of view which is imbued with masculinist scopophilia. This term, literally 'pleasure in looking,' denotes a position of dominance which is maintained through the imposition of the gaze. (395)

Expressions such as "se le bebió con los ojos" and others appearing in Pardo Bazán's short fiction illustrate the consumption, pleasure and dominance embodied in the scrutinizing eye of male characters. As a result, "in Sartreian terms," Tolliver continues, "by placing the woman as object of his gaze, by positing her as Other, the man confirms his own subjectivity" (396). Pardo Bazán employs the male gaze to confirm the inequality in the power distribution between men and objectified women, particularly among the bourgeoisie.

In the words of Foucault, the male characters of doña Emilia's *oeuvre* control the panoptic gaze, while the female characters are controlled, corrected and punished. Pointing to the disciplinary, rather than pleasure-seeking aspect of the gaze, Foucault claims, "it is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual" subjected (199). Although it is men who decide women's fate, they are assisted by the female object's internalized self-vigilance. Likewise, women's internalization of the

panoptican seemingly permits them to exert control on other women who occupy a lower socioeconomic status. Foucault further explains how “the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, heirarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes” (195). This hierarchy of discipline manifests itself in Pardo Bazán’s inclusion of French maids, Spanish *marqueses* and characters’ middle-class contemporaries for whom female characters dress and undress themselves in competition for the attention and approval of the male subject.

The subjectivity of male characters in Pardo Bazán’s short fiction is also emphasized by the use of first-person, presumably male, narration. Male narrators, such as those of “Los ramilletes,” necessarily fashion themselves as the subject of the story, while the would-be female protagonist becomes objectified. Nevertheless, using the first-person singular voice to narrate her short stories, Pardo Bazán blurs the division between author and narrator. The fact that female protagonists do not enjoy the use of *yo* reflects their lack of power to decide their own fate or to fashion themselves according to their personal desires. They also lack the voice necessary to communicate to the readers their own version of their stories. As Greenblatt states, “one of the highest achievements of power is to impose fictions upon the world” (141). While Pardo Bazán denies her female characters a voice, and therefore, power, she does so to illustrate the gender inequality experienced by Spanish women at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Free indirect discourse, which blends the mimetic and diegetic, serves to unite the narrator with the fictional character. However, while readers gain access into the minds of the women, we do so as outsiders looking in, just like the male gazers described above.

Henry Louis Gates, Junior's interpretation of this distinctly modern style in African American literature proves useful in examining its impact in female-authored texts. Gates maintains that free indirect discourse represents the double-voiced nature of a minority literature struggling to articulate itself within a hostile dominant culture. Free indirect discourse, according to Gates, "is a dramatic way of expressing a divided self" to the reader (207). He continues by stating that:

...[it] is not the voice of both a character and a narrator; rather, it is a bivocal utterance, containing elements of both direct and indirect speech. It is an utterance that no one could have spoken, yet which we recognize because of its characteristic 'speakerliness,' its paradoxically written manifestation of the aspiration to the oral. (208)

Although the vast majority of Pardo Bazán's characters do not enjoy the ability to write their own stories, free indirect discourse offers them limited access to the power of the word, alternating it with the authority of the narrator's voice. Like society itself, free indirect discourse both allows access to and seemingly controls female characters' thoughts, speech and actions.

While male subjectivity is confirmed by the written word, flowers and mirrors reflect female objectivity in the short stories' texts. The narcissus, traditionally symbolizing women's vain "nature," and other flowers serve to unite the author's female characters with the natural world. Like the illustrations that appeared in the magazines in which Pardo Bazán's stories were published, flowers play an important role in symbolizing women's relationship to nature. Charnon-Deutsch points out that "the flower was the single most common token associated with the feminine" in nineteenth-century Spanish periodicals (*Fictions* 24). Furthermore:

...flowers often stand for women's physical attributes or their virtues and vices: the bud or flower growing in situ often connotes purity (the beauty of nature unsullied by human hands—at least until it is picked), and the fully open flower in a woman's hair or pinned to her chest signifies passion, maturity, and sexual allure. Sometimes the artist tested his skill to bring all these characteristics together in a single-flower woman. (Charnon-Deutsch *Fictions* 28)

In bourgeois culture, women, similar to flowers, are to be admired for their beauty, not utility, and serve as adornments for male companions. Indeed, many of Pardo Bazán's female characters, like flowers, passively wait to be “picked” by eligible husbands.

Mirrors, the traditional symbol of vanity that also appear in Pardo Bazán's short fiction and magazine illustrations, allow female characters to contemplate their outward appearance, while at the same time offering equally crucial insights into society's values towards women and men. As Bretz describes, the modernist vision of self is multi-faceted, represented by both masks and mirrors. While “the mask symbolizes the recognition of the multiple selves, the mirror represents the self as other” (Bretz 452). Irigaray, for her part, attests, “women are a mirror of value of and for man” (177). As a commodified being and serving as an adornment, a woman reflects her father's and husband's worth. Although Pardo Bazán's short stories demonstrate how a man also reflects a woman's value, he does so in a different manner. As Flügel attests, unlike woman, “man abandoned his claim to be considered beautiful” (111). As a result, he is valued more for his character than his appearance. In Pardo Bazán's *oeuvre*, male character's thoughts and statements about such things as *la vanidad femenina* illustrate how society not only encourages but at the same time criticizes the narcissism that it instills in women.

Together with free indirect discourse, mirrors also serve to further illustrate the alienation of the female protagonists by men. Nevertheless, the representation of mirrors in illustrated magazines provides evidence of the multiple realities among women. Charnon-Deutsch outlines the commonalities and differences she encountered in examining dozens of depictions of women contemplating their reflections in *Blanco y Negro*, *Ilustración española y americana* and other periodicals by stating that:

...although the women seem seduced by their own images, a look of total composition about them points from them toward their clothes, jewelry, and other objects nearby in the room. This pleasurable self-examination remained the privilege of only certain groups of women: although they seemed equally composed, exotic women and women of the working classes did not share in this pleasure. Only aristocratic or bourgeois women seemed to indulge in it, and their pleasure was thus connected to the symbols of wealth that adorned or accompanied them. The mirror reflects purchasing power; it is an advertisement for both the beautiful figure and the objects that contribute to the beauty and that are lavishly executed in the mirror images. (*Fictions* 159)

Although illustrators may have omitted representatives of the working class from depictions of women at their *toilettes*, Pardo Bazán includes both socioeconomic classes in her short fiction. Characters' responses to their reflections reflect society's standards of beauty, which favor bourgeois women over those of the working class. As illustrated in Pardo Bazán's "La manga," Nati, raised according to middle-class values, glances approvingly at her reflection while the economically disadvantaged Consolación shies away from mirrors.

Due to the highly significant meaning the author bestows on clothing and the role mirrors and the male-controlled panoptic gaze play in her later short stories, being undressed by or in front of men, whether figuratively or literally, proves especially problematic for her



characters<sup>12</sup>. Hollander explains that, “for the Western world the distinction between being dressed and undressed has always been crucial” because “the more significant clothing is, the more meaning attaches to its absence, and the more awareness is generated about any relation between the two states” (*Seeing* 83). A female character’s fall from grace is coupled with her moral failure when her naked form is exposed in public. Hollander describes how “occasions for nakedness often have to do with sex, and so among those for whom sex was associated with shame, a sense of the shameful of nudity could arise” (*Seeing* 84). Female nakedness, anathema to Catholic values concerning feminine propriety, causes the downfall of the prospective *ángel del hogar*, who is unable to marry if she is shown to be sexually available to men.

Nakedness and nudity, however, embody both positive and negative attributes. In *The Corset*, Valerie Steele observes:

In metaphorical and philosophical terms, nakedness has often been regarded favorably. We speak of ‘the naked truth,’ because, like Plato, we believe on some level that nakedness signifies both ideal form and eternal verities, and that the truth can be seen once the veils of illusion and deceit are stripped away. Conversely, the Judeo-Christian tradition asserts that the naked, fleshly body is sinful, while the soul is clothed in glory. (113)

While Steele’s description of nakedness does not differentiate between the sexes, clear distinctions are made in representations of nudity, the artistic interpretation of the naked form. The female nude “has often been associated with nature, sexuality, and abjection, while the male body has been associated with strength and wholeness” (Steele 114). Indeed, Pardo Bazán’s female characters’ nude bodies reflect their lack of strength and wholeness, exposing their vulnerabilities as much as their flesh.

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<sup>12</sup> Pardo Bazán explores the theme of nakedness, punishment and shame in “«Las desnudas»” and “El pajarraco.”

Although none of Pardo Bazan's female characters willfully displays her unclothed body, each experiences shame when her perceived shortcomings or purported sexual laxity become unveiled and scrutinized by the public. The male counterparts of these undressed female characters are characterized by a corresponding fear when confronted with the naked female form as they lack experience in managing a bourgeois woman's sexuality, especially outside of marriage. The same men (and, occasionally, women in positions of relative power) for whom female characters clothe themselves undress them metaphorically with a scrutinizing and controlling eye as the narrator and author undress them with a normalizing voice and pen.

## II. "El disfraz": Liking You Just the Way You Aren't

Although *vestir* primarily signifies covering, adorning or garnishing and, concomitantly, concealing, concealment is central to the definition of *disfrazar* ("Vestir," "Disfrazar"). While the former action possesses the ability to enhance one's appearance, the latter serves to hide. In addition to disguising, hiding, however unsuccessfully, dominates the plot of "El disfraz." Performance, necessitating the "vestido de máscara que sirve para las fiestas y saraos, especialmente en carnaval" that functions as a definition of "disfraz," also figures prominently ("Disfraz"). Despite doña Consolación's concealment of her sentiments as she strives to disguise the poverty that imprisons her, Pardo Bazán's use of irony and undressing—both of Consolación's tattered clothing and her thoughts—allows readers to uncover the protagonist's true character as well as that of her monied employers. Thus, doña Emilia demonstrates, to quote an English adage, clothing does not "make the man" (or woman).

Difference, which is repeatedly emphasized throughout “El disfraz” and embodied in the characters’ dress and dressing, serves to illustrate Consolación’s marginality in society. The narrator repeatedly draws attention to the piano teacher’s feet and footsteps to illustrate the stark differences between Consolación’s reality and that of her employers, *los marqueses*. The story opens with the declaration, “la profesora de piano pisó la antesala.” The assuredness of stepping and the validation of one’s presence that a footprint can provide, however, are diminished by the teacher’s timidity and insecurity. When she sets foot in the *antesala*, she is entering another world, one in which she does not belong. Her “tacones torcidos” represent another incongruity in that they “golpeaban” not a hard surface, but rather “la alfombra espesa,” representative of the luxury and bounty of the marqueses’ home (3: 68). These initial descriptions characterize Consolación as ill clad and capable of striking a soft surface, rather than a dainty, decorative noble whose space she invades. Her twisted heels also substantiate the narrator’s claim that Consolación walks to work, rather than taking public transportation, in order to save money.

The initial, negatively charged descriptions offered by the narrator are confirmed when Consolación passes by her employer’s mirror. She is framed, by the mirror as well as the narrator, as “un semblante ya algo demarcado, y ahora más descompuesto por el terror de perder una plaza que, con el emple[i]llo del marido, era el mayor recurso de la familia” (3: 68). Her emaciated appearance emphasizes the urgency of her tenuous situation as well as the precedence she places in feeding her family rather than herself. The use of male signifiers, such as “semblante,” furthermore, bestows masculine traits onto the hard-working piano teacher. Unlike her upper-class counterparts, who are validated by their outward

appearance, Consolación's reflection serves to express the alienation she feels as a result of her internalization of societal values regarding femininity and her inability to uphold them.

Clothing reflects the starkest contrast between Consolación and the mother of her student. Description of the piano teacher's "semiandrajos, su traje negro, decente y raído" in which she will dress after the evening's performance reflect the narrator's admiration of Consolación (3: 71). Although her black dress is tattered, it is also "decente" as it accurately reflects the dignity of Consolación's character, unlike her borrowed clothing, which conceals the truth. When Consolación undresses in front of the French maid, she forcibly reveals her unfashionable garments, which are characterized as "estigmas de la miseria sufrida heroicamente" (3: 70). Nevertheless, description of the marquesa's dress lacks information about her character, emphasizing instead its luxuriousness. While Consolación is "decente," the marquesa is simply "adornada." The narrator describes the marquesa as "siempre vestida de terciopelo, siempre adornada con fulgurantes joyas" (3: 68-69). Although society stigmatizes improper clothing, Pardo Bazán provides a new interpretation of the worn garments as a reflection of the heroism of hardworking women like Consolación who sacrifice their health and happiness for their families.

The decency of her own clothing clashes with the superficiality of the dress Consolación borrows from the *marquesa* to gain admittance into the elite world of the opera. To attend—and take part in—the performance, Consolación "lucía guantes blancos, largos, que le hacían la mano chica" (3: 70). The whiteness of the gloves and the reduced size of her hand replace previous characterizations of Consolación's laboriousness, a central component of her personality. Indeed, Consolación is referred to as "la profesora de piano" and

compared to “los asalariados humildes” before she is referred to by name (3: 68). The gloves, which mask such key identity markers as fingerprints, effectively remove Consolación’s individuality as they confirm her inability to self-actualize. While economic necessity originally forced her to surrender her dream of being a concert pianist, the need to feed her family forces Consolación again to ignore her own needs in favor of those of her offspring.

The fact that Consolación dresses in white clothing that, although “antiguo para la elegante marquesa” is, “en realidad casi de última moda” serves to further distance the materialistic marquesa with the hardworking, self-sacrificing piano teacher (3: 70). While the rapidity of changes in fashion impede lower class women from attaining, let alone maintaining, a fashionable look, nobles like the *marquesa* rely on ever-changing trends to set themselves apart as fashionable role models in society. Using “antiguo,” the narrator exaggerates the temporality of fashion that was traditionally manifested in royalty’s clothing and imitated by their subjects.

Although the *marqueses*’ wealth is made evident, the short story includes a plethora of words denoting hiding and lack, not only associated with Consolación, but with her monied employers as well. Unable to nourish herself after feeding her family, the purchase of fashionable clothing to attend the opera proves well beyond Consolación’s reach. Similarly, descriptions of her clothes—“la ropa interior desaseada, los bajos destrozados, el corsé roto” and “el pobre dril gris”—draw attention to the garments’ wear and lack of fashionability (3: 70). A broken corset, moreover, poses a physical danger to the teacher. Consolación’s clothing, therefore, serves as an extension of herself, worn out from work and

daily sacrifices. Losing her breath and her footing several times during the story, her compromised health is undeniable. Most notably, Consolación survives “ataques de sofocación al subir tramos de escaleras,” like the ones in the *marqueses’* home (3: 71). She is not only imprisoned in and repressed by a society that does not value women’s labor; she is also denied the hygienic fashion enjoyed by bourgeois women.

Consolación’s lacking is epitomized in *los agujeros*, or the debts the family incurs and which the salary earned from the piano lesson covers. *Los agujeros* also evoke images of tattered clothing and the *aguja* of working-class women whose financial situation necessitates mending their clothing instead of purchasing new garments. Because of her family’s threatened economic situation, Consolación is indebted to the *marqueses* who pay her to instruct their daughter. However, she derives satisfaction from telling her other debtors that she teaches “la hija única y mimada de unos señores tan encumbrados, que iban a Palacio como a su casa propia, y daban comidas y fiestas a las cuales concurría lo mejor de lo mejor: grandes, generales, ministros” (3: 68). This “dressed” pride in association, nevertheless, masks Consolación’s “undressed” deeper feelings of inadequacy that she experiences in the *marqueses’* home.

The story begins with her stepping into the “antesala” feeling more “en falta” than usual because she has arrived late to the lesson. For this reason, “hubiese querido esconderse tras el repostero” and, although impossible, wishes she could “meterse bajo tierra,” completely disappearing from the *marquesa’s* gaze (3: 68). The discomfort intensifies when Consolación discusses the opera with the *marquesa* and her daughter. The omniscient narrator states that “no sabía lo que le pasaba. Ignoraba si era pena, si era gozo, lo que

oprimía su corazón enfermo y mal regulado” (3: 70). Although she initially feels elated by the prospect of attending an opera performance, she almost immediately discovers that disguising her true identity represents the root of her pain.

Ambivalent descriptions of the *marqueses* include allusions to their material wealth but also their moral poverty. Their financial security, symbolized by the pastry chef and other servants, provides a stark contrast to the depravity that characterizes Consolación. The *repostero*, behind whom Consolación wishes to hide, is associated with ostentatious display, not only for the desserts he confection, but because he was the person who “ostentaba los blasones de los marqueses de la Ínsula” (3: 68). “La Ínsula,” which brings to mind the island that Don Quijote promises Sancho, draws attention to the fictionality of the *marqueses*’ “realm.” It also suggests that, even though Consolación arrives late and feels out of place in their home, it is the *marqueses* who lead an anachronistic existence. While Consolación does not possess the financial means to dress herself as fashion dictates, the family for whom she works does not embody modernity either. Like Sancho’s *ínsula*, the home of the *marqueses* is an insulated place worthy of a knight in shining armor, shut off from the modernizing, increasingly equalizing world outside.

The fictionality of the *marqueses*’ world is also emphasized with parallels to *Cinderella*. As in “El zapato,” Pardo Bazán relies on a modern interpretation of the classic fairy tale to criticize the role of clothing in fashioning women’s futures as wives and mothers. Consolación and Cinderella are similar in that they are both magically outfitted to disguise their membership in the working class. However, the superficiality of *Cinderella*’s plot is exposed in “El disfraz” by the fact that there is no prince waiting for Consolación, only a

husband who (over-)values her physical appearance. Moreover, Consolación secures her opera tickets not from a fairy godmother, but from Enriqueta, whom the *marquesa* describes as a “diablillo” and “habituado a mandar” and who derives pleasure from her piano teacher’s painful, masqueraded performance (3: 69). Consolación decides to participate in the “masquerade” of going to the opera, not for herself, but rather for her student and the income she represents for Consolación’s family.

Apart from allusions to *Don Quixote* and *Cinderella*, Pardo Bazán directly references Wagner’s<sup>13</sup> opera, *Lohengrin*, featuring his famous “Wedding March,” as the performance that the teacher and her husband attend as the *marqueses*’ guests. Set in the Middle Ages and starring a knight, *Lohengrin* parallels “El disfraz” in the importance dress and disguise play. Elsa, one of the characters in Wagner’s opera, who stands accused of murdering her brother, dreams of being saved by a knight in shining armor. Lohengrin, Knight of the Holy Grail, arrives in a boat pulled by a swan (the reincarnation of Elsa’s brother) and promises to wed Elsa on condition that she never ask him his name or inquire about his background. Once Elsa’s curiosity overpowers her and the knight’s true identity is inevitably revealed, however, Lohengrin returns to his homeland and Elsa proves unable to escape death caused by grief. Like the heroic Lohengrin, Consolación cannot survive in a world that is alien to her own, however hard she tries to please those around her. Both characters must inevitably reveal their true identities. In Consolación’s short story, however, no proverbial knight in shining armor exists.

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<sup>13</sup> Doña Emilia was introduced to the music of Wagner during a trip to Vienna in the summer of 1873 (Faus 1: 124-25).



The first character to serve as an eyewitness to Consolación's depravity is the French maid. When undressing, Consolación exposes her true situation to the servant as well as to herself. She is mortified by the shortcomings revealed in her undergarments and appears to feel as self-conscious, perhaps more so, than if she were naked. Undressed, Consolación would achieve equality with the judgmental women of the *marquesa's* home. Dressed, even partially dressed in undergarments, Consolación reveals her shortcomings. Ironically, the domestic servant, who normally typifies a socioeconomic position lower than that of a private music instructor, appropriates the power of the gaze in examining and, finally, disapproving of the piano teacher's undergarments.

As her name implies, Consolación represents a person who both consoles and is consoled, particularly after the loss of a loved one. Although she is humiliated by the carnivalesque atmosphere of her preparation for the opera, Consolación consoles herself throughout the story by reminding herself what the *marqueses'* money provides. She tells herself that if she does not accept their invitation, "puedo perder esta lección de ricos, los dieciocho duros al mes, casi tanto como gana Pablo con su empleo." Although she lacks a voice in her own destiny, Consolación's inner dialogue reflects her true emotions when she falsely assures herself, "no me vestirán de carnaval" (3: 70). Her resentment illustrates how, according to Elizabeth Scarlett, "carnivalesque themes often force a confrontation with a danger or harsh truth that lies below the surface of merriment" (32). Although she desires to preserve her dignity at the expense of her employment, Consolación opts for the embarrassing, financially prudent decision and decides to accept the *marquesa's* offer.

Securing monetary parity with her husband does not secure her equality in marriage, however. By the story's end, when Pablo asks her, "¿sabes que me gustas así?" Consolación seeks consoling from her husband (3: 70). Having been enlightened by her epiphany, she breaks out in tears and throws herself in Pablo's arms, knowing that she will have to return to her life as a piano teacher—representing her consolation prize—as soon as the curtain falls on the opera performance and on her performance as a bourgeois woman. Consolación mourns her dream of becoming a pianist, which she surrendered in favor of being a wife and mother, trading art for pragmatism. She mourns the loss of her husband's blind affection, as well, who prefers her falsified image to her true self. Rather than recognizing his wife's sacrifices and musical talent, Pablo, symbolizing society at large, values Consolación's physical, although masked, appearance instead.

To what disguise does the "disfraz" of the short story's title ultimately refer? Many appear within the story's text, both noble and dishonorable. Pardo Bazán demonstrates, however, that nobility resides not in a person's dress or title, but rather in her character. Although Doña Consolación does not conceal the physical suffering embodied in her clothing until Henrieta pleads with her to do so, she suffers her hardships in a respectable manner, proving that she is a noble mother and teacher. Conversely, the finery with which the *marquesa* dresses herself serves to conceal the deficiencies of her character, not for one fantastical night, but, as the classic fairy tale ending attests, ever after. In "El disfraz," Pardo Bazán illustrates the ease with which similar disguises may be lifted, exposing one's true character, for better or worse.

### III. “La manga”: The Ruin of a Family

In many ways, Nati, the protagonist of “La manga,” represents Consolación’s antithesis. Whereas Consolación yearns to escape the cruel fairy tale in which she finds herself, Nati wishes to attain the materialistic lifestyle that the piano teacher rejects. However, the bourgeois lifestyle in “La manga” is not embodied in a sleeve, as the title suggests, but rather in a hat<sup>14</sup>. The short story begins with a hyperbolic description of one of those “sombreros inconmensurables que son el encanto, el susto y la ruina de una familia burguesa durante una estación” (3: 382). While the hat is clearly not “immeasurable,” its negative effects on the family’s socioeconomic situation ultimately are. The financial struggles and other images of conflict abound in the short story, serving to detail the negative effects materialism wrecks on families faced with the decision to clothe or feed their offspring. Nature’s might and the power of the gaze, however, ultimately serve to restore the “natural” order to the characters of “La manga,” dispelling the myth of the fairy tale ending they hope to secure.

While headscarves play an important role in the life of at least one character in the preceding chapter, hats define the poor woman’s slightly wealthier counterparts. As Reades notes, “hats, it is clear, were worn most in those parts of Spain where *mantos* were dispensed with” and, as a result, represent modernity (9). According to the narrator, the hat “presta a la señorita honrada la provocación atractiva de las cupletistas y las cocotas en los grandes casinos internacionales,” thereby granting hats an association not only with modernity but also with moral decay (3: 382-83). References to women in the public spotlight mark the

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<sup>14</sup> Pardo Bazán provides a fierce criticism of the custom of wearing hats in her essay “Sobre la moda.”

tenuous dance that a respectable woman like Nati must play with her suitor. In order to provide pleasure to men and provide economically for themselves, both “señoritas honradas” and “cupletistas” exchange their bodies—dressed or undressed—for money. Nati imitates a “public woman” too closely, however, when she exposes herself—albeit inadvertently—to the public.

The hyperbolic description of sartorial excess embodied in Nati’s unwieldy hat demonstrates not only Nati’s vanity and artificiality, but her marginality as well. In *The Culture of Fashion*, Christopher Breward notes that:

...ribbons and other items of haberdashery have been identified as the means by which members of the lower social orders could take elements of elite fashion, customising them for their own use without incurring the expense or moral problems of the whole package. (99)

Like the work required to enable the purchase of the hat, the narrator of “La manga” states that the “tarea de prender el sombrero no fue corta.” The family hopes that the sacrifices required for the purchase—and indeed of the dressing—of the hat will serve as an investment, the dividends of which pay off in the marriage of their daughter. As a result, the narrator blasphemously describes the hat as “lo sacrosanto” (3: 382).

Like religious fervor, however, the hat exudes a special power on all of the characters of the story, from other girls to the young man whom Nati encounters during *el paseo*. It sets Nati apart from her mother and other girls and ultimately alienates her from all of society, including the young man she meets. Reflecting fashion’s power in dictating the family’s spending of limited resources, the hat is described as “el sombrero que impone *forzosamente* la moda” (3: 382 emphasis added). Nati’s fashionable attire comes at a cost not only to herself, but to her mother as well. Nati expresses relief in that her father, rather than her

mother, will accompany her to the *paseo* because “la mamá siempre da una nota ligeramente caricaturesca, a menos que vaya tan bien o mejor trajeada que su hija...” The mother’s inadequate dress would betray the family’s secret impoverishment and threaten Nati’s ability to attract an eligible suitor. Ironically, the hat’s enormity, illustrated by the use of the superlative “sombbrero,” frames Nati as a caricature more effectively than her mother ever could (3: 383).

Nevertheless, the hat invokes envy among the middle-class girls whom Nati passes. They are described as “ligadas,” unable to escape their families’ predicaments and unable to participate in “el paseo” (3: 383). The hat’s “liga” is also used to describe the means in which the “cazable” fiancé can be captured (3: 382). The *ligas* mentioned in the short story, however, contrast with the women’s leagues or *ligas* that supported women’s voting rights and other issues, during the time period in which Pardo Bazán published this and other short stories. On the one hand, Nati represents a more traditional female model, in that she seeks to bind herself with a husband in traditional marriage rather than enjoy equal rights sought by other women. She does not associate herself with her New Woman contemporaries, many of whom were league members, but instead distances herself from them as well as from her family’s dire situation. On the other hand, however, her behavior approximates that of future bra-burning feminists when she disregards her petticoat in favor of the hat.

While Pardo Bazán characterizes fashion as a relentless, powerful force, men exude the ultimate power in “La manga,” matching the sustenance provided by food and the strength of nature. The interdependence of food, clothing and men are demonstrated in numerous references throughout the short story. During the courtship ritual, flirting provides

sustenance for Nati and her suitor, reinforcing Tolliver's thoughts on masculinist scopophilia. Their first meeting, for example, is sensually described as "aquel instante delicioso." Later, "la sensación exquisita" represents the couple's feeling of being isolated from the rest of the group and from providing each other visual pleasure (3: 383). Until Nati weds, her family forfeits expensive food in order to cover the high cost of Nati's fashionable hat. For two months they replace their normal diet of meat with that of potatoes and *panchos*, or *pan y chorizo*, a symbol of the phallus and a stand-in for the husband Nati seeks (3: 382). Although the *panchos* satiate the family members' hunger, it is hoped that their daughter's future husband will provide sustenance—both social and physical—for her.

Descriptions of upward, flying motions, many which double as phallic symbols, are found throughout "La manga." The rising costs, "fénix matrimonial," fireworks, wings and volcanic activity represent an escape from her decadent reality and, initially, the elevation of Nati's status in society through her rebirth as a bourgeois wife. The narrator explains that, while costs have risen in other sectors of the economy, prices for hats "se lanza en vertiginoso arranque." Similarly, at twenty-eight years of age, Nati "espera fundadamente el fénix matrimonial," which, like the mythological phoenix will rise up from ashes to live again (3: 382). Both the phoenix and Nati's claim that she is worth nothing serve to destroy her old self to be born again—or re-fashioned—as the suitor's wife. Her feigned modesty during her conversation with the suitor is illustrative of the role she must play in the courtship ritual and reflects society's low estimation of her. The narrator indicates how "el pretendiente expresaba su admiración; la pretendida, coqueteando, negaba que valiese nada; hasta negaba la elegancia de su atavío, a la cual había notado que su pretendiente era muy

sensible” (3: 383). In order to maintain the interest of her *pretendiente*, Nati must fashion herself as self-denying, a crucial characteristic of the *ángel del hogar*. Nevertheless, Nati’s words prove to become a true assessment of her reality in society’s eyes by the story’s end.

The *pretendiente* as a possible husband represents a savior for Nati, whose name brings Christ’s birth to mind. When he first approaches, he does so “pronto como un pájaro” who will rescue her from her reality (3: 383). Nati’s appearance “bajo las alas enormes” of her hat approximates that of a bird (3: 382). In the end, however, the hat proves to be as useless in attracting a husband as it is in taking flight when Nati desperately yearns to escape. While the *enaguas* that Nati sacrifices serve a purpose, the hat is purely decorative. Additionally, as an impediment to movement, the hat hampers Nati’s escape and obstructs her vision.

Although the dictates of fashion are portrayed as powerful, they represent no match against nature’s power. The rain returns the people to their natural, undressed state, like that in the womb prior to birth. However, water in “La manga” is not portrayed as a feminine force that provides life. While water generally represents femininity, rain is associated with masculinity in the myth of Jupiter Pluvius, whose semen fell to the earth to populate it (Walker 348). The torrential, destructive water in the short story functions as masculine power that spares the male characters. Rather than cleansing, the rain tarnishes Nati’s reputation and exposes her secret. “El repentino hielo” depicts the freezing of relations between Nati and her deceived suitor (3: 385). Reminiscent of the Biblical flood that wipes out humanity, “el diluvio” in “La manga” separates the weak from the strong (3: 384). The rainstorm highlights Nati’s inability to prosper in a male-dominated society that revolves

around the economic prosperity of men and moral propriety of women that also relies on material wealth and adherence to the dictates of fashion.

While the destructive rain is masculine, the moon-shaped mirrors in Nati's bedroom represent a feminine symbol. Although she finds the hat worthy of being reflected in "las triples lunas de lujoso tocador," her own mirrors reflect Nati's image back to her, confirming her physical appeal (3: 383). The reflection in the "modesto armario de luna," however, cannot mask the poverty that threatens the family (3: 382). Magazine illustrations show mirrors that reflect luxurious surroundings, but Nati's furniture is modest. The *luna*-shaped wardrobe also announces the lunacy that erupts during the rainfall. "Nati, desde el primer momento," the narrator describes, "había corrido como una loca..." She fears being seen because she will be made into "una birria," a monstrosity and useless object, once her clothing and hat, representing "la tercera parte por lo menos de su belleza," are ruined (3: 384). While at first she hides herself in luxurious clothes, later she hides from the judgmental eyes of the unsympathetic townspeople in her father's home.

When Nati admires her form in the mirror, prior to heading to "el paseo," she sees "los trazos ligeros del púdico semidesnudo de los figurines de arte" (3: 383). In Western art "the nude body," first admired by the Greeks, "and draped clothing become essential elements of idealized vision," appearing in allegorical as well as religious representations (Hollander, *Seeing* xiii). The draped nude proved suitable in representing Greek deities and Christ on the Cross, ultimately symbolizing strength as well as death. Although seminudity is esteemed in the context of art, Nati's naked form is by no means interpreted as *púdico*. While her nudity is only suggested before the storm, the rainfall exposes her total nakedness



under her dress, like “la estatua bajo el lienzo del escultor” (3: 384). Similar to the subject of a piece of art work displayed for public consumption, the suitor can no longer be ensured exclusive access to Nati’s body. Unlike a nude statue, however, Nati’s unclothed form is described as shameful, hilarious and unpleasant and announces her downfall. While *el lienzo* frames the nude statue, Nati’s *lienzo* is her transparent dress that displays, like a painter’s canvas, more than it hides.

The narrator invokes art in another term that is used in the short story: plasticity. Describing “la plástica” of her body, the narrator invokes a parallel between Nati’s body and that of an inanimate statue (3: 384-85). Her clothing—as well as her body—betrays an artificiality akin to a marble sculpture, but succumbs to exterior natural and social forces. In the downpour, the hat’s flowers “vertían arroyitos de tintes de colores.” Similarly, “los rostros perdían el ligero artificio del blanquete y del rosa de tocador.” Nati did not want to be caught with “unas plumas desteñidas soltando manchurroneos.” Flowers, skin and feathers, the three natural elements in the ensemble, are all altered and discolored for fashion. In the rain, Nati’s hat, like others, “manchaba y ridiculizaba más” (3: 384). Nevertheless, it is the women, not the men, who are ridiculed by the rain and their ruined clothing.

Visual elements play a central role throughout the short story. The suitor’s admiration of Nati is described when “se la bebía con los ojos” (3: 383). The townspeople participate in the *paseo* to see and be seen. However, during the storm, the terror of “ser vista en grotesca situación” overtakes the protagonist (3: 384). She runs, motivated principally by the fear of losing her clothing and accessories. Nati’s nakedness becomes real, however, when she witnesses it herself with her own eyes. Having been penetrated by the

men's gazes, Nati is "profanada"—simultaneously desecrated and familiarized to the public—and, therefore, unfit for marriage (3: 385). Suggestions of nudity, or the idealized depiction of the undressed human form, initially attract the suitor, but Nati's nakedness, especially in a public context, repels him as it aligns her with *cupletistas* and *cocotas* rather than *señoritas honradas*.

When the tale ends, the narrator states that Nati "no podía reemplazar la ropa perdida... Ni el novio, perdido al mismo tiempo que la ropa," showing the interdependence of the fiancé and clothing (3: 385). As the honor of a family depends on the virtue of the wife and mother, Nati is deemed ineligible for marriage. Despite the exaggerated emphasis originally placed on Nati's unruly hat, it is her body and, more specifically, her head that draws attention in the end. Indeed, Pardo Bazán demonstrates that a superlative hat cannot—and should not—replace a well-informed mind.

#### IV. "Los ramilletes" and the Prying Eyes of *el paseo*

In her biography of the author, Pilar Faus describes *el paseo de las Filas* in La Coruña as "variopinto escaparate en donde las jovencitas de la mejor sociedad, como Emilia, lucen los últimos modelos traídos «de Madrid»" (1: 52). Pardo Bazán continues with the ritual of *el paseo* in "Los ramilletes," in which visual elements and disguise—representative of both male power and female subjugation—play a central role. The story's first line, "un paseo—díjome Severando—" notifies the reader of the import of ritualistic display to its plot (3: 404). Like the other short stories described here, true and falsified identities play equally central roles in the development of "Los ramilletes." Indeed, contradictions appear throughout the short story centering on Severando, symbol of socioeconomic prosperity as

well as cowardice, and an unnamed female object who proves incapable of disguising the gravity of her endangered existence. The dichotomies of laughter and pain and distance and proximity serve to illustrate the incongruities embodied in both figures. Severando's story, juxtaposed with that of the young woman, demonstrates not only the contradictions modernity represents but also the difficulty in escaping the limits imposed by a rigid social hierarchy, controlled by the male gaze.

The language Severando employs stands among the most readily identifiable oppositions in the text of "Los ramilletes." For example, he ironically describes the people who watch the daily stroll as sitting "de a pie." Moreover, the people passing by are portrayed as inanimate "trenes," while the feathers of the girl's hat are "alborotadas," acquiring human characteristics. Similarly, Severando's reflections on the *paseo*, which he portrays as both humorous and painful, embody contrasts. Severando observes that "lo ridículo, que tanto hace reír es infinitamente, profundamente melancólico." *El paseo* is also "dolor pequeño, envuelto en apariencias cómicas." Furthermore, Severando points out the role perspective plays in one's interpretation of *el paseo*. The daily stroll is "un filón de asuntos regocijados para un sainetero" but "un trozo de dolor humano para un novelista" (3: 404). Rather than frame his account as humorous, Severando, like a novelist, reveals the severity of the blonde's situation to his readers.

The opening quote of "Los ramilletes" not only provides an example of the centrality of image, but also illustrates the short story as story-within-a-story, in which two first-person narrators figure: one who records Severando's "larga relación" in writing and Severando himself, who relays his story to the anonymous narrator (3: 406). Because the framing of

Severando's story is only revealed by the narrator's inclusion of "díjome" in the opening line, clearly identifying Severando as the voice of the narrator of the blonde's story initially proves difficult. However, the narrator effectively allows Severando to retell the story without interruption, thereby blurring clear distinctions between the two voices and aligning the narrator with the oral storyteller. The question and subsequent answers that comprise the last four paragraphs of the short story, nevertheless, clarify for the reader that it is from Severando's perspective that the story has just been related. The narrator, however, by fashioning his own interpretation of the last days of the female object's life and clearing Severando of any culpability in her death, tries to appropriate Severando's tale as his own.

Featuring only one named character, "Los ramilletes" primarily exists as Severando's story. Although knowledgeable of detailed information about the woman who sits by the flower kiosk, he never refers to her by name. Instead, he describes her as "una muchacha rubia vistosa," "la rubia del sombrero atrevido y el peinado a la Cleo" or, simply "la rubia," providing evidence of his complete objectification of her and emphasizing the artificiality of her physical appearance (3: 404, 405). By leaving the blonde woman unnamed, nevertheless, Severando leaves her legacy untarnished. However, he also denies her a true identity, converting her into a nameless representative of working class women who falsify their self-image in the hopes of bettering their situations.

While the blonde proves unable to communicate her own story, she does provide an alternate reading of her true self to the public during *el paseo*, which Severando quickly discovers and relays to the narrator. Severando presents his first impression of the blonde, seen from afar, then a close observation and, finally, a third reading of what occurs outside of

the public eye, at the blonde's home. Initially, Severando believes the blonde to be "alguna señorita del gran mundo." From afar, Severando admires and describes each piece of clothing, jewelry and accessories with which she adorns herself. The description includes "plumas alborotadas del sombrero amplísimo," "encajes del largo redingote," "guantes calados" and "medias transparentes" (3: 404). Closer examination permits Severando to unveil the truth, causing him to state that "lo mismo su traje que su belleza querían ser vistos de lejos" (3: 404-05). He later describes his "mania de estudiar, de analizar y descomponer la vida que pasa a mi lado" (3: 405). As proprietor of the panoptic male gaze, he fashions a story for the blonde from his observations.

Severando contrasts his initial impression by stating that "las plumas eran ordinarias y tiesas; el encaje, basto, los guantes, zurcidos con habilidad; las perlas, descaradamente falsas; el brazalete, de similar; el pelo, teñido baratamente con agua oxigenada." His unveiled analysis reveals the theatricality of the blonde's appearance, distancing her from the respectable *señorita* and aligning her with a ballerina who plays *su juego*. While he characterizes her as one of the "*personas decentes*," his characterization of her demonstrates her indecency (3: 405). Indeed, the image he conjures is not unlike that to which Dorothy Parker refers in "Big Blonde," also published in the early twentieth century. The narrator of the American tale describes the incitement of "some men when they use the word 'blonde' to click their tongues and wag their heads roguishly" (Parker 105). In addition to her bleached hair, the blonde's posture is also defined by its artifice, designed to provide visual pleasure to men. Severando describes the blonde's "actitud" as "estudiadamente artística, tendiendo a la silueta de cubierta de semanario ilustrado" (3: 405). While *la rubia* dresses in order to be

seen and rehearses her posture, Severando provides an “undressed” description of the costumed female object.

Although “disfraz” is not used in Pardo Bazán’s short story of the same title, Severando uses the term twice in “Los ramilletes.” He characterizes the clothing of “las *personas decentes*” as “disfraz tantas veces del extremo apuro económico.” He also describes how the blonde, having returned home and “[dis]puesto el disfraz,” cooks and cleans the dishes for her asthmatic mother (3: 405). She attempts to fashion herself as “useless,” disguising her hands and fatigue, as the emblems of domestic work do not fit into the bourgeois image she wishes to emulate and which Severando promulgates when he criticizes her appearance. By doing so, however, she also hides her virtue. Her costume ultimately proves to be an ineffective one because it cannot mask her true identity.

As Charnon-Deutsch states, “the male subject constructs the feminine as a storehouse of information about the body, nature, and especially, illness, and death” (*Fictions* 224). As the possessor of the male gaze, Severando provides explanations of human nature utilizing descriptions of the blonde’s body, clothing and behavior. Nevertheless, he proves incapable of providing details of the young blonde’s death. Although Severando informs his interlocutor of her passing, the narrator of the framed tale explains, even justifies her demise. He absolves Severando by stating “esas chicas insuficientemente alimentadas, sin higiene, torturadas de vanidad, en espera febril de lo que no llega: del esposo, de la posición, son candidatos naturales a la tisis” (3: 406). The narrator also conveniently disregards the role of Severando’s gifts of flowers in the blonde’s death, intent on absolving him of any guilt he may harbor.

As the title of “Los ramilletes” suggests, flowers play a central role in the short story.

In Western literary traditions:

The language of flowers is the language of love. It is true not only in a metaphorical sense, but also in the sense of botanical biology, since flowers are the genitalia of plants. Perhaps the beauty of flowers is not the only reason, then, that they so often symbolize human sexual relationships. Many lexicons of romantic flower language have been compiled. Flowers are used as messages, love charms, gifts, and ritual objects. (Walker 422)

As a ritual object, flowers, especially *ramilletes*, exist as a symbol of the wedding ceremony.

Severando, however, has no intention of proposing marriage to *la rubia*. Nevertheless, he

does not fault the blonde’s desire to wed, describing her search for a husband as “nada pecaminoso” (3: 405). It is Severando, rather than the blonde who is characterized by sin.

Instead of presenting *la rubia* with flowers as a means of expressing his affection, as Pardo

Bazán recalls doing the day Spanish troops returned home to La Coruña from victory in

Morocco, Severando sends her fresh flowers to assuage his feelings of guilt, produced by abandoning her in the park (“Apuntes autobiográficos” 700). Indeed, he never reveals his

identity to the young woman by the kiosk, whose eyes “se posaban en la embalsamada

cosecha traída de Valencia o de Murcia” (3: 406). The narcissus, one of the three types of

flowers described amid the crop of flowers sold in the kiosk, conjures images not only of the

mythic Narcissus, but the underworld as well, announcing the end of the blonde’s life. Like

the embalmed flowers in the kiosk, the flowers in the bouquets that Severando sends to the

blonde, too, symbolize death. For as long as the blonde receives the flowers, she lives. The

cessation of the deliveries, however, signals her death.

At the story’s end, the first-person narrator expresses how “Severando movió la cabeza, suspiró, y en toda la tarde [no] se le pudo sacar del cuerpo otra palabra” (3: 406).

When he has exhausted his words, the story, which depends on Severando's words to move it forward, ends. Severando finds himself unable to defend his despicable actions towards the girl sitting by the flower kiosk. For that reason, he effectively censors himself. What could have resulted in a confession is modified by the involvement of the narrator, however. In reassuring Severando of his innocence, the narrator displays the self-centered characteristics Severando criticizes in his tale. The italicized "*personas decentes*" whom Severando describes signals the hypocrisy of the protagonist's thinking.

Severando falls victim to the societal practices that he so adamantly criticizes, such as "la nivelación en el traje, en las modas, [que] es uno de los absurdos de nuestra civilización," when he ridicules the blonde, possibly causing her downfall (3: 404). While the blonde yearns to conceal her true situation, it is Severando who ultimately hides behind the floral bouquets. Just as the woman's appearance deceives passersby, Severando deceives the woman by anonymously sending flowers to her. He too participates in a game, which turns out to be much more costly. Ultimately, however, it is the readers who question whether they are being misled by Severando and his presentation, albeit a conflicted one, of himself.

"Los ramilletes" ultimately offers two readings of Severando's actions, never confirming nor denying the validity of his story or the short story ending provided by the narrator. During the framed tale he characterizes his decision to disappear as, at first, "el recurso de los cobardes." Later, he describes his idea of sending flowers as "desastrosa." While Severando appears to sympathize with the young girl, his reaction to her death as well as the reaction emitted by his interlocutor demonstrate the sexist and classist stereotypes they both hold. When, during the last few paragraphs, the narrator asks him if Severando knows



the effect the flowers had on *la rubia*, Severando characterizes it as “ridículo, como todo lo suyo,” altering his tone from remorseful to annoyed (3: 406). He informs the narrator of the woman’s illness, but is unable to tell him that it resulted in death, leaving his last sentence unfinished. Severando, therefore, embodies another contrast when he proves himself unable, as his name implies, to asseverate the blonde’s demise.

Is Severando guilty of the young woman’s death or is, he too, tortured by vanity, wrong to assume that his actions caused her demise? Did she die of *tisis* or of a broken heart? The only person able to answer these questions is *la rubia*. Her side of the story will never be known, however, because death permanently silences her voice. Sadly, in life, she does not enjoy the ability to communicate her own story either. Just as the male gaze normalizes, the male narrator makes sense of the blonde’s life and death, providing a definitive explanation that, in a modernist short story, raises suspicions in the reader’s mind.

## V. “Una lección” Learned the Hard Way

Visual images in the *fin-de-siecle* and early twentieth-century feminine press depicted women not only as the embodiment of beauty and fashion, but of domesticity as well. Serving as a title for countless illustrations in the periodicals in which Pardo Bazán published her short stories, “La lección” aimed to indoctrinate readers with bourgeois values regarding women’s roles in the home. According to Charnon-Deutsch:

Where little girls are concerned, all the ‘lessons’ involve activities like learning to make the sign of the cross and to say the rosary, giving obedience lesson to pets or receiving lessons from an adult, learning to embroider or to make a bed, learning to sing or paint, learning to dress a doll: in other words, the skills learned and taught when a young girl is depicted all involved idealized domestic routines. As inconsequential as ‘La lección’ may seem, its idealization of the domestic scene was part of a tidal wave of images that were sharing notions of respectable middle-class living arrangements, a short

‘episode’ in one of the country’s most pernicious fictions of the feminine.  
(*Fictions of the Feminine* 42)

Although equally didactic, Pardo Bazán’s “Lección” distances itself from illustrations by the same name by satirizing the traditional model of femininity and pointing out its inherent sexism. In her short story, the Galician author relies on contrasts and similarities between nature and the female characters to draw attention to the women’s outdated, romantic notions of courtship as well as the artificiality of their desperate attempts to win the favor of Juanito, the eligible bachelor. The lesson Juanito offers Lola and Jacinta reflects the values of modernity, in which young men seek companions distinguished by their individuality rather than their ability to imitate magazine covers. Pardo Bazán, however, offers an additional lesson to her readers: the need for substantive educational reform to create opportunities for women beyond embroidery and making beds that she advocates in her nonfictional writings.

The omniscient narrator’s descriptions of the female characters serve to cast them as stereotypes rather than individuals. He presents the unmarried cousins, Lola and Jacinta, as both infantile and materialistic, motivated by the prospect of an economically beneficial marriage with Juanito, “hijo de un opulento banquero,” rather than by love (3: 377). Their similarity to “típicas figuras de Zuloaga,” the Basque portrait artist who favored depictions of upper-class and noble women as well as flamenco dancers and bull fighters, emphasizes their superficiality as well as lack of originality (3: 377-78). The women’s artifice is similarly confirmed by the narrator’s assertion that they were obligated “a cuidar de su belleza, haciéndola resaltar por el adorno y el arte.” Possessing stereotypical “vanidad femenina,” the married cousin, Micaela, strives to present Juanito with her relative superiority, rather than appearing typically bourgeois, or “encogida, ñoña” (3: 378). Although she succeeds in

separating herself from other middle-class women, she consequently aligns herself with another group. Specifically, as “la más picante,” she reminds Juanito of Parisian women who had “entretenido gratísimamente sus ocios de soltero...” (3: 379). For a married, bourgeois woman, this parallel does not reflect favorably on the dinner’s hostess.

The theme of child’s play continues throughout the short story. The idea of the dinner is described as “la humorada,” a whim but also a joke designed by young, bored people, “curiosa de sensaciones nuevas” (3: 377). Juanito finds himself in the midst of a chess-like game, opposite two women who “se afanaban y se desvivían por atraer su atención,” but proves capable of controlling his opponents’ movements. According to the narrator, Juanito maintains them “en jaque.” For their part, the women see in Juanito “un brillante partido,” whose marriage proposal represents the spoils of the victory in their “match” to win his favor. In addition to the enviable Parisian women with whom Juanito would have come in contact, they compete with each other. In “la dulce guerra,” in which women arm themselves with beauty rather than brains or brawn, Juanito is “incensado como un ídolo blanco de tantas flechas,” conjuring an image of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian and highlighting the sensuality of the encounter (3: 378). Not only do the women objectify themselves, they fashion Juanito as their adversarial object of desire, a superficial, albeit, fitting male companion for the socially constructed *ángel del hogar*.

Like the illustrations depicting “La lección” in the feminine press, the meeting of the unmarried cousins and Juanito is framed in an idealized, romantic space. Nevertheless, by stating that “parecían doblemente gustosos los manjares,” the narrator describes the heightening of senses that the idyllic setting and food provide the guests (3: 377). Indeed, the

female characters are also equated with the food the guests consume in the sensually charged scene. When Juanito addresses the three “se derretían cada vez más,” while Jacinta bites her lip “en vez de morder la rebanada de piña” on her plate (3: 378, 79). Descriptions of “la deliciosa humedad ligera” of the late September night and “el olor a jazmines y a rosas no agostadas” provide further evidence of the heightened sense of smell and taste that Juanito’s presence raises. Heaven and Earth appear to align when the moonlight “emperlaba con tonos nacarados el jardín,” creating an appropriate setting for a romantic encounter between a prospective suitor and a female admirer (3: 377). The reference to pearls, a traditionally sacred symbol denoting the union of female waters and male fire, leads the reader to believe that a romantic pairing will shortly ensue (Walker 518).

Parallels between the Garden of Eden and that in Levante also serve to announce the downfall of the immoral female characters. Rather than fulfilling the role of Adam, however, Juanito exists as a stand-in for God, deigning the women’s conduct sinful. The narrator states, “la alegría de la linda cena adquirió algo de insensiblemente pecaminoso, un tinte de elegante orgía” (3: 378). The use of “tinte” also illustrates that, like a painting, visual elements garner favor above all else in the dinner scene, representing the characters’ lack of profundity as well as their desire to conceal their true character, with dye or other means. However *elegante*, the narrator characterizes their behavior as licentious, further revealing their objectification of Juanito as well as themselves.

Upon closer examination, additional incongruities begin to appear. The narrator’s statement that the idea of the dinner “era, a decir la verdad, encantadora,” hints at the realistic, unromantic ending about to unfold. His description of the idyllic setting also

betrays the artificiality of the scene. While flowers initially symbolize the “flowering” of the young sisters who are ready for marriage, it becomes evident that they are kept alive by unnatural means. The jasmines and roses are “no agostadas, porque el riego conservaba su vida” (3: 377). Moreover, although the scene evokes notions of edenic tranquility, the three women dress themselves as though they are going to the casino, “con trajes escotados de gasa y seda *liberty* y sombreros de los de enormes plumas y ala formidable” (3: 378). Like Nati of “La manga,” they present a masked version of themselves to the potential suitor. Specifically, “se habían disfrazado para asemejarse más a las mujeres que Juanito había conocido hasta el día” rather than what may more correctly reflect their personalities or the venue (3: 379).

Despite Micaela’s supposedly comfortable bourgeois existence, she yearns to be validated by Juanito as much or even more than her unmarried cousins. Although it exists as the ultimate goal of her cousins, marriage is portrayed as lacking the fulfillment promised to young girls in magazine illustrations and feminine literature. Micaela’s husband Manolo is not only “dueño de la hermosa quinta,” but also “de la antojadiza mujer” (3: 379). Despite the cousins’ objectification of Juanito, women prove to be the ultimate objects of desire in the short story, lacking power and happiness in the tradicional bourgeois marriage the young cousins seek to secure with Juanito.

In addition to references to the past, evidenced by the edenic setting, symbols of modernity, such as electricity, address the changes affecting gender relations in Spanish society. Hailing from Paris, site of the 1900 World Exposition featuring “the lighting of five thousand coloured lamps in the Palais de l’Electricité, an event destined to earn Paris the

epithet of ‘Ville Lumière,’” Juanito embodies the positive qualities attributed to artificial light (Peri 35). As a recurring motif in the short story, however, electric lighting acquires dual significances. The guests dine outdoors in the garden, “alumbrada por un aro de bombillas eléctricas,” which denote the modernity, and, therefore, prosperity of the Granados household (3: 377). The two sisters and their cousin, who all flirt with Juanito, sit at the table in the “embalsamado cenador.” The artificial light approximates the beauty of the women and their sexual readiness, from whom “parece desprenderse electricidad” (3: 378). When Juanito speaks of his future marriage, “a las solteras les chispearon las pupilas negras,” stoking their passion further. His eyes, however, are described as “demasiado lucientes” (3: 379). The light eventually symbolizes the revelation of truth as expressed in Juanito’s own words. Indeed, his surname, Lucena, indicates that he is illuminated while the women of the Granados household exist in a darkened past. Like the path he navigates in the garden, he recognizes the need to turn the course of events developing between him and the three women.

Modernity, too, is reflected in the text by the incorporation of foreign words as well as slang speech. The “liberty” silk represents the freedom and modernity embodied by the United States. The women’s *toilettes* and mention of *chic* fashions, on the other hand evokes notions of beauty represented by France. Slang expressions and references to changes in Spanish lexicon also appear. The use of “«ponían los puntos», como se decía en España, o «flirteaban » como dicen hoy” represents the narrative’s modernity (3: 378). However, the use of the colloquial expressions serves to align the Granados women both with the traditional *ángel del hogar* in search of a husband and the modern, liberalized woman who is

not limited by restrictive norms dictating a *señorita*'s comportment. Moreover, Pardo Bazán appropriates a number of the names used by her lover Galdós in his realist masterpiece, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, raising a typically modernist question about ownership and—not unlike the female characters she fashions—originality. Unlike the Galdosian novel, however, Juanito stands up to middle-class custom, refusing to wed the traditionally minded Jacinta.

The language the narrator employs, in the form of free indirect discourse, allows the reader to gain access to the male subject's mind as well as that of the female objects. The narrator expresses that “si ellas hubiesen tenido advertencia, bastaría para demostrarles que de ninguna le importaba, en realidad, un rábano...” offering the readers a warning the cousins lack. The party hostess, on the other hand, sees a “representante de cierta alta vida que no era la suya, puesto que ella no vivía en París ni estaba relacionada en los varios «mundos» que frecuentaba Juanito” (3: 378). Juanito correctly unveils their intentions, but the women prove incapable of seeing Juanito's true character as they deny themselves access to his thoughts and opinions. Additionally, as women confined to the home, they are denied access to the freedom of movement that grants Juanito his worldiness.

Language and its relationship to clothing also play an important role in the development of the female characters. The narrator classifies their comments as meaningless “gorjeo” and their gestures infantile “monerías.” To further emphasize their lack of profundity, the female characters' behavior and speech align them with children at play, “chorreando pendencia.” The women also imagine Juanito comparing them to their Parisian counterparts, not only with respect to their sartorial fashion but also to “la charla más desenfrenada y libre” the French women enjoy. The fabric of their clothes, embodying their

sexual allure, speaks for the repressed Spanish women, both figuratively and literally. Rather than the voices of Lola and Jacinta, the dinner scene “era todo rugir de sedas, parloteo de excitación” (3: 378). Unlike “La manga,” in which clothing and male suitor were equated, in “Lección,” the women and their clothing are inseparable. The cousins are as slippery as the silk with which they clothe themselves, their provocative actions materialized in their low-cut, silky dresses.

As the young women dress themselves, Juanito dresses his admonishment of their artificiality in initially playful banter, claiming that he will soon marry. The repetition of “muy” in the cousins’ questions regarding his fiancée, “¿Muy elegante? ¿Muy rica? ¿Muy guapa?” points to Spanish bourgeois society’s mandate that girls exaggerate their beauty and wealth to attract a man. When Juanito expresses his conditions for choosing a wife, the narrator focuses heightened awareness on his oral speech, turning it into a weighty admonishment that affects the young women on a physical level. Once deciding to “pagar la hospitalidad con un favor,” he “tomó la palabra,” thereby arming himself with meaningful words that serve to extinguish the women’s desire. Juanito “dejó caer las cláusulas como dejaría caer agua helada sobre aquellas carnes húmedas de un sudor que ya traspasaba la capa de polvos de arroz,” again demonstrating the relationship among food, clothing and sexuality, but now aligning all three with language as well. He fashions his wifely ideal, authoritatively stating “que se parezca lo menos posible a las mujeres que he conocido hasta el día... y que no piense nunca en imitarlas... Eso es lo que busco y creo haber encontrado.” With the ironic question, “¿Verdad que tengo razón?” Juanito confirms the female characters’ duplicity and puerility, treating them as the mischievous children they, whether



inadvertently or not, fashion themselves to be. When Juanito chastises them, the pride Lola, Jacinta and Micaela once projected onto their clothing is replaced by shame, “de sus escotes, de sus sombreros de postal, de su jugueteo provocativo...” (3: 379). Fittingly, the embarrassment they experience for their actions figures second to that reserved for the all-important clothing with which they define themselves.

In Pardo Bazán’s “La lección,” unlike illustrated versions of *lecciones*, however, it is the women who embody the traditional, sexist ideal, while the man, embodiment of modernity and worldliness, is a harbinger of change. Ironically, however, by authoring a lesson on how to secure a marriage proposal, Pardo Bazán upholds the same traditional notions of the feminine ideal that she criticizes. Nevertheless, Juanito’s lesson addresses the need for fundamental education reform in Spain, providing women with the “weapons” rather than dresses they need to survive, regardless of marital status. Having previously been indoctrinated in how to dress and act, the female characters, like turn-of-the-century Spanish women in general, must learn a new lesson for a new era.

## VI. Conclusions

Although referring to Renaissance texts, Stephen Greenblatt’s statement that, “if we say that there is a new social mobility, we must say that there is a new assertion of power by both family and state to determine all movement within the society” readily applies to the context of early twentieth-century Spain, during which time family, the Church and society at large closely monitored the physical as well as social movement of their members (2). The movements involved in dressing and undressing Pardo Bazán’s text, her characters’ speech as well as the characters themselves reveal the careful scripting necessary for women wishing

to adhere to traditional bourgeois notions of propriety. Indeed, the union of clothing, language and food in Pardo Bazán's later short stories exhibits the interdependent relationship between image and substance, as well as sustenance, in Spain's changing political, social, economic, as well as literary, landscape.

In Pardo Bazán's short story, "El abanico," the narrator observes that "la sociedad esgrime un inmenso abanico" (3: 36). Pardo Bazán fashions a figurative fan for each of her female characters, whether an expensive hat, borrowed clothing or an outfit best seen from afar, empowering them to gain access—however ephemeral—to a traditional bourgeois world. Nevertheless, the male-gendered gaze stands ready to decipher the language of the "fan," which aids the women in flirting and disguising, discovering the women's true intentions and realities.

Like the language of fans, the figurative or literal depictions of a character's undressing allow the reader to access the truth behind the self-fashioned image each woman presents. The women who dress and undress themselves for men are trapped between the mores of their class, prohibiting women to secure employment outside their homes, and a lack of education, reducing them to carrying out domestic tasks. Pardo Bazán thereby enables herself to express her negative opinion regarding imitation of restrictive women's dress, by way of criticizing the characters she "dresses" on the page. She does so most often by fashioning male characters who admonish women in language "dressed" in irony. The reader peels the velvety layers to expose the "undressed" statements that serve to silence the female characters and expose their "bellies of bran."

## CHAPTER THREE: DISGUIISING DEPRIVITY

“‘Ah,’ said the bridegroom, ‘how do you come by these odious friends?’ Thereupon he went to the one with the broad flat foot, and said: ‘How do you come by such a broad foot?’ ‘By treading,’ she answered, ‘by treading.’ Then the bridegroom went to the second, and said: ‘How do you come by your falling lip?’ ‘By licking,’ she answered, ‘by licking.’ Then he asked the third: ‘How do you come by your broad thumb?’ ‘By twisting the thread,’ she answered, ‘by twisting the thread.’ On this the King’s son was alarmed and said: ‘Neither now nor ever shall my beautiful bride touch a spinning-wheel.’ And thus she got rid of the hateful flax-spinning.”

-- “The Three Spinners,” *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*

As modern *haute couture* has constructed a realm of consumable luxury, youth and beauty, it has also given rise to the unequal marriage between world-famous fashion designers and the nameless seamstresses in their employ. Save for occasional revelations of deplorable working conditions in overseas sweatshops, it is the designers and glamorous celebrities whom they outfit that receive accolades in fashion magazines, while the anonymous women who turn artists’ ideas into reality largely exist in the margins of print media. Rather than promulgating this trend, Pardo Bazán brings dressmaking out from behind the curtain of domesticity onto the main stage of the fashion industry, creating a veritable fashion show with seamstresses, rather than fashion models or designers, as the main attraction. Through her depictions of women who sew for money, Pardo Bazán exalts traditionally female interests and skills while striving to fashion new, modern and more receptive attitudes about women’s work. As a result, she displays holes in the fabric of age-old arguments concerning female honor and vulnerability, demonstrating that women can and should contribute to the labor force in meaningful ways.

Each of the short stories I will examine in this chapter provides clear evidence of Barthes's theory of fashion as a collection of fictions. The textiles the seamstresses produce embody a complex system of cultural, social and economic signifiers that reflect both their individual struggles on the one hand and, on the other, the historical hardships and advancements of women. As these short stories demonstrate, the seamstresses' creations come to represent financial independence from ineffectual partnerships with men. Their female clients, in turn, use clothing as a way of both asserting their identity as individuals and solidifying their membership in the bourgeoisie. While the bourgeois customers concern themselves with their physical appearance, the seamstresses, too, disguise their deprivation from their clientele, many of them claiming their work is needed to acquire luxury items rather than to ensure their survival. Like the palimpsest, the fashions created by Pardo Bazán's words and her fictionalized seamstresses' hands—especially those using second-hand fabrics—reflect the multi-layered history of the women who not only produce, but dress themselves and others in homemade clothing.

### I. A History of Weaving Women

By focusing on husbands who abandon their responsibilities at home, forcing their wives and daughters to turn their sewing into profit, doña Emilia contrasts female dignity with antiquated ideals of male honor. To illustrate and criticize gender inequalities, Pardo Bazán, like other modernist writers, re-fashions Spanish Golden Age heroes, such as the mythical Don Juan, to frame the obstacles that notions of *honra* and *vergüenza* present to women's quest for equal rights. Likewise, satirical references to the heroines of traditional fairy tales as well as parallels to the *femme fatale* popularized in the nineteenth century serve

to provide evidence of the need for a change in opinions regarding the female labor force and women's contributions to the arts.

While Pardo Bazán relies heavily on the oral and written traditions of her native Galicia, the literary antecedents of the seamstresses depicted in her later short stories hail from ancient Greece, Denmark and Golden Age Spain. Arguably the most famous legend depicting and honoring a weaving woman in Western literature is that of Penelope, who awaits the return of her husband, Odysseus, in Homer's classic, *The Odyssey*. Unlike the potentially empowering effect sewing embodies in Pardo Bazán's short stories, however, Penelope's tale is traditionally characterized as lauding female passivity and loyalty<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, in the Grimm Brothers's *The Three Spinners*, weaving, spinning and disguise are brought together to ensure the marriage of a young maiden and, as result, her respectability. The Grimms continue this theme in *Rumpelstiltskin* when, with the aid of the devilish manikin, the miller's daughter secures matrimony with the prince, purporting to spin straw into gold. *Trotaconventos* and *Celestina*, two deceitful, needle-wielding characters, represent the contributions of the Spanish authors Juan Ruiz and Fernando de Rojas, respectively, to the Western literary tradition of women who sew. They repair women's honor by "mending" their virtue, thereby disguising evidence of their sexual transgressions and enabling them to marry.

Instead of detailing the typically romanticized courtship period on which other authors traditionally focus, Pardo Bazán's short stories reveal the daily life of married

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<sup>15</sup> Scholars of twenty-first-century Spanish literature, however, have begun to examine Penelope's role in a new light, one that characterizes her as a heroine who determines her own destiny. David Thompson's article, "Return to Ithaca: Contemporary Revisions of Penelope in Spanish Women's Literature," provides examples of such new interpretations.

women, writing beyond the traditional ending of the fairy tale that concludes with an exchange of marital vows. One of the ways she does so is by fashioning characters who possess traits of the *femme fatale*, breaking the mold of the model of passive femininity glorified in traditional tales. Often portrayed as cats, snakes or vampires, the cunning and harmful *femme fatale* has existed in Western literature from the story of Adam and Eve to Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* and beyond (Whitaker 748). Nevertheless, Pardo Bazán employs the image ironically, illustrating the destruction that male rather than female characters cause to the home and to marriage. Indeed, modernist female characters, such as Dolores in "Casi artista," act aggressively to defend their families and their honor, not to selfishly inflict unnecessary harm on unsuspecting, innocent men.

The title of this chapter, "Disguising Depravation," embodies some of the qualities—such as mendacity and evil—that relate to the *femme fatale*. Examining the etymology of the verb "disguise," however, it is clear that the primary definition of the word does not concern deception. Rather, "disguise" signifies to "alter the guise or fashion of dress and appearance of (any one); *esp.* to dress in a fashion different from what has been customary or considered appropriate to position, etc.; to dress up fantastically or ostentatiously; to deck out" ("Disguise"). The definition of "depravation," nevertheless does embody duplicity. Its verb form, "deprave," signifies "to make morally bad; to pervert, debase, or corrupt morally" ("Deprave," def. 2). Although now archaic, deprave also signified "to corrupt (a text, word, etc.)," which, if clothing is considered text, pertains especially to Frutos's treatment of *la Cartera*'s work in "Casi artista" ("Deprave," def. 1b). In the historical sense of the word "disguise," Pardo Bazán disguises the seamstresses in a style not often seen in fiction.

Rather than characterizing them as morally inferior as working class women, especially seamstresses, are sometimes depicted in literature, she deems them to be praiseworthy. She questions instead the morality of their husbands and fathers whose irresponsible or violent behavior necessitates that the women disguise their realities.

As Pardo Bazán's short stories reveal details about fashion and the formation of women's identity in the modern age, they also communicate information about the changing Spanish economy. When Industrialization reached the shores of Spain, women had become accustomed to working alongside men in the fields of rural provinces. However, as the nation's urban centers expanded in population and economic importance, jobs were soon divided according to gender. Men found work in public, commercial contexts, while needlework, weaving, laundry and other jobs that could be performed at home were reserved for women.

The confines of the home, at least in theory, were safer than the public atmosphere of the factory. Nevertheless, it was not the work *per se* that contributed to the moral downfall of women working outside the home, but rather the impossibly low wages that impoverished them. According to Aurora Gómez Rivière:

Working-class women were more susceptible to being reduced to a cheap commodity: either a labor force so exploited that prostitution was a common second employment (such as among the worker in the tobacco factory of Madrid) or a domestic service force whose most poorly paid workers often ended in the brothels or women's hospitals of Madrid such as San Juan de Dios. (qtd in *Fictions of the Feminine* 128)

Prostitution quickly became analogous with sewing as a number of seamstresses set aside their needles and fashioned themselves for the more lucrative, albeit stigmatizing, work of



providing pleasure to men. Indeed, of the former prostitutes admitted to hospitals in Madrid, 37.2% had been involved in textile production (endnote 2, *Fictions of the Feminine* 282).

For those who avoided the fate of prostitute, however, the need to maintain a desirable, fashionable appearance ensured their continued oppression. Not surprisingly, “the cycle of clothing poverty was common amongst lower-paid women and especially problematic for those in office or shop work for whom a smart and clean appearance was a necessity of employment” (Burman 8). Thus, a woman working in a dress shop typically supported the fashion industry in at least two ways: as both saleswoman and consumer. In doña Emilia’s short stories, the protagonists who work from their homes not only assume both of these roles, but also a third, that of dressmaker.

Although weaving and women are closely associated in the modern social imagery of the Western world, dressmaking as an exclusively female activity is a relatively modern concept. As Jennifer Jones attests in *Sexing la Mode*:

...despite modern cultural stereotypes of the female seamstress, making clothing for the market was not particularly associated with women in the Middle Ages. Even within the domestic economy of the family, in which early-modern women were certainly associated with spinning and needlework, women were not, for the most part, responsible for making clothing. (82)

The responsibility and the corresponding prestige of clothes making fell initially to men. During the Renaissance, when the production of clothing began to take place outside the home, women’s manufacturing of clothing decreased. Instead, women produced veils, needlework and other less lucrative garments or fashion accessories (Breward 28-31). As a

result, men's greater earning power, prestige and fame in the modern fashion industry were born.

Although fashioning women quickly became relegated to female dressmakers, vestiges of the medieval practice of men clothing women are still readily apparent centuries later. Two of the biggest names in fashion in twentieth- and early twenty-first century Spain include Amancio Ortega and Cristóbal Balenciaga, whose descriptions in biographies and news articles illustrate their dependence on seamstresses. In *Ghosts of Spain*, Giles Tremlett points out that Ortega, billionaire founder of ready-wear fashion clothing store Zara and others that form part of the Inditex empire, "employs some 45,000 people. Much of his sewing is still done by seamstress co-operatives spread throughout rural Galicia and northern Portugal. One of the secrets of his success, indeed, is that so many Galician women can sew" (350). Likewise, a July 2006 *New Yorker* article by Judith Thurman, entitled "The Absolutist: Cristóbal Balenciaga's cult of perfection," mentions how Balenciaga's widowed mother worked as a seamstress to support her children. Having learned from his mother's example, Balenciaga "designed some three hundred originals a year, from which a staff that numbered, at its height, five hundred tailors, seamstresses, fitters, pattern cutters, milliners, and specialists in embellishment filled thousands of private orders" (Thurman 58). From their training as young boys at the sewing tables of their female relatives to their loyal clientele, women were, and still are, integral to the international success of both Ortega's and Balenciaga's labels. Most important, however, the personal stories of Balenciaga and Ortega illustrate the fundamental importance of the steady hand and careful eye of the anonymous female seamstress to the name-brand designer.

Shielding one's labor from the public eye, however, was of critical importance to many seamstresses. As Pardo Bazán's short stories demonstrate, if a bourgeois woman working as a home dressmaker wished to maintain her status in Spanish society, she feigned her labor as pleasure. In *Women's Work in Rural Andalusia*, Jenny Masur points out how work and leisure are classified. She states:

So it is not the task itself that determines the classification, but the context in which the task is performed and the relationship between the performers and beneficiaries. Embroidery, for example, is an ambiguous activity: it is work when performed in an embroidery workshop or for someone else for pay; it is leisure for the rich who do not need to do regular women's chores; and it is something of both when performed by a girl preparing her trousseau while her mother takes on the burden of other household tasks. (Masur 31)

Pardo Bazán's seamstresses take advantage of the ambiguity associated with embroidery and sewing, assuring their clients that they do not sew for such mundane purposes as food or clothing, but rather to amass luxury items. So long as her production of clothing is carried out for the purpose of leisure and not necessity, a woman's status as *ángel del hogar* is not threatened. As a result, Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption proves to thrive in the lives of Pardo Bazán's fictional dressmakers.

While sewing occupies a tenuous position between labor and leisure, homemade clothing itself comes to play a complicated, at times contradictory, role. During the age of Industrialization, ready-made clothing and the department stores or boutiques in which they appeared contributed to the "consumption" of fashion. While, on the one hand, designer clothing was held in high regard, clothing manufactured by hand could either signify a less desirable imitation or a higher-quality alternative. According to Barbara Burman:

There is enough evidence of complaints about poor standards of materials, make, fit, and style in manufactured clothing in the UK and USA to suggest that women also sewed at home to guarantee themselves better and longer-lasting garments. This is likely to have been a significant motive for home dressmakers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. (8)

As with embroidery, the prestige of homemade clothing depended on the motivation at work behind its production. If the wearer used homemade clothing as a more economical alternative to store-bought fashion, the styles were viewed as inferior. With so many opportunities to “fashion” one’s reality, seamstresses were able to lift themselves and their families from poverty, turning tradition—and the dire economic situation accompanying it—on its head. In turn, the seamstresses enabled their clients to strengthen their own purchasing power, in effect cutting out the *haute couture* (male) fashion designer.

Indeed, Pardo Bazán’s characters create an economy of fashion—designed by and for women—centered on sewing. The short stories demonstrate how fashion, however, both divides and unites the female characters in a tenuous partnership. On the one hand, with clothing’s power as visual cue, fashions mark difference accorded to socioeconomic status and divide the seamstresses and clients along class lines. On the other, upper-class women provide their seamstresses with the opportunity to secure their financial freedom; a freedom, arguably, the largely homebound bourgeois women do not enjoy. Both client and seamstress, however, are provided with the means to fashion themselves anew, whether through reduced-priced homemade dresses or the funds earned by fashioning these modish alternatives.

## II. An Entrepreneur, Breadwinner, Lioness and “Casi artista”

The title of the short story “Casi artista” represents an effective starting point for an analysis of the significance of women’s work in Pardo Bazán’s *oeuvre*. It also demonstrates a key difference between the male-dominated, esteemed realm of art and that of arts and crafts. In France, as in Spain and other Western European countries, “in the midst of this incipient culture of the marketplace, the relationship between ‘the agreeable arts of clothing’ and objects of ‘high art’ posed a particularly vexing problem for philosophers, humble artisans, and female consumers alike” (Jones 115). As a result, seamstresses, unlike sculptors, painters or even fashion designers, have occupied positions in low culture. The main character of “Casi artista,” Dolores, therefore, is “almost” an artist in two ways: as a seamstress she will never enjoy the exalted title, fame or fortune of a designer and, as a woman in early twentieth-century Spain, she will not easily secure the economic independence she seeks. By using the gender-neutral term “artista” in the story’s title, however, Pardo Bazán demonstrates that artistic expression is neither an exclusively male nor female phenomena. Nevertheless, the protagonist’s inability to become a true artist, rather than “almost” one, rests not in an inherent inability, but in a society that maintains women imprisoned in often times abusive marriages.

Rather than existing as a menial, blinding task, as seen in other depictions of seamstresses in Pardo Bazán’s *oeuvre*, sewing serves as a means of escape and empowerment for Dolores while her marriage represents confinement. Upon her husband’s departure for the Americas, memories of her apprenticeship in a workshop comfort the protagonist. She fondly remembers how, prior to her marriage to Frutos, which effectively extinguished her

liveliness as well as her livelihood, “fue pizpierta aprendiz en un taller que surtía de ropa blanca a un almacén de la calle Mayor.” Once married, she abandons the skills and possibilities associated with her trade. As a newly single woman, however, “ahora, ante la necesidad, volvía a pensar en sus dedal de acero gastado por el uso y sus tijeras sutiles pendientes de la cintura” (3: 101). Her sewing tools, although used, represent the possibility of survival and a brighter future.

Despite being worn from use, descriptions of her needle, scissors and measuring stick approximate those of weaponry, enabling Dolores to fight against the moral decay embodied in her husband. The scissors occupy a space hauntingly similar to that of a gun in its holster. The *vara*, for its part, serves as her sword in this modern adaption of a *capa y espada* tale, in which Dolores, the absence of a male hero, must defend her honor. Indeed, a cape is referenced when the narrator describes the ineffectiveness of the law in protecting wives from abandonment, stating that “ella, a prohibir, y los tunos, a embarcar... y los señorones y las autoridades, a hacerles la capa” (3: 101). *La vara*, however, is charged with additional meaning: that of the benevolent fairy godmother’s wish-granting wand. When, unlike the passive heroines of the fairy tale, Dolores fashions her own future and metes out justice with her *vara*, the stick ultimately incriminates her in Frutos’s murder, providing further evidence of the law’s protection existing for men alone. Dolores’s tale serves as a reminder to women that, instead of waiting for a fairy godmother who will never appear, they must fashion their own futures utilizing the skills they possess.

While “Casi artista” illustrates how men enjoy rights not afforded to women in marriage, the workplace as a gendered space surges from the first lines of the story’s text.

Dolores searches for her husband in municipal offices, the tavern and “[e]l taller donde él trabajaba—es un modo de decir.” Although by definition workshops are places for work, in the case of Dolores’s husband, alcoholism coupled with a lack of skill or motivation and a penchant for extramarital affairs, prevents him from contributing meaningful labor. His ineffectiveness, nevertheless, sharply contrasts with the “zarandeo” that characterizes Dolores from the story’s opening (3: 101). Likewise, the public places where Dolores’s searches take her are prohibited to hard-working, morally upstanding women like her. While *el Gobierno Civil* and *oficinas municipales* reflect institutionalized power, the government buildings’ association with the masculine space of the *tavernas* in the same opening sentence express to the reader that the law does not exist for Dolores’s protection. Rather, the rights afforded by the law are to be enjoyed by men, even those who transgress moral codes, abusing alcohol and women while also committing adultery.

In addition to general references to the male-controlled institutions of legislative and legal power, the narrator alludes to a specific law that protects women. She states, “la ley dicen prohíbe que se embarquen los casados sin permiso de sus mujeres” (3: 101 emphasis added). Although the law may have been in existence, its effectiveness—put in doubt by the inclusion of “dicen”—proves dubious, allowing Dolores’s husband to emigrate to Argentina without her prior knowledge, much less her permission. The fact that the narrator and, presumably, Dolores possess a familiarity with legislation through hearsay rather than first-hand knowledge illustrates the protagonist’s alienation from society and its laws. When he returns, the narrator refers to Frutos, as “el intruso,” contrasting Dolores’s view of her estranged husband with his sense of entitlement and permanence, illustrated by his

exclamation of “¡Soy su marido!” (3: 102). Initially, the particular statute together with the entire legal structure prove ineffective in protecting Dolores from abandonment and, later, from her abusive husband and the financial ruin she works so diligently to avoid.

Gender division is reinforced by reference to Dolores’s nickname, “Cartera,” given to her not because of her own work but because of her father’s occupation. Is it an accident that Dolores-the-seamstress’s nickname has to do with the written word? Barthes’s theory of fashion as fiction and the historical associations of weaving and storytelling would lead us to suspect that it is not. The otherwise hidden pain and suffering that are exposed in the short story are as private as the contents of a letter, but representative of the depravation—particularly that which husbands cause—disguised by many women like the fictionalized Dolores. Text and textile as well as sewing and art combine in the description of the most expensive and labor-intensive project that Dolores undertakes, the “canastilla de hijo millonario.” Described as “un poema de incrustaciones, realces y pliegues,” the outfit exists as a literary as well as sartorial work of art communicating both the wearer’s wealth and the seamstress’s talent (3: 102).

Although the narrator is unabashed in her negative portrayal of the womanizing, alcoholic Frutos, she acknowledges his one redeeming quality: bringing home “una corteza de pan,” representing the meager *frutos* of his labors (3: 101). The name “Frutos,” like the image of the weaving women, is one that enjoys a long history in Spanish fiction, including José María Pereda’s *Don Gonzalo González de la Gonzalera* and Clarín’s *La Regenta*. These authors, nevertheless, derive their inspiration from a medieval character whose name is associated with that of a particular *fruto*, Don Melón de la Huerta of *El libro de buen amor*.



In *El libro de buen amor* references to themes central to Pardo Bazán's modernist fiction, such as honor, the role of love in marriage and sewing appear. Don Melón emphasizes that he wishes to marry for love, not for money, a feeling he contrasts with the desires of his family. He states, “Deseaban mis parientes casarme en esta sazón / con una doncella rica, hija de don Pepión; a todos di por respuesta que no la querría, no / mi cuerpo será de aquella que tiene mi corazón!” (Ruiz 658). Doña Endrina, justifiably concerned with the risk that appearing alone with Don Melón represents for her *honra*, requires “needling” from Trotaconventos. The matchmaker gains admittance to doña Endrina's house stating “¡Llevo toallas! ¡Compradme aquestos manteles!” and, once inside, “poco a poco, así la aguja” (Ruiz 723, 724). References to linens and needles, whether figurative or literal, play a role throughout Ruiz's work and, as in Pardo Bazán's short stories, symbolize women's work and, indeed, power.

Shame, a common thread in the short stories in this chapter as well as Spanish literature throughout the ages, plays a central role in the characterization of Dolores's pain. While the handkerchief appears again in “Casi artista,” unlike that depicted in “El pañuelo,” it assumes a more utilitarian role of masking the shame that suffocates Dolores as she searches for her husband. Once Dolores suspects that Frutos has left for Buenos Aires, the narrator describes how “a boca de noche, abochornada” Dolores “se deslizó” in the warehouse and “en voz baja pidió labor «para su casa», pues no podía abandonar a las criaturas” (3: 101-02). Her mission is necessarily secretive as to not draw attention to her need for employment or the fact that her husband has abandoned her. The narrator expresses sympathy for Dolores's plight when she states, “¡como si fuera ella quien hubiese hecho el

mal!” (3: 102). Throughout the short story Dolores assumes the shame and embarrassment that Frutos should feel for his (in)action and abandonment.

Once gainfully employed, however, Dolores provides her family with bread, a home, and, for the male child, a formal education. The benefits of Dolores’s labor are evident in the “piso modesto, limpio, con vista al mar” that she occupies with her son who “concurría a un colegio” and her daughter who “ayudaba a su madre.” Dolores establishes a clientele of *señoras* who are attracted not only by the *equipos* and *canastillas* that she fashions but by her precision and ability as well. From the customers and employees she has secured to a hard-won reputation and advertisements in the newspaper, Dolores seems to have “made it.” Although the narrator continues to refer to Dolores as *la Cartera*, the protagonist refashions her identity from the wife of a drunken carpenter to a hardworking, clean, “semiartista.” “Aunque todavía fresca y apetecible”, the narrator assures the reader, “la Cartera guardaba su honra con cuidado religioso” (3: 102). Despite *la Cartera*’s ability to attract men, and, presumably, earn money as a prostitute, she resists the temptation that many seamstresses in her epoch were unable to ignore and maintains, indeed, fortifies her honorable reputation.

In contrast to his hardworking wife, Frutos, the “carpintero vicioso,” returns home unable to survive the demands of work in the “New World” (3: 102). Dolores, initially the self-abnegating wife, agrees that, in return for promising to respect “la labor de ella, su negocio, su industria ya fundada, su arte elegante,” Frutos may eat, drink and smoke “a cuenta de su mujer.” However, the accord between spouses, as delicate as lace, quickly becomes undone by Frutos’s “orgullo de varón.” Dolores insists that Frutos take his “oficiala” lover to another space, “a un sitio en que tus diversiones no me manchen la labor.”

As a seamstress, Dolores has encountered her own position in society and her own voice. She will not stand for his sexual escapades, but her admonishment causes the intoxicated Frutos to “meterse con la ropa blanca.” After spitting on the floor, throwing the cigars and “manoseando” the clothes, Frutos “se ponía las enaguas bromeando, se probaba los camisones” (3: 103). Threatened by his wife’s success and overcome with envy, he secures her—as well as his own—demise by ruining her artwork, disguising himself in women’s clothing and literally staining them as he sullies his wife’s reputation.

Prior to authoring their tragic ending, Frutos effectively writes his own text over that of Dolores’s palimpsest in various instances, disguising—and silencing—the poetry of her art form. When he initially enters her new home without permission, he invades her space with his “terno y la colilla ardiendo,” which “chamuscó el encaje de Richelieu de una sábana de cuna.” “Terno,” in addition to the definition used here, “voto, juramento o amenaza,” also signifies “conjunto de pantalón, chaleco y chaqueta, u otra prenda semejante, hechos de una misma tela” (“Terno”). The image of the well-dressed gentleman, however, sharply contrasts with not only the appearance but with Frutos’s behavior, too. The first utterance from Frutos, which contains a grammatical error, demonstrates the difference in expression between the two spouses. Referring to his wife, Frutos states, “a cualquier hora ‘me se’ figura que la podré ver” (3: 102). He makes his mark, albeit a destructive one, on the text of the fabric, disrupting not only the appearance and functionality of the textile, but his wife’s work. Similarly, the *terno* employed by Frutos, unlike the prestige language of the fabric’s poetry, causes alarm in the children. The narrator recalls Frutos’s destruction of the *equipo de novia* of one of Dolores’s clients during an exposition with the careful precision used by

Dolores to produce her art. First, he begins to “disparar pullas picantes, a glosar, en el vocabulario de la taberna, los pantalones y los corsés, las prendas íntimas, florecidas de azahar...” of the bride (3: 103). Although Dolores artistically crafts the garments as a poet crafts verses, Frutos destroys them with the pedestrian language of the tavern.

In ruining the *equipo de novia*, Frutos destroys his marriage and, as a result, jeopardizes the hard-earned socioeconomic position of Dolores, from which he shamelessly has profited. Although Frutos causes irreparable damage to his marriage when he embarks to the American continent, it is only when he provides visual and tactile evidence—*vis à vis* the soiled wedding garments—that his and Dolores’s fate, both as man and wife and as individuals in their town, are sealed. Frutos’s brutish actions contradict female dignity as well as male honor and, in a society where women’s reputations are tied to their husbands’, by desecrating her creations, he ensures Dolores’s downfall for a second time.

When Dolores exacts her revenge, she is described as having become a “leona,” and, as a lioness protects her young, the seamstress protects her labor in order to shield her children from harm. While once she defended “la corteza para comer,” now she defends “el ideal de hermosura cifrado en la obra.” In addition to the practical benefits her *oeuvre* represents, *el equipo de novia* encapsulates the modernist notion of art for art’s sake. In this modernist picture, however, Frutos does not fit. Whereas Dolores’s hands and other equipment previously existed as her weapons against poverty, now “la vara de metrar puntilla fue arma terrible...” (3: 103). Having opened the door to the outside world, Frutos falls down the stairs to his death. The entryway, a neutral space, neither public nor completely private, is where the story ends. The presence of the son of an *oficiala*, however, leaves the

reader suspecting that Dolores, broken measuring stick in hand, will be again imprisoned by “officials,” implicated in the death of her “uncivil” husband. Even in death, sewing plays a vital role in descriptions of Frutos’s destructive character, as evidenced by the “hilo de sangre” which runs from his temple and whose description ends the short story (3: 104). In no means, however, does it provide closure. Instead, it is suggested that Dolores and Frutos will remain connected by this unbreakable *hilo*.

According to the narrator, Dolores’s pain, or the “discretas confidencias de esas penas domésticas,” is one “con que toda hembra simpatiza” (3: 102). What is particularly important to garner from this reference to “toda hembra” in the context of Pardo Bazán’s modernist *oeuvre* is that women share a common hardship in Spanish society, most notably, a lack of equality with men. Although women of a higher economic class are afforded many luxuries, they, just as Dolores’s daughter, are prohibited from attending *el colegio* because of their gender. Dolores, nevertheless, thrives in a community and economy of women. Her loneliness and betrayal by her husband and the legislative system, however, are expressed by the enigmatic tone of the story’s conclusion.

Instead of exclamations that appear throughout the text, representing both Frutos’s and Dolores’s voices, in the final paragraph the narrator inserts questions that are not—perhaps cannot—be answered: “¿Era ella quien había sacudido así? ¿Era ella la que todavía apretaba la vara hecha astillas?” (3: 104). Although Frutos is never penalized for abandonment or infidelity, the reader assumes that la Cartera will be as incapable of escaping punishment for her husband’s death as she was in evading his abuse. Among the enduring resources in her life are the scissors she wears on her hip and the thimble that shields her

finger, emblematic of the weapons for “toda hembra” and the skills that they possess. Unfortunately, Dolores’s weapons may prove to be inept against a patriarchal, institutionalized power structure.

### III. Instinctual Differences in “El paraguas” and “Instintivo”

As victims of abandonment, the seamstresses in “El paraguas” and “Instintivo” find themselves in positions that approximate Dolores’s in their difficulty. A comparison of the two short stories, nevertheless, highlights differences in the manifestation of restrictive gender roles among Pardo Bazán’s characters. While the female protagonists of “El paraguas” overcome the deceit with which their male relative attempts to shroud them, proving themselves equal to men, Elvira, the protagonist of “Instintivo,” is unable to escape the romanticized notions instilled in her. Unlike the other sewing protagonists of Pardo Bazán’s short fiction, Elvira does not utilize her talents to prosper economically as she fails to envision a future without Miguel, her fiancé, as her husband. Doña Emilia therefore illustrates the importance of education and empowerment in a woman’s ability to succeed.

At first, Ángeles of “El paraguas” appears to be as dependent on her father as Elvira of “Instintivo” is on her fiancé, jealously—and silently—guarding her father’s umbrella in hopes of his return. On the day he abandons his family, Máxima points out that her umbrella, which her husband Señor Broade wishes to borrow, is too small for a man and antiquated. He responds by stating that his is older and that “la tela ya no se sujetaba, de puro rota en jirones, a las varillas.” The cloth has come undone from the small poles, just as the marriage has, too, come undone. Drawing her mother’s attention to the umbrella that is delivered to the women’s home by “un hombre desconocido, muy rubio, con traza de extranjero” two

months after Señor Broade's disappearance, Ángeles exclaims that “¡el paraguas es la prueba de que mi padre vive!” (3: 394, 95). Indeed, Señor Broade opts to dutifully—and, as he does so through an intermediary, cowardly—return the umbrella to its rightful owners. While the umbrella's presence provides a visual reminder of Señor Broade's role as both protector and deserter in Ángeles and Máxima's life, it also confirms their irrelevance in his new life and thus the inherent inequality in the relationship between the man and the two women. While the umbrella provides evidence of his prosperity, it confirms the women's poverty.

Like Ángeles's father, the new umbrella is “magnífico,” standing in direct contrast to initial descriptions of the women. The umbrella has “ese aspecto confortable que caracteriza a los productos de la industria inglesa; y lo elegante del puño, lo rico de la seda, lo recio y bien modelado de las bellotas que, pendientes de un cordón, decoraban el mago, producían una impresión de lujo.” Nevertheless, the characters who inhabit the “vergonzante” space that surrounds the umbrella are, as the narrator describes, “vestidas también ellas, no diré de andrajos, pero de trapitos ala de mosca—vueltos, recosidos y rezurcidos—” (3: 393). Their garments are not only sewn and darned, they are re-sewn and re-darned to further their use. While the closely related *andrajos* and *trapos* are translated as “rags” in English, “trapos” describe cloth used to dry, clean or dust, conveying an image of labor more appropriate for the hardworking women who dress themselves in the *trapitos*. The reference to rags is also significant for its use in the colloquial expression “hecho un trapo,” which signifies “derrotado, deprimido o trastornado” (“Hecho un trapo”). While initially the negative characteristics of the rags they wear are transferred upon the women, the positive qualities embodied by the *trapitos* quickly prevail.

The women's poverty exists as a result of their abandonment by Señor Broade. Rather than sympathize with the plight of the women he left behind, however, Broade's coworkers assure one another that the reason he fled was to escape their "babosos cariños," effectively blaming his wife and daughter for their predicament. The narrator shares an insightful detail about the man who starts the jokes, describing him as "cómico de afición, que solía representar, en noviemebre, el 'Tenorio'" (3: 394). Like the misogynistic don Juan, the *cómico* derives pleasure from insulting women whose behavior in relation to men results from norms dictated by a male-dominated society. Similarly, doña Máxima maintains the parallel between Pardo Bazán's conniving characters and Lazarillo de Tormes when she refers to her husband as "¡Pícaro!" (3: 396). Regardless of the playful nicknames used to characterize Señor Broade, he ultimately escapes ridicule while his female relatives receive the most enduring insults for a situation they did not willingly create.

As the narrator describes, Señor Broade "había sido para ambas en culto el marido, el padre" (3: 394). After his disappearance, the umbrella replaces Señor Broade as an icon of cult worship. The mother's reaction to the returned item is bewildering; she is thrilled to think that her husband has remembered her in spite of his treatment of her. The daughter searches for a reason to explain her father's abandonment by asking her mother, "¿No le quisimos? ¿No le obedizamos? ¿No le adoraste como a un santo?" (3: 395). The questions demonstrate the self-abnegating behavior that doña Máxima believes to be suitable for women in relation to men and that she has been bestowed onto her daughter. Ángeles's use of rhetorical questions also proves that inequality does not represent the answer to a successful marriage.



Máxima and Ángeles, nevertheless, replace reliance on Señor Broade and his umbrella with dependence on the needle, a more powerful, sometimes crippling, phallic symbol of power, in order to disguise their depravation. When the narrator states, “bordaban primorosamente, y tomaron la aguja, cruel amiga de la mujer, que la mantiene y la ciega,” he summarizes the complicated relationship that exists between women and sewing. Máxima’s words prove that the greatest enemy after the needle and her husband is herself. She asks Ángeles “que a nadie digas nada de esto... Yo, desde le primer día, callé, callé. Cualquier cosa que se charlase pudiera perjudicar a tu padre... No hay nada como el silencio... Y además, ¡tu padre tenía derecho a hacer lo que quisieses! Se fue: ¡sus motivos tendría!” Together with her labor, Máxima’s silence disguises her depravity and enables Señor Broade, “un hombre del cual nada malo se dijo nunca,” to maintain his honorable reputation (3: 393). Ángeles, however, represents the voice of reason, reminding her mother that “mi padre no solo nos dejó sin amparo, sino que dispuso de lo poco que guardabas para hacer frente a la miseria” (3: 395). Doña Máxima proves unable to face the reality that her daughter has proven herself worthy of confronting, opting instead to present a falsified appearance of domestic tranquility. Like other characters, Máxima instead threatens suicide; assuring her daughter that if their misery is made public she will throw herself into the sea.

The two women’s reaction to the 1,000 guineas transferred to them further confirms their divergent views of Señor Broade. Ángeles tells her mother that the money exists “a modo de otro paraguas que te dan en cambio del que se llevaron tuyo” (3: 395). With payment of the guineas, the father not only frees himself from his wife and daughter, but also reinforces the phallic and economic power embodied in the umbrella. Although Máxima

believes the remittance announces her husband's return and represents sacrifices he made on their account, Ángeles attests that the money solidifies his abandonment and that he has made a fortune abroad. Nevertheless, the mother's response to her daughter's interpretation of the money is "¡ingrata!" reflecting the eternal hopefulness—and denial—of the abandoned woman. Indeed, the tardiness of the money's arrival is confirmed by the description of the mother as simply "la ciega" (3: 396). She is blinded by the needle, but more important, is unable to see the sad reality that characterizes her life as *ángel del hogar* in comparison with that of her Tenorio-like husband, freed from guilt and the confines of traditional, bourgeois marriage described as "la cadena conyugal" (3: 394).

While references to don Juan Tenorio unite "El paraguas" and "Instintivo," the latter relies on intertextuality to provide a contrast to romantic fiction, betraying the inner conflict Elvira, the protagonist, experiences. Similar to the character by the same name in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, a 1787 operatic adaptation of the don Juan legend, Elvira patiently awaits a lover who deserts her, passing the time by sewing her *equipo de novia*. Moreover, like *Romeo and Juliet* and *La Celestina*, the female protagonist takes her own life when union with her fiancé proves impossible. However, unlike Shakespeare's play, it is a single rather than double suicide that is portrayed in "Instintivo." The male lover, Miguel, cuts his ties with Elvira succinctly and without apparent remorse in order to lead the life he desires. He alludes to suicide, however, when stating that "era todo su porvenir aquella boda, y tiraría por la ventana el porvenir si la rehusase" (3: 374). Nevertheless, it is Elvira who finds herself without a future. Believing herself undesirable, she denies the advances of a young man who appears the day she commits suicide, referred to as "el madrugador Tenorio," a modern

adaption of Tirso de Molina's don Juan character, who asks to accompany her as she walks through the streets. When he speaks to her she is surprised to find that "no la fuese desagradable oír hablar de amor" (3: 377). Although Miguel's abandonment has heightened her interest in romance, Elvira will not permit another man to rescue her nor, possibly, to provide her with happiness.

Despite references to romantic tales throughout the text, "Elvira no era romántica," as the narrator assures the reader (3: 374). Indeed, he later reveals that her motivation for marrying is not for love but rather to escape her stepfather's house, demonstrating her lack of possibilities outside of marriage. The narrator states that "cuando pensaba en Miguel, se decía, *ante todo*, que al casarse también ella dejaría de ver la odiada figura del padrastro" (3: 375 emphasis added). As this quote illustrates, when thinking about Miguel, Elvira's thoughts turn to what marriage represents rather than what her feelings towards him specifically include. Again referring to her inner dialogue, the narrator claims that Elvira "nunca se había dicho a sí misma, pensando en Miguel: «O su amor o la muerte». Se muere de las tifoideas, de la tuberculosis, de las pulmonías" (3: 374-75). Elvira's opinion of the power of love and its role in death, however, quickly changes.

Elvira's dreams, described as "los sueños de niño," are contrasted with "la realidad" that "surgía" once she learns that her fiancé chooses to be made a partner in "la casa de comercio de Bilbao" by marrying the owner's daughter (3: 374). Although her convictions lead her to believe that one does not die for love, her romantic ideals, instilled in her in childhood, become apparent and, together with self-doubt, prove inescapable. The desire to include "«Univira»: De uno solo" on her headstone uphold the traditional notion of love and

marriage while also raising the possibility of committing suicide. She believes that love “venía sólo una vez” but does not question whether true love characterizes her relationship with Miguel, instead focusing on his rejection of her (3: 375). Contrasting her initial thoughts about death and love, she contemplates throwing herself from the window, as Melibea from *La Celestina* does.

Descriptions of the pain that Elvira suffers contrast with the romantic tragedies referred to in the text and demonstrate to the reader that “Instintivo” represents a modern interpretation of the traditional love story. Her feelings of nausea are described as “prosaico fenómeno, bien diferente de las poéticas señales de sentimiento que se describen, en las novelas y dramas, en casos como el de la abandonada, cuyo suceso se narra aquí” (3: 376). With an additional nod to realism, the narrator notes that Elvira “sentía como un gran vacío en su ser. Acaso fuese hambre,” proving himself able to dismiss the romantic notions that Elvira maintains (3: 376). The realistic description of her suicide also reflects the anti-romantic tone of the text. Elvira throws herself in front of a passing streetcar, emblematic of modernity<sup>16</sup>, which “magulló contra el corazón las costillas.” Rather than referring to thoughts about Miguel or love, the narrator concludes the short story after providing graphic details of her death with the declaration, “Instantáneo todo” (3: 377). Elvira’s demise is quick and efficient and, like the 1906 painting entitled “Instantánea” by the Spanish artist Joaquín Sorolla, signals the dawn of a new, high-speed age that threatens to leave traditionally minded men and women behind.

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<sup>16</sup> A streetcar also causes the demise of the title character in Clarín’s *Doña Berta* as well as Conrado in Pardo Bazán’s “En verso.”

Although she chooses a modern invention to bring about her demise, references to sewing and clothing represent Elvira's traditional upbringing, embodying both an escape as well as confinement. She adheres to realistic notions of death by disease rather than for love, "Al menos cuando estuviese en su estado normal, sin pena aguda, sentada en su cierre de cristales, haciendo un dobladillo o pegando una puntilla" (3: 375). Although preparing her wedding gown maintains Elvira's hope, her pastime represents her imprisonment rather than freedom, economic or otherwise. As the narrator describes, "Coser aquel equipo modesto representaba cientos de noches de velar hasta el amanecer, con los ojos hinchados, la vista desvanecida," demonstrating that Elvira sacrifices her youth as well as her health for unrequited love (3: 374). When she departs for the street, she flees "hasta del equipo." Nevertheless, the clothing with which she dresses approximates that of a bride, including "el abrigo largo y el velillo," demonstrating that her life as well as death is intertwined with her identity as Miguel's future wife (3: 376).

Fabrics are intertwined not only in description of Elvira, but in those related to Miguel as well. The letter, in which he declares himself free from the marital compromise, contains "ribetes de humilde," approximating fringe that adorns the hem of a dress. The letter, nevertheless, is more than a "pedazo de papel." Elvira raises the possibility that, like the umbrella in "El paraguas," the letter represents *una prueba*, both a test and proof. Although it does not exist as a means of testing her love for him, it does test her ability to live without him and ultimately provides proof that their engagement has ended. Above all, the letter is the final contact between the two former lovers, silencing Elvira forever. "No

había respuesta ni objeción posible” as the narrator attests (3: 374). Having yielded total control of her future and ignoring her skills, Elvira finds herself without options.

In addition to sewing, language plays an important role in Elvira’s relationship to Miguel, as evidenced by the repetition of “cifrar” in the story’s text. Meaning “transcribir en guarismos, letras o símbolos, de acuerdo con una clave, un mensaje cuyo contenido se quiere ocultar,” “valorar cuantitativamente, en especial pérdidas y ganancia,” and “compendiar, reducir muchas cosas a una, o un discurso a pocas palabras,” the verb describes what marriage to Miguel has come to signify for Elvira: a home and motherhood (“Cifrar”). In order to maintain a life after Miguel, the narrator describes Elvira’s task as:

Empezar otra vez a forjarse un porvenir; arrancarse del alma no solo aquel cariño, sino todo lo que era su consecuencia y su corolario, el hogar, la maternidad, que había *cifrado* en un solo hombre, y que no veía manera de *cifrar* en otro diferente... (3: 375 emphasis added)

Just as she has transcribed, hidden and reduced all her hopes onto Miguel, Elvira abandons everything once he rejects her, including “el bonito equipo orlado de espumas de encajes de imitación, pero finos y vaporosos, y tan lindamente marcado con cifras y escudos, sobre el sitio que corresponde al corazón” (3: 376). Emblematic of the imitative nature of Elvira’s relationship with Miguel, the “encajes de imitación” exist as a romanticized dream rather than reality. The “cifras” in the garment, for their part, represent both Elvira’s coded intentions and numerical figures, indicative of the financial security she will obtain through marriage.

The contradictory nature of “Instintivo” represents the inner conflict of many early twentieth-century women who struggled against society’s expectations. While instinct

usually functions as a way to protect life, Elvira's instinct tragically leads to her death. It is clear that Elvira takes her own life not purely from a romantic ideal, but due to the limiting, misogynistic belief that, at the age of twenty-nine, her possibilities of finding another husband are severely limited. While Elvira embodies the past, Ángeles represents the future in which women utilize their strengths to overcome adversity. The depictions of the two young female protagonists who possess widely divergent values illustrate how a woman's happiness and, indeed, survival depends on possession of the ability to disregard detractors, whether external or internal, to forge her own destiny without reliance on a male partner.

#### IV. "El mundo" and "La vergüenza": Shame on Whom?

Comparing "El mundo" and "La vergüenza" also yields insightful information about men's and women's roles in society. Although Pardo Bazán's seamstresses all labor within their homes, sisters Germana and Dionisia in "El mundo" successfully expose a fashionable self to the outside world, masking their pain privately while gaining fame publicly for their work. They work because "no vamos a dejar en vergüenza la memoria de mamá," failing to mention the fate of their father whose absence has surely caused the family's downfall (3: 66). Indeed, no single male character exists in "El mundo," which represents the world of women in relationship to each other. On the contrary, *vergüenza* inhibits the female protagonist, Carmela la *Vergonzosa*, of "La vergüenza" from fulfilling her life's dreams, never marrying the man she loves. Despite serving as a motivator for the two sisters and Carmela, the results of the characters' shame are markedly different, illustrating early twentieth-century women's changing attitudes towards themselves and their abilities as well as rights.

Among the differences in the two texts is the narrative style employed by the author. An unnamed third-person narrator relates “El mundo” to the reader, which is originally recounted to him by Germana. Although he primarily relies on dialogue to advance the story’s plot, he informs the reader of how Germana sold her first toilette “de las que hicieron la reputación de las famosas hermanas Ramos.” While conversations between Germana and the narrator produce the text of the short story, dialogue between the sisters and their former friends serves to demonstrate the interdependence of the seamstresses and their clients. It also provides a contrast between the public face and the private turmoil that the sisters mask. At the story’s conclusion, the narrator frames Germana’s final, brutally honest quote with the remark, “decíame Germana, al referirme su escondida tragedia,” garnering the reader access to the sisters’ story that the other characters do not enjoy. “La vergüenza,” on the other hand, is narrated in the first-person by an anonymous storyteller whose perspective is that of a visitor to a small town and voyeur. He directs his comments to the reader, stating that, in a *pueblo*, “lo primero que averiguáis son las historias íntimas de las mujeres” (3: 31). Ironically, however, “La vergüenza” is primarily the narrator’s story, as he never gains first-hand access to the intimate details of Carmela la *Vergonzosa*’s life, choosing instead to worship her from afar.

Whether directly quoted or not, mothers play a fundamental role in “La vergüenza” and “El mundo,” representing the values of a soon-to-be bygone era while their daughters embody the ability to facilitate the arrival of the New Woman. Similar to the mother in “El paraguas,” in “El mundo” Germana’s ailing mother ironically calls her “ingrata” for leaving her alone for long lengths of time (3: 67). She insists that her daughters do not comprehend



the gravity of their situation, stating, “Creéis que únicamente hemos bajado de posición... Ayer me entregasteis carta del tío Manolo, que ha terminado la liquidación de nuestra fortuna... Estamos completamente arruinadas” (3: 66). She does not offer solutions to their situation, however, choosing instead to forego calling the doctor in order to save money. At first, Dionisia’s reaction parallels that of her mother’s. Crying in the corner, when Dionisia proves hesitant to take her mother’s savings from her armoire, Germana asks her sister, “¿prefieres pedir limosna?” and spearheads the effort to change their situation through work rather than charity (3: 67).

The family’s past splendor is evident in descriptions of their own wealth and that of the daughters’ friends, beginning with the transitory “belleza del diablo” that once characterized the young sisters before caring for their ill mother turned them pale (3: 65). The narrator also describes the “salita amueblada con cierto lujo, reliquia del bienestar antiguo” (3: 66). Although he demonstrates the relationship between the sisters’ wealth and their well-being as well as beauty, he does not provide a description of how their fortune was lost. Nevertheless, Germana and Dionisia are motivated not only by a desire to secure their previous wealth and social status, but to maintain the honor of their mother. As a result, they hide their labor production from her as well.

The sisters decide, “trabajaremos,” convincing themselves that, through hard work, they will lift themselves from the dire straits of poverty. Germana assures Dionisia that they will even “volver a tener coche” (3: 66). Germana’s creations include “el traje de sociedad, el de calle, el de abrigo y hasta el alborotado, insolente, enorme sombrero,” which, apart from reminding readers of Nati’s unweilding headpiece in “La manga,” demonstrates

the frivolity of the daughter's creations (3: 67). First using rags to dress miniature models, the sisters use their mother's clothing to fashion their clients in the latest sartorial trends. The clothing that the sisters create for their clients approximates that with which Germana clothes herself to garner their business. The narrator states, "Vistóse Germana con elegancia y coquetería: traje sastre de fino paño marrón; toca azul, donde anidaba un pajarito tornasolado" (3: 66). Unlike other female characters discussed in this dissertation, however, she dresses herself not to flirt with men, but to win back the favor of women. The dotted veil behind which Germana hides conceals as it frames her face, projecting a fashionable image to the outside world.

She not only dresses, but plays the part as well. Germana enters their houses "decidida, sonriente bajo el velito de motas; un ramillo de violetas naturales, preso en la solapa." Rather than begging, Germana "soltaba el discurso, no en tono suplicante, sino como el que pide lo que se le debe" (3: 66). She does not emphasize their losses, but instead points to the luxury with which she and her family once lived and reminds her friends that her disposition and good taste are permanent traits. Germana assures her old friends that she and her sister do not find themselves "lo que se dice en grave apuro," but admits that they do miss "el coche, los abonos, los viajes." While the coach and trips symbolize their desire for movement, the theater tickets embody their wish to see and be seen. Sewing provides them the means to do all of the above and to make themselves "más ricas que nunca," as Germana indicates to her former friends (3: 67).

Germana relies on associations with French culture in general and French fashion in particular to win back the favor of her friends because "al espejuelo de la elegancia

extranjera, la mujer acude, y acudió.” First she states, “yo tengo disposición, buen gusto, algo de chic.” Later, she mentions “una modista muy elegante de Biarritz” who used to dress her and her sister and whose styles they plan to reproduce for their customers at a discount. She continues by explaining how they will make “las toilettes y los sombreros; todo completo” in their *taller* (3: 67). By associating themselves with French fashion and with accessories that embody conspicuous consumption along with hard work, the sisters are able to elevate their social standing beyond that with which their father provided them.

Reading between the lines, the reader must suspect that the friends find themselves in threatened economic situations or they would have the means to buy directly from *madama Lagaze* whose creations incite the attention of passersby. Perhaps the sisters are not the only ones disguising their depravation. Germana even assures one of her friends that buying her tailored garments, “es en ventaja tuya” (3: 67). Indeed, the sisters’ relationships with their clientele prove advantageous to all involved. Germana summarizes her story of success when she reveals to the narrator, “hay que pedir con soberbia y para lujo; no para comer...” (3: 68). By maintaining this philosophy, Germana and Dionisia not only have enough to eat, but are able to acquire fame and fortune while their clients maintain their standing in society.

Although wealth and fashion do not interest Carmela *la Vergonzosa*, the protagonist of “La vergüenza,” her story too, deals with the notion of honor as well as the act of sewing in an enclosed, private space. It is a male narrator who communicates the tale, with the townspeople existing as additional storytellers, enveloping Carmela in texts as layered as the clothing with which she shields herself from public view. The narrator also draws attention to the practice of “la exageración de lo conocido” (3: 31). Similar to other of Pardo Bazán’s

short stories, hyperbole characterizes “La vergüenza” and serves to illustrate twentieth-century Spanish women’s need to overcome imprisoning feelings of shame<sup>17</sup>. Whether one believes it is shame or dignity that characterizes Carmela depends on whether one approaches the story from a feminist or romantic perspective and illustrates the role gender plays in interpretations of the short story. The person who can substantiate the claims—Carmela—lacks a voice and is rendered unable to communicate her tale.

The narrator creates a bond with his readers, stating that during a stay in a small town, “lo primero que averiguáis son las historias íntimas de las mujeres y los fregados y guisados políticos de los hombres.” His statement not only demonstrates the bourgeois gender divide, deeming the home the suitable space for women, but also reinforces the narrator’s claim in “Casi artista” that the law exists for men alone. The narrator continues by stating that “a menudo alábase un pueblo de encerrar en su recinto a la hembra más alegre de cascos, o a la más honesta y recatada” (3: 31). He then warns that fame leads to vanity, another trait traditionally associated with women in the Western imaginary. The reader, especially the twenty-first-century reader, is thus provided with insight into the values and expectations early twentieth-century Spain held towards women.

The narrator’s presence in the village converts him into curious spectator, rescuer and worshiper, his male gaze normalizing as it observes. Always giving rather than receiving, Carmela, for her part, provides her pueblo and the narrator with the self-esteem every inhabitant of towns without “iglesias góticas, ni cuadros del *Greco*” seeks, existing as a homegrown piece of art to be contemplated (3: 31). While the narrator believes shame

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<sup>17</sup> Pardo Bazán also explores questions of punishment and shame as well as the disparate treatment of men and women who engage in sexual activity outside of marriage in her short story “Sor Aparición.”

impedes Carmela from presenting herself to him, he does not consider that it could be fear that paralyzes her. After mass, he writes, “la seguí” and “espié sus ventanas,” focusing on the visual pleasure Carmela represents for him rather than what his presence possibly signifies for her (3: 32, 33). When he states Carmelas as “a quien me propuse conocer y tartar,” he demonstrates that he not only wants to speak with her, but also have amorous relations and possibly “treat” her for an illness (3: 31). In short, he wants to play the fairy tale hero to her captive heroine, weaving his own story into that of Carmela’s when he visits her town. He admits at the end of the short story, however, that “sería ya un descanto para mí si Caremla se asomase,” preferring the romanticized legend to the woman of flesh and bone (3: 33).

While the townspeople create a legend about Carmela, the narrator develops a cult-like devotion to her. He assures the reader that he would have written Carmela “una carta incendiaria” or jumped the walls of the garden if it hadn’t been for “la fuerza de aquella vergüenza sagrada, celestial, el verdadero atractivo de Carmela para mí.” By equating her shame with a sacred, celestial force, the narrator creates a parallel between Carmela and the Virgin Mary. Indeed, his worship of the cloistered woman approximates that of Mary when he describes himself as “postrado ante la imagen de *la Vergonzosa*” and his love as becoming a cult (3: 33).

Carmela, having internalized societal values dictating women’s purity and virginity and the shame created by amorous or sexual relations, proves unable to accept the advances of a man truly in love with her. The primo indiano, whether offering her marriage, the house or her privacy, demonstrates the love and respect Carmela seeks. Rather than admit to her

mother her desire to marry, Carmela leads a cloistered life, which represents the only respectable lifestyle traditionally available to women in Spain outside of marriage.

Conversely, *el primo indiano*, unlike his female relatives who never leave the village, has enjoyed the opportunity to travel to the American continent. Once her cousin marries her sister instead, Carmela continues to be enveloped in shame, brought about by “aquella adoración tímida” that he displays towards her (3: 32). In contrast, the curious narrator, believing he has fallen in love with her, exhibits gratitude towards Carmela for allowing him to blindly confirm the values instilled in him with respect to male and female roles within society, expressing his adoration not “timidly,” but rather *sin vergüenza*.

Although the cousin offers her the entire inheritance, which has passed to him as the sole male heir rather than to Carmela or her sister, “Carmela, avergonzada, solo aceptó la casita y el huerto” (3: 32). The protective walls of the garden and the small house hide Carmela from the shame and injustice, as well as the pleasures, of the outside world. Allusions to apple and pear trees as well as the turtledove align her with the natural world with which women are traditionally associated. Her imprisonment, although self-imposed, as well as her long blonde hair that almost touches the floor, also conjure images of the fairy-tale figure, Rapunzel. Unlike the endings of the Grimms’ tale, however, no man is capable of freeing Carmela from her self-imprisoned shame.

In addition to her feelings of *vergüenza*, sewing and fabric characterize Carmela. Like the seamstresses, she sews for others in order to to dress herself. Specifically, “cosía de blanco para fuera, y la costura le daba con qué vestir y calzar, cebar la lámpara de petróleo” as well as “otras humilidísimas necesidades de su existencia casi monástica.” Descriptions of

Carmela's dress serve to demonstrate her life in mourning. Although she sews white clothing for her clients, in mass, "un pañuelo de seda oscuro cubría su cabeza." Similarly, she adorns her hair with black ribbons, which contrast with her blonde braids, "como haz de hebras de luz que asiese apretadamente una mano" (3: 32). Her mourning clothes symbolize not only her lost love, but also what amounts to her own death in cloistered life.

Once the narrator catches a glimpse of Carmela, his description reveals the blending of the material of Vergonzosa's clothing with her skin. As she lowers "los luengos párpados de seda," the silk of her headscarf becomes confused with the skin of her eyelids. Although this description demonstrates the desire the narrator feels for *la Vergonzosa*, it also demonstrates how, due to the prevalence of her shame, the mourning dress envelopes Carmela and her body absorbs it, blurring distinction between the color of the cloth and the darkness that characterizes Carmela's existence. In an additional reference to silk, the narrator describes her "boca sinuosa, acapullada" as revealing the woman's passion (3: 32). Nevertheless, it also reveals her cocoon-like status, prohibiting her from opening her mouth to defend herself with her mother or her storyteller(s).

The use of the male voice allows Pardo Bazán to illustrate the differences between dominant views of women and her own, feminist values. While doña Emilia entitles the short story "La vergüenza," the narrator questions the appropriateness of the term. He asks, "¿No tendría otro modo de ser este nombre?... ¿No se llamará «dignidad»?" (3: 32). The question he poses demonstrates his positive characterization of Carmela's feelings. Like *el ángel del hogar*, the narrator turns Carmela into a domestic goddess to be revered for her purity and self-abnegation above all else. For Pardo Bazán, however, shame imprisons

Carmela in an undignified manner rendering her paralyzed, unable to fulfill herself as Dionisia and Germana of “El mundo” do, breaking the bonds of shame that threaten to imprison them in poverty. “El mundo” and “La vergüenza” demonstrate the differences afforded women according to their self-esteem and the danger that adherence to traditional values represents to them. They also raise the question of to whom *la vergüenza* belongs—to the woman or to the society which has facilitated her imprisonment? Pardo Bazán would undeniably favor the latter.

## V. Conclusions

In her introduction to *The Culture of Sewing*, Barbara Burman points out that

Like the histories of sex and cooking and childrearing, the making of clothes at home has a history which enfolds a rich spectrum of cultural, social and economic practices. It touches most obviously on gender and consumption, but within these lies the further intricacies of fashion, age, class, and perhaps more subtly, identity and the presentation of self. (1)

As Pardo Bazán’s short stories demonstrate, although (traditionally male) fashion designers make names for themselves around the world, “home dressmaking is largely anonymous” and associated with women’s work (Burman 2). Moving the seamstresses’ struggles to the forefront, Pardo Bazán’s short fiction reveals the inequity in the fashion industry, illustrating how the intensive labor required to stitch a garment approximates art and, at the same time, marginalizes the “artist” involved in its production. By doing so, she fashions an identity and place for the largely unnamed women who clothe a nation. She also demonstrates how the interdependence among fashion designer, seamstress and client mirrors that of the short story writer, printer and reader. Indeed, in many ways the seamstresses’ stories approximate that



of their creator, Pardo Bazán, who fashioned ideas into words on the pages of her short stories, ultimately securing her own financial freedom through their publication.

Using ancient and modern texts with their corresponding literary tropes, Pardo Bazán both lambastes and honors the writers and characters who preceded her and the seamstresses she fashions. Like other modernist female authors, she demonstrates how traditionally female interests can—and should—be exalted in fiction and reality. While shopping, fashion and other female interests were frowned upon or ignored in previous literary movements, Pardo Bazán and her literary contemporaries fashion these interests in a new, favorable light. Although the clothing industry in many instances works subjugate women, seamstresses are shown to turn the tables on the power structure, empowering themselves through the very institution that has oppressed them.

Unlike the heroines of previous literary works, Pardo Bazán's seamstresses prove that, by relying on their skills, they are capable of lifting themselves from their dire economic straits without the meddling influence of their “honorable” husbands and fathers. After unexpectedly finding themselves in untenable circumstances for which fairy tales and other literary classics have not prepared them, they fashion sartorial splendor for their clients while also forging new realities for themselves. Their ability to thrive in a new reality, however, depends on their ability to dispel notions of a classic fairy tale ending featuring the arrival of a *príncipe azul* and instead embrace the power of the needle.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FASHIONING THE NEW WOMAN

En esta España de los pantalones  
 lleva la voz el macho;  
 mas si un negocio importa  
 lo resuelven las faldas a escobazos.

--Antonio Machado (XXX S Proverbios y Cantares)

Literary Modernism proved fitting in providing Pardo Bazán with an innovative writing style that the depiction of the thoroughly modern but highly fictionalized New Woman necessitated. Indeed, her short stories featuring New Woman protagonists can easily be regarded as among her most modernist texts. Unlike the honest and sometimes brutal depiction of gender inequality to which naturalism lent itself, modernist ambiguity and oneiric sequences fitfully conveyed a feminist utopia in which women enjoyed the freedoms long afforded to men. Similar to the other short fiction she authored during this later period, Pardo Bazán employed parodic elements in this particular group of short stories to dismantle antiquated ideas propagated through canonical texts and fairy tales. Nevertheless, she did so to create independent-minded female protagonists who are able to thrive in a modernizing Spanish society rather than succumb to it. Underlying the humorous elements, however, lie serious feminist issues such as the right to marry when and to whom one wants, or, alternatively, to divorce or not marry at all. Ultimately, parody, oneiric sequences and humor in Pardo Bazán's depiction of the New Woman demonstrate clothing's ability to empower rather than imprison women, outfitting them with new opportunities for a new century.

## I. The New Woman

Pardo Bazán's writings demonstrate that differentiation between men's and women's dress does not necessarily imply the superiority of one sex over the other. Nevertheless, fashion trends of the early twentieth century provide clear evidence of the obstacles that impeded women's quest for equality. Compared to men's three-piece suits and flat dress shoes, which varied only minimally from season to season and permitted relative mobility, European and American women's fashion throughout the nineteenth century witnessed an increasingly exaggerated restrictiveness in physical movement. The ever-changing and ever-constricting fashion for upper class women did not occur by accident, however. It fulfilled a two-fold purpose, hampering participation in labor-intensive activities in or outside the home and serving as an emblem of a woman's domesticity and idleness, facilitated by her husband's purchasing power.

An ironic effect from the restrictive, concealing clothing included its highlighting of the feminine form during a time period renowned (correctly or not) for its "prudishness." The corset, a classic example of Victorian restrictiveness, highlights this phenomenon. According to Valerie Steele:

By simultaneously constructing an image of irreproachable propriety and one of blatant sexual allure, the corset allowed women to articulate sexual subjectivity in a socially acceptable way. The corset was also supposed to make women look more 'beautiful' by concealing physical features that were less than 'ideal.' (35)

Consequently, the corseted "wasp-waisted," divided body regulated a woman's expression of sexuality as well as any perceived aesthetic imperfections.

Like the divisive corset that was exalted by some as empowering and criticized by others as subjugating, the New Woman, first appearing at the end of the nineteenth century, embodied the hopes and preoccupations of modernity. Despite her membership in the middle or upper classes, the New Woman represented the antithesis of the tightly corseted nineteenth-century *ángel del hogar*, challenging the comportment as well as sartorial trends that characterized the domesticated ideal. As Catherine Jagoe attests, the New Woman was “a dashing urban gender rebel, who assumed the right to live, dress, and act in defiance of bourgeois norms of feminine behavior” (156). She strove to receive an education on the par with men, secure gainful employment outside of the home and decide for herself when and how many children she would raise. She may have cut her hair short and worn clothing that afforded her greater mobility, ridden a bicycle or practiced other sports, smoked or traveled unaccompanied by male relatives or a husband. Susan Shapiro, however, argues that “New Woman”<sup>18</sup> is a misnomer, stating that “the New Woman, when she appeared in 1890, was just about as appropriately named as New College (Oxford), founded in 1379” (510). To support her argument, Shapiro points to examples of wealthy women who rejected traditional roles as far back as the fourteenth century.

Regardless of the novelty her name implies, the arrival of the New Woman elicited applause and dissonance from both contemporary readers and authors alike,

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<sup>18</sup> The “New Woman” moniker continued into the twenty-first century, as evidenced by the appearance of *New Woman* magazine, which was published from the 1908s to 2008 (Brook). As its publisher’s Web site stated, “New Woman (NW) magazine is one of the top UK women’s magazines, written for the woman who wants to be ‘even more aspirational and gorgeous than ever before, while retaining a gutsy and irreverent attitude.’ Each issue covers everything from celebrity and fashion to true life stories and sex, taking an approach that’s both hip and informative. NW delivers a funny and glamorous mix of all that’s important in the life of the modern, ‘new’ woman” (“*New Woman*”).

especially as it related to her “masculine” style of dress. Unlike the rare historical figures to whom Shapiro refers, the New Woman represented an especially intimidating threat because of the novel, relatively widespread accessibility to fashion that Industrialization engendered. The “Rational Dress” with which the New Woman was associated not only provided a readily visible indicator of her rebelliousness, but heightened fear of gender role reversals. Reactionary comments from the period, especially those found in the English magazine *Punch*, depict men who stay home to raise the children, cook and sew while their wives (often described as “bearded”) leave home to run the country.

Linda Dowling points to the associations between the decadent and the New Woman to further explain and provide evidence of men’s fears of women’s growing independence. She states that:

To most late Victorians the decadent was new and the New Woman decadent. The origins, tendencies, even the appearance of the New Woman and the decadent—as portrayed in the popular press and periodicals—confirmed their near, their unhealthily near relationship. Both inspired reactions ranging from hilarity to disgust and outrage, and both raised as well profound fears for the future of sex, class, and race. (436)

Feminist authors such as Pardo Bazán, therefore, strove to assuage the apprehension and negativity surrounding the New Woman’s image, decades after the young rebel’s appearance. Doña Emilia employs New Woman sartorial fashions sparingly, framing depictions of women in *pantalones*, for example, in a satirical light. As illustrated by the presumably male narrator and his interlocutor in “Feminista,” Pardo Bazán fashions male characters’ reactions to the New Woman protagonists as overwhelmingly positive,

contrasting the negativity harbored towards rebellious women in the male-dominated press.

Dowling continues by adding, “like the decadent, the heroine of New Woman fiction expressed her quarrel with Victorian culture chiefly through sexual means—by heightening sexual consciousness, candor, and expressiveness” (441). In her later short stories, Pardo Bazán demonstrates a heightened awareness of characters’ sexuality, primarily to illustrate their marginality. In her specifically New Woman short fiction, however, the author portrays both men and women as desirous of sexual encounters, emphasizing their similarities rather than drawing attention to their differences.

Other key differences that Pardo Bazán highlights in her depiction of the New Woman concern geography and the rights afforded to women outside of Spain. In her essay entitled “La mujer española,” published in 1890, the author analyzes the different “types” of Spanish women. Promising to provide an uncensored portrait, she states that “los defectos de la mujer española, dado su estado social, en gran parte deben achacarse al hombre, que es, por decirlo así, quien modela y esculpe el alma femenina” (*La mujer española y otros escritos* 84). Not surprisingly, none of the Spanish women she describes in her essay “le satisface, como demuestra en la crítica que hace de ellos. Por tanto, se impone la búsqueda de la mujer nueva” (Faus 1: 557). The search for the New Woman would ultimately yield a model in foreign lands, most specifically in England and the United States.

While real-life women who fashioned themselves in divided skirts and page-boy haircuts walked the streets of London and New York, the streets of Madrid and Barcelona

lay relatively barren of the New Woman, except when appearing on the printed page. The fabricated look of the New Woman, curiously absent in the Spanish context, reflected the tangible gains of Anglo-American women in the burgeoning feminist movement towards the end of Pardo Bazán's life and career. While universal suffrage in the United States and England occurred in 1920 and 1928, respectively, women did not secure the right to vote in Spain until the Constitution of December 1931 granted them suffrage as well as the right to run for political office<sup>19</sup> (Graham 101). Graham attributes the disparity to the fact that, prior to the advancements secured in the 1930s, "autonomous organization by women in Spain was that of an élite—often university-linked" (103). As a result, many of the New Women fashioned by Pardo Bazán in her short fiction hail from North America and Great Britain, although they, like their Spanish counterparts, occupy an elevated socioeconomic status relative to other characters.

Understandably, with or without the existence of universal suffrage, disparities existed not only between Spanish men and women but also among women themselves. In addition to representing geographical, and therefore, cultural differences, Pardo Bazán's New Woman reflects the disparity afforded to socioeconomic class. Pilar Faus notes that in 1890 – during the decade in which the New Woman appears in literature of other European countries – Pardo Bazán refrains from authoring short stories exclusively about lower class women and instead focuses on their middle class contemporaries. Faus explains that:

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<sup>19</sup> The appearance of women's rights in Spain reflects the lack of New Woman models in Spain. Unlike the feminist movements in other countries, Spanish women's legal rights, including the right to divorce, act as a witness and administer estates, were granted by the male-led government of the Second Republic rather than secured via grass roots movements organized by women (Graham 101).



En la novelística de este período, la mujer de la clase media acapara el protagonismo por ser ella la que con mayor gravedad acusa el problema social de la época. Sobre ella pesan mayores exigencias culturales, aunque estas no sean todavía muchas porque su instrucción es aun muy deficiente. (1: 556)

Freed from hunger and the need to meet other basic human needs that impeded poor and working class Spanish women, the New Woman could, quite literally, afford to dedicate her time and energy to furthering further social goals that benefited herself first and foremost.

Although Pardo Bazán characterizes her fictional New Woman as a desirable model to emulate, apprehension by women and men alike surrounded the feminist ideal. As Pilar Faus maintains, in writing a happy ending to *Memorias de un solterón*, Pardo Bazán “cree que puede atraerse a muchas mujeres jóvenes cuya aversión a las doctrinas feministas están inspiradas en el temor a la soltería propagada por el varón tradicional” (1: 568-9). Unlike the vast majority of the other short stories outlined in this dissertation, those featuring the New Woman, like *Memorias de un solterón*, end happily, with justice being served where necessary. Doña Emilia therefore demonstrates to her readers—both male and female alike—that feminism is nothing to fear and that equality is women’s natural right. Instead of adhering to a widely known reality, however, descriptions of the New Woman in Pardo Bazán’s fiction point to a future ideal. It is an ideal, as Doña Emilia demonstrates, that has arrived in other modern nations and should come to Spain as well.

## II. “El engaño” and “Por España”: Feminism Imported

In “La revolución y la novela en Rusia” Pardo Bazán laments, “las mujeres españolas, aun las menos cobardes, no viajamos tan intrépidamente como las hijas de la Gran Bretaña” (762). Substantiating her claim, doña Emilia fashions the protagonist of “El engaño” as an unchaperoned yet married Englishwoman travelling with her young son to the fictionalized Marineda. Similarly, the independent American protagonist of “Por España” embodies the New Woman ideal that exists primarily outside of Spain. Both short stories, however, announce the inevitable arrival of feminism to Spain’s shores. While the protagonists provide evidence of the advancements secured by foreign women, Pardo Bazán’s depiction of the two characters also serves to demonstrate that women need not surrender their femininity in order to consider themselves feminists.

In “El engaño,” Pardo Bazán satirizes traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, fashioning the female protagonist as naturally beautiful, honest and intelligent while laziness defines the males, who possess a stereotypically feminine interest in their physical appearance. To emphasize his own virility, the male narrator opens the short story with a reference to the symbol of masculine bravado and exclusivity: the cigar<sup>20</sup>. When he states that “acababa de fumarme el más sabroso de los cigarros del día,” he not only aligns himself with macho culture, but also provides evidence of his admittedly indolent lifestyle. Moreover, he smokes the cigar “después de la comida a la española,” prepared by anonymous, presumably female hands that contrast with the hands leisurely holding the cigar. The reader then learns that the narrator’s friend Valentín Beleño, like

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<sup>20</sup> Fashion, deceit and cigars are interwoven in doña Emilia’s “La punta del cigarillo” as well.

the narrator himself, “lleva una vida apacible y grata” (3: 26). Nevertheless, the female characters are no less stereotypically described. The narrator states that Beleño’s wife possesses “fama de celosa” and speculates that the Englishwoman must be “¡mujer guapa, por cierto!” (3: 27).

The description of the Englishwoman that the narrator initially provides focuses on her complexion, eyes and abundant hair rather than her clothing. Later, however, the narrator states that she “andaba al paso largo e igual de una mujer bien formada, que calza holgadamente y usa ropa corta” (3: 28). She is, literally, dressed to go places. Although she displays more skin than traditionally-fashioned women, the narrator emphasizes her step and her clothing rather than the contours of her body. Her fashion allows her mobility that traditional Spanish women in long dresses and high heels—as well as the uncomfortably yet fashionably dressed narrator and Beleño—deny themselves.

Beleño complains bitterly of having to interrupt his normal schedule of a daily stroll and a game of dominos in order to entertain British visitors wishing to visit a battlefield. The foppish narrator requests five minutes “para atusarme” before joining Beleño and the “inglesita.” The narrator’s meticulous preening for the encounter with the Englishwoman, which he executes “con esmero,” parallels that of a soldier ceremoniously preparing himself for battle. The narrator quickly realizes, however, that the visitor “no buscaba más guerra que aquélla cuyos recuerdos estaba evocando,” as she looks at her male companions with indifference rather than the unwarranted admiration or lust that the narrator expects (3: 27). Nevertheless, the male protagonists prove to be

easily intimidated by the modern foreigner, feigning intrepidity while concealing their physical discomfort and sloth.

Unlike their English guest, the men do not wish to visit the battlefield where English and Spanish troops united against the French invaders due to the physical exertion required in reaching it. The narrator complains that “necesitábamos internarnos por tierras de labor, escalar un cerro empinado y, en suma, andar cerca de tres kilómetros por mal piso, bajo un sol picón, con calzado impropio de tales faenas y pies mal cuidados, no dispuestas para la marcha” (3: 27). However, it is not only their laziness that hinders their movement, but their fashionable yet impractical footwear as well, providing an additional stark contrast. Now, however, they contrast themselves with the soldiers who fought in the battle of Dorantes, particularly those who travelled from Great Britain to defend a foreign land.

Not only does her mobility contrast with that of her male guides, so too does the Englishwoman’s bilingualism, patriotism and knowledge of history. Her “bastante comprensible” Spanish is acquired from living two or three years in Mexico because of her husband’s business (3: 27). Her male guides, however, do not speak her native language. She proudly displays her love of country when responding to the narrator, who assumes that her interest in the battlefield stems from the fact that one of her forefathers fought in the battle alongside the Spanish. She enthusiastically informs him, “¡Oh! Todos los ingleses que ahí combatieron eran antepasados míos.” Confused by the incorrect, albeit less distant, battlefield site to which her tired guides bring her, the Englishwoman then states, “Usted sabe que los franceses se atrincheraron en una ermita”

and asks to see the structure (3: 28). Her persistence, together with her knowledge of history, marks as indelible a contrast with her male guides as her dress does.

Although lacking in physical fitness and knowledge of details of the battle's history, the narrator proves adept at covering his lies with plausible stories. Nevertheless, it is "la casualidad" rather than his forward thinking that "había colocado allí," where he points to the incorrect location of the former hermitage, "un laurel magnífico, ya añoso, de los que parecen regados con sangre." He quickly experiences sadness, however, after having deceived the Englishwoman and confesses, "acaso [era] la intuición confusa de que el alma engañada vale más que la mía" (3: 28). Like don Juan, the narrator tries to deceive the beautiful woman for his own personal gain. Unlike the mythical character, however, the narrator ultimately comes to view the woman as more valid—and indeed, valiant—than himself.

The Englishwoman ultimately proves better equipped sartorially, physically and emotionally to serve as her guides' "cicerone," leading them into the future while valuing the glory of the past (3: 28). Although in "La novela rusa" Pardo Bazán presents the Englishwoman as a model for Spanish female travelers, "El engaño" demonstrates that she has something to demonstrate to Spanish men, too. With valor, honesty and determination, as well as the proper clothes, one may attain self-worth and see the world.

Like "El engaño," "Por España"<sup>21</sup> features a New Woman protagonist who is a

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting, that Pardo Bazán published "Por España" in 1896, prior to the years encompassed in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the short story is worthy of inclusion here as it depicts a foreign-born New Woman protagonist. Gladys's Spanish-inspired transformation allows Pardo Bazán to laud her country prior to the onset of a politically devastating war and period of national introspection and self-doubt.

multi-talented, independent, foreign woman who learns Spanish in Mexico. Unlike the seemingly happily married “inglesa,” however, the American, Gladys, has reluctantly married Mister A.H. Sadler Bigpig, “un hombre prosaico y opulento,” who typifies the stereotypical pigheaded American (3: 60). As her essay “La mujer española” reflects, Pardo Bazán’s search for “la mujer nueva” in Spain does not bear fruition. Instead, the author fashions a woman who embodies the possibilities of the future and the anti-materialism of Spain’s present. As a result, “Por España” captures the sentimentality of the Spanish and couples it with the equality in education and marriage enjoyed by their American sisters, fashioning a conflicted yet ultimately independent protagonist who enjoys the best of what both cultures offer.

Although published in 1896, two years prior to the Spanish-American War, Pardo Bazán signals the growing tensions between the two nations. From the first paragraph, the narrator shows Gladys falling in love with Spain, “tierra expresamente elegida por la antojadiza criatura para comerse el panalito de miel.” Spain represents an additional character in the text, described as barbarous by Gladys’s jealous husband who longs to return to the “civilized” United States. Instead of singling out one Spanish man in particular, however, the disgruntled husband harbors jealousy towards the entire country. The passionate Iberian land, for its part, contrasts sharply with the restrictive, unworldly and unsentimental Mr. Bigpig whose “brazo conyugal” is “afanoso de ceñirse a su talle,” restricting Gladys’s movement (3: 60).

Despite allusions to the modernity of the United States, descriptions of Gladys’s dress serve to characterize her as a conservative, traditional-minded middle- to upper-

class woman rather than a New Woman. She “llevaba con gentil desembarazo su sombrero de fieltro gris que cimeraba una gaviota enorme, y se envolvía airosamente en la larga manta de viaje, de cuadros amarillos y marrón.” The gender-neutral grey, yellow and brown colors with which she adorns herself also hint at Gladys’s lack of passion. Moreover, she wears her hair in a sensible yet plain style, “recogido en moño griego, saliente y firme” (3: 60). The blanket, together with the bun in her hair, serve to align Gladys sartorially with a statue of an ancient Greek goddess, far removed from the modernly-dressed, mobile Englishwoman of “El engaño.” Although the narrator has provided a detailed description of Gladys’s hair, he emphasizes its length by stating, “si mistress Gladys tenía las ideas largas, no podía decirse que tuviese el pelo corto” (3: 60-61). Indeed, the long pants and short hair of the New Woman are curiously absent in the physical description of Gladys. Moreover, while her navy blue eyes sometimes express “una especie de infantil asombro,” Gladys’s hands are “fuertes y huesudas cual las de un muchacho” (3: 61). While childlike in her innocence, she also possesses the physical strength necessary in combating the obstacles soon presented to her.

The narrator makes a point of illustrating Gladys’s masculinity and lack of passion to demonstrate Spain’s effect on her lifestyle, attitudes and dress. In marked contrast to “El engaño,” Gladys, referred to by the narrator as “la ex señorita Gladys Stilton” becomes “feminized” by her honeymoon in Spain. As the narrator notes, she has been “educado virilmente, mejor dicho, cual se educa un muchacho, que no es mujer y todavía no es hombre.” Despite all of Gladys’s accomplishments, however, she lacks sentimentality. When tears spring to her eyes, the narrator describes their occurrence as

“cosa desusada y hasta humillante para una doctora en leyes” (3: 62). Her tears, however, signal her epiphany, communicating her unhappiness in marriage regardless of the other freedoms she has been afforded.

Despite the detailed description of her physical appearance and clothing, it is her husband, the aptly named A. H. Sadler Bigpig, whom the narrator demonstrates as not only mundane and materialistic, but fragile and elderly as well. When he argues that only in the United States are people “civilizadas,” Gladys replies, “allí vivimos como cerdos, pendientes solo de la materia” (3: 62). Although Gladys does not manifest herself as blantly materialist or dependent, Mr. Bigpig himself is dependent on the assistance of others for mobility. He supports himself “según la moda, en el brazo de su consorte” and relies on his “báculo” to walk (3: 61). Curiously, the narrator chooses “báculo,” which also represents a bishop’s staff, instead of the more commonly used “bastón,” which not only connotes a walking stick, but the authoritative truncheon as well (“Báculo”). By doing so he also hints at the possibility of Mr. Bigpig’s inability to provide sexual pleasure to his wife, who is easily seduced by the romance and passion of Spain. Indeed, her husband proves unable to match the sensuality that Gladys perceives from the men who, in a patently Spanish manner, “la piropeaban” (3: 61).

By contrasting Gladys and her husband, Pardo Bazán pays homage to popular culture and traditional female Spanish fashion. Although her husband remains utterly dissatisfied with the quality of the hotel, food and bathroom facilities, Gladys “estaba lo que se dice embobada con las costumbres gaditanas, sobre todo las populares.” Despite her husband’s warnings that she will become sick from eating only sweets, Gladys not



only does not fall ill, but becomes more spiritual, losing her “aire amarimachado.” She begins to dress more femininely, putting a rose in “el pico de escote,” aligning herself more with a traditional Spanish *señorita* than a masculinized, well-educated modern woman (3: 61). Mr. Bigpig, for his part, proves unable to comprehend Gladys’s needs, much less meet them. She requests “un poco de dulce engaño” from her husband (3: 62). Like “El engaño,” however, the truth wins and Gladys finds herself unable to continue in an unsatisfying marriage between two people who do not understand each other.

Gladys’s athletic prowess serves her well when she “corrió sin rumbo,” leaving a confused Mr. Bigpig behind (3: 63). She retreats to an Edenic setting, where, as the narrator notes, “nosotros, mejor informados, sabemos que pasó horas de nostalgia bajo los árboles” (3: 62). Her nostalgia does not spring solely from her own experience, but rather from a shared experience with her female ancestors during an idyllic time when life was less complicated. The letter that she sends her husband the following day informs him that she has decided that she is indeed Spanish and that the money she has with her is her own, demonstrating that she can enjoy the best of both worlds: the financial independence relegated to her as a New Woman and the beauty and passion available to her in Spain.

Although the narrator forms a community of “nosotros” with the reader, his depiction of Spain is complex. He ruminates on the thoughts that Mr. Bigpig must have, wondering if the darkness he feels is “la pena de no haber sabido, durante unos minutos, ser tan bárbaro, tan novelesco como España” (3: 62). The unreality and barbarity of Spain characterize it as a less than modern country, but also serve to demonstrate its

attraction to foreigners. Spain's effect on Gladys is likewise paradoxical. Rather than leave her husband for a man, she leaves him to enjoy solitude, "expuesta sin duda a desazones y percances; pero sola" (3: 63). In the land where she becomes more "feminized" and is showered with *piropos* and flowers by men who objectify her, she finds the ability to end a loveless marriage.

Although the short story presents a humorous, satirical look at the virtues that draw foreigners to Spain, "Por España" exists as an ambiguous account, pointing to the disparities between women's opportunities in Spain and the United States as it lauds Spain and its relative lack of materialism. American women are portrayed as athletic, independent and well-educated, but lacking sentimentality. Likewise, their husbands are unromantic and passionless. Largely absent in this account, however, are Spanish women, made invisible by the predominance of male characters whose voices are used to simultaneously praise and belittle Gladys. Instead, the *señoritas* exist as a romanticized, Andalusian ideal. Pardo Bazán's depiction of strong-willed, female Spanish protagonists would have to wait until the issues surrounding Spain's 1898 defeat had subsided and questions of feminism could be more easily explored.

### III. The Speed and Intrigue of the "Sud-Exprés"

"The field of research for the short story is the primitive, antisocial world of the unconscious, and the material of its analysis are not manners, but dreams," according to Charles May ("Nature" 133). "Sud-Exprés," the title story of a collection to which many of Pardo Bazán's modernist short stories belong, provides a clear example of what May espouses as the quintessential elements of the short story. Indeed, the oneiric story marks

a departure in style from the doña Emilia's other, more realist, short fiction. Despite weaving foreign travel by women into its plot, "Sud-Exprés" represents marked differences with "El engaño" and "Por España." Pardo Bazán fashions a female, presumably Spanish, narrator who serves as an eyewitness to the short story's events. The object of the narrator's observation, a woman with a Russian coat, figures as a don Juan-like character, entertaining two men at the same time, thereby turning the tables on the gender roles prescribed by Romanticism. Most important, in "Sud-Exprés" Pardo Bazán grants her reader rare access to the unconscious mind of her protagonist. Rather than receiving clarity, however, the reader struggles to make sense of the information provided, weighing questions emblematic of modernity, including observation, speed and time, in order to reach his or her own conclusion about the events that unfold on the train.

Observation and framing initially provide the reader with a wealth of information. The short story opens by offering a view of the workers in the field who "al ver cruzar el raudo convoy, experimentaban esa impresión peculiar, de envidia respetuosa, que infunde el espectáculo de lo inaccesible social." The narrator, traveling in the luxurious train, provides a sympathetic view of the workers from outside. Like a strip of film flashed before their eyes, the train offers both the field hands and the reader a momentary glimpse into the lives of its travelers. As she states, "era una visión de cinematógrafo," where the narrator, serving as a veritable camerawoman controls the images presented (3: 5). The cinematographic detail of the short story serves to demonstrate that the train also exists as an element of fantasy, a bourgeois realm with which the working people are

unfamiliar. The narrator also observes the actions of her fellow travelers, interpreting the images and behavior she witnesses, whether real or dreamt.

The watchful gaze of “la galería” of which the honeymoon travelers remain oblivious emphasizes not only the visual importance to the train’s travelers in general, but also that of clothing as well as the theatricality of the train’s occupants. The gallery, representing the passengers, has seats similar to those in a theater or art exhibit, while also conjuring the notion of the exclusivity of the luxury shopping mall first appearing in the nineteenth century. By doing so, the narrator emphasizes visual cues from the beginning of the short story to only later raise doubts about what she sees.

Speed not only plays an important role in the cinematographic element of the short story, but in the velocity of the train in which the narrator travels. It is an express train, representative of modernity and the brevity of the short story as genre. Moreover, the Sud Express connected Madrid with Paris, center of fashion, intellectual thought and the arts and at the turn of the century, provided a means for passengers to travel from Spain to the French capital—overnight. Additionally, it served as a link to Russia as well when coupled with the Nord Express running from Ostend, Belgium to St. Petersburg. The Sud Express completed its nine hundred four-mile journey in twenty-six hours and forty-nine minutes, including stops, representing an approximate traveling speed of thirty-eight miles per hour (Tunell 40). Traveling relatively quickly and efficiently for its time, the train of Pardo Bazán’s short story unites people across continents as it also leaves the people living in the country far behind, both in a geographic and temporal

sense. Nevertheless, time stands still for the narrator once the mysterious actions of the female passenger begin to unfold.

The passengers themselves also represent modernity in their mobility, manners and dress. Indeed, they express themselves through literary, sartorial and physical means. “Eran familias sudamericanas,” the narrator states, with children “elegantemente ataviados a la última moda británica.” Not only does British fashion figure among the cast in this cinematographic story, so too do the “inglesas formales y reservadas” themselves. Independent female travelers also make an appearance, albeit aligned more with prostitutes than the New Woman. They are described as “señoras solas, perfumadísimas, provocativas en su vestir.” Although the narrator does not offer much information about herself, she figures among the women traveling alone “observando tras el velo de gasa gris” (3: 5). Indeed, the one piece of clothing that defines her as a woman is her veil.

From film to veils, framing provides context to each character’s perspective. “Los altos y claros vidrios” of the train allow the peasants working in the fields to catch a glimpse of the pleasure-seeking occupants, but simultaneously represent the luxurious train’s inaccessibility to the lower socioeconomic classes (3: 5). Likewise, the oneiric qualities of the tale prohibit the reader from gaining a reliable interpretation of the story’s events. The frames of the windows and the narrator’s “lens” represent layers that on the one hand provide access to and, on the other, distort or impede a clear view of what is actually occurring.

Her veil, too, frames the narrator's perspective, permitting her to view a scene, albeit through a protective, individualized barrier. At the same time, it adds an element of mystery and raises doubts about the veracity of her interpretation of the story's events. Unlike the bride's white veil, the narrator's is an impure grey, similar to the smoke emitted from the locomotive. Hollander stresses the more sinister associations of veiling when she states that:

Heavy hangings, obscuring veils, sable draperies, along with delicate tissues, gossamer raiment, clinging robes, and so on, made their appearance in Romantic literature as the properties of mystery, passion, exoticism, and anything legendary, morbid or erotic. (*Seeing Through Clothes* 70).

Rather than exhibit erotic behavior herself, however, the narrator frames her fellow passengers' behavior in an erotic light, particularly when they savor a sensual meal together.

The depiction of the train's scene quickly moves from a cinematographic to a metaliterary one, framed by the book the narrator reads. Apart from the independence required to cross foreign borders by herself, the reader also possesses an awareness of Russian literature, something few other women of her generation would have enjoyed. She puts her Russian novel down in order to "ojeer" her surroundings, blending the fictionality of her book with that of her surroundings. She describes how she finds "un drama oscuro"—weaving the written word with the visual aspect of the theater—instead of an "idilio" when she fixes her sights on the newlywed couple (3: 6). Occurring on an overnight train, the drama is necessarily dark and hints to the possibility of the story-as-dream. The image that the high-speed train presents to the spectators it passes, "un realce

novelesco,” further denotes the literary qualities of the narrator’s story (3: 5). Indeed, connecting Spain with Russia is a similiarity that Pardo Bazán’s short story and the express train share.

The fictionality and oneiric qualities of the unfolding events is confirmed by the narrator’s use of the possessive form to describe the honeymoon couple. She appropriates their story as one of her own making, referring to them as “mis dos recién casados,” reinforcing her possession by adding, “por tales los tuve” (3: 6). Like actors performing in front of a camera, the couple soon quickly forgets about the observer’s presence in the train’s car, sensuously sharing their meal. Repeated references to the idyllic nature of the scene, such as “en el momento de los postres” when “se acentuaba el carácter idílico,” reinforce the artificiality of the train as well as the newlyweds’ relationship (3: 7). Moreover, the references raise further suspicion about the accuracy of the narrator’s interpretation of events.

Ambiguity characterizes not only the narrator’s story, but the married woman as well. Her dress points to her traditional values while her comportment, most notably the fact that she brazenly flirts with a man other than her husband, aligns her with a fully independent, modern woman. She is “vestida de paño flexible, cenizoso, tocada con un sombrero del cual se escapaban inquietas dos alas blancas de ave” (3: 6). Although the oversized hat denotes her adherence to traditinal upper-class values, the restless bird wings, appearing to want to take flight, reflect the desire of the woman to escape into the arms of the other man.

As the above quote illustrates, the narrator proves to be a keen observer of both the woman and her clothing. She describes the woman's coat as having "remates de níquel," evoking the material of currency and a mineral characterized by its strength. The narrator also claims to have seen what happened to the coat, stating that "se lo había visto deslizar a «ella», antes de abrir la cestita de los víveres, bajo el asiento, disimuladamente..." Nevertheless, the narrator proves curiously ill-equipped in recalling other, crucial details to the story's plot. She presents a detailed description of the sensuous "banquete" and the dialogue exchanged between the husband and wife, but cannot specify how long the woman and stranger embraced. "¿Duró mucho el terrible y peligroso abrazo? Tal vez un segundo, tal vez cinco minutos o más," she recalls (3: 7). Indeed, the great disparity in the amount of time recalls the uncertainty of a dream, which may occur in mere minutes, but seems to continue for hours.

After passing the French-Spanish border, and upon entering the country where Pardo Bazán first gained exposure to translated Russian literature, the narrator leaves her yellow covered book and her own *saquito* on the table. She refers to her book as "la novela de Danilewsky," a fictional author that evokes the names of such Russian writers as Dostoevsky, particularly considering the psychological aspect of his works (3: 5). With the inclusion of the other female passenger's overcoat, it is difficult to overlook Gogol's "The Overcoat" as a possible influence in this short story. Like Gogol's overcoat, the *saco* serves as a text of the other woman's life, creating both a diversion and a way to advance the story's plot. With the pretense of looking for her misplaced "saco de cuero de Rusia," *ella* is free to pursue her relationship with the man in the plain cap in



the next car. Once the *saco* is recovered, however, the sub-plot between the woman and the man in the next car ends, not unlike how Akaky's story quickly reaches a conclusion once he secures his long desired overcoat. By including the Russian overcoat, Pardo Bazán pays homage to the Russian writers who influenced her literary development while also demonstrating the importance of cross-cultural awareness and exchange.

Like a literary work or film from Russia or elsewhere, the train contains a beginning, middle and end. To re-tell her story in chronological order, the narrator must supplement the narrative offered by the woman in the Russian overcoat with her own renderings of what occurs. Although the husband is referred to as *el engañado*, the reader and the narrator may also be betrayed by believing what is presented to them. In order to avoid being deceived by the sleepy narrator, the reader must pay attention to the clues offered throughout the text from beginning to end. The oneiric qualities, for example, abound from the story's first lines. The smoke of the train evokes a mysterious, sleeplike state while the reference to the train's *sleeping* conveys to the reader that hers is an overnight train without the narrator's expressly describing it as such. Finally, when she states, "Discurrí si habría soñado..." the narrator raises suspicions about the truthfulness of her tale (3: 8). Her choice of words also emphasizes the element of speed. "Discurrir" not only signifies "to think," but "to pass" or "to go by," like a speeding train ("Discurrir"). The reader cannot help but wonder if the veil behind which the narrator viewed this tale was her eyelids, in a vision that is dreamt on an overnight train.

Although "Sud-Exprés" may raise more doubts than it clarifies, the short story provides clear evidence of Pardo Bazán's ability to combine the key elements of the

modernist short story, particularly speed, time and brevity. The same characteristics that are embodied in an express train and a dream come together to create a complex and mysterious fictionalized world worthy of the Russian literary figures to whom she renders homage. By doing so, Pardo Bazán creates a community of readers that transcends temporal, physical and linguistic borders, central issues in a modernizing age represented by the expanding presence of the locomotive.

#### IV. “Feminista”: A Marriage of Sartorial Equals

Although female protagonists clothed in long pants do not generally figure prominently in Pardo Bazán’s short fiction, “Feminista” centers on the polemic surrounding women’s ability to dress in the typically male garment. The New Woman protagonists of this short story and other feminist literature, however, were not the first female characters to appear in Spanish literature dressed in pants. Golden Age dramatists employed cross-dressed women as a literary trope in Tirso de Molina’s *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes*, published in 1635, and many other dramatic works. Tirso de Molina and his contemporaries thus provided evidence of women’s ability to travel, hide, dress and act like men. By the endings of the plays, however, disrupted gender boundaries return to their rightful order, with men in power and women as subjects. In “Feminista,” when the doctor states “se creería que hay duendes...” and thus conjures images of Calderón de la Barca’s *La dama duende*, he not only hints at the tradition of the Golden Age theatre that Pardo Bazán salutes, but signals the changing landscape of modern Spanish sexual politics (3: 107).

In the initial paragraph of “Feminista,” the narrator of the framed tale marks a clear distinction between the husband and wife. The narrator presents Clotilde as “bonitilla, con cara de resignación alegre” who is “siempre atenta a esos caprichos de los enfermos.” Although the wife, rather than her husband, Nicolás Abréu, ultimately exacts revenge, the narrator describes the whims of the ill as “la venganza que toman de los sanos” (3: 106). Indeed, the narrator initially casts the wife as a devoted caretaker and the husband as the one “wearing the pants.” By so doing, he not only typifies the couple’s relationship in a stereotypical manner, but also alerts the reader to the ironic developments that are about to take place.

Other allusions in the text point to marriage as a partnership, particularly between equals. Clotilde is referred to as her husband’s “consorte,” who appears to play the role of a Queen by marriage, accompanying the “rightful” heir to the throne<sup>22</sup> (3: 107). Nevertheless, “consorte” is defined as “persona que es partícipe y compañera con otra u otras en la misma suerte,” stressing the equality rather than disparity between the two spouses (“Consorte”). The narrator also refers to Clotilde as her husband’s “mitad” on whose assistance his physical survival depends (3: 107). Staying true not only to her marital vows but to the definition of *consorte* as well, Clotilde obligates her husband to live his dying days as he has forced her to, under strict control and lack of freedom.

Despite allusions to equality, the narrator claims that “la flexibilidad y delicadeza de espíritu” (also described as “prendas raras,” as strange as women wearing pants in the early twentieth century) are lacking among the Spanish people (3: 106). He cites the

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<sup>22</sup> The theme of legitimate rule that appears in the story’s text was one that figured prominently in the Carlist Wars, provoking debate about Salic Law, which prevents female heirs from assuming the throne.

heated discussions in cafés as well as “otros signos del orden histórico” to substantiate his claim (3: 107). Nevertheless, the antiquated ideals espoused by Abréu provide the clearest evidence of the inflexible, indelicate Spanish nature as well the rising threat presented by women’s liberation.

Like Don Pedro of “El frac,” anachronism characterizes Nicolas Abréu. The narrator states that “su modo de pensar era entre inquisitorial y jacobino,” relics of two distant eras (3: 106). While the narrator refers to him as “el marido,” Clotilde is referred to as “la muchacha.” Although marriage robs Clotilde of many freedoms, it is her loss of youthful exuberance that provides one of the starkest contrasts between her and her husband. The unwavering morality that Abréu finds later in life developed after “una juventud divertida y agitada,” proving himself to be not only sexist, but a hypocrite, too. The double standards and hypocrisy of the New Woman detractors, who criticize their sexual freedom, are made evident in this brief yet fundamental reference to Abréu’s promiscuity. The doctor refers to his illness as “los restos y reliquias de su mal vivir pasado” and concludes that “no tenía remedio” (3: 108). While Clotilde is defined by her purity and innocence, Abréu’s deteriorating health is attributed to a sexually transmitted disease.

Abréu’s traditional values contrast not only with his youth, but with the changes occurring in his surroundings as well. For example, the narrator relates Abréu’s belief that “en los hogares reinaba la anarquía, porque, perdido el principio de autoridad, la mujer ya no sabe ser esposa, ni el hombre ejerce sus prerrogativas de marido y padre.” His blame for society’s failings extends to women, other men and the aristocracy. He

never looks to himself, however, to explain the changes he finds abhorrent. Among the warnings he lodges is that “hasta que se zurciesen muchos calcetines no cabía salvación,” demonstrating the inexorable, albeit traditional, link not only among women, sewing and fashion, but also between women’s work and the natural order imposed by God (3: 107). Without darned socks women will not find salvation, but, above all, their husbands will not be fashioned in a presentable manner.

When Abréu forces Clotilde to don his pants the morning after their wedding, the narrator explains that, like a king, he “ordenó” and “pronunció” that:

...he querido que te pongas los pantalones en este momento señalado para que sepas querida Clotilde, que en toda tu vida volverás a ponértelas. Que los he de llevar yo, Dios mediante, a cada hora y cada día, todo el tiempo que dure nuestra unión, y ojalá sea muchos años. (3: 108)

Like the king’s God-given authority, Nicolás believes that the right of men over women is assured by their Creator. Prior to ordering her to put on his pants, Abréu states, “Clotilde mía...” conveying his sense of entitlement over his wife’s actions (3: 108). Nonetheless, as the judgmental Abréu dies, so too, do his antiquated, Inquisitorial opinions about women.

When forcing Clotilde to cross-dress, Abréu confirms by means of visual representation his desire for traditional gender roles in their marriage, mocking his wife as he degrades her. This act also clearly demonstrates Abréu’s fear of his wife’s desire and ability to assume equality in their marriage. By dressing her in long pants he unwittingly demonstrates the fragility of men’s and women’s roles in traditional marriage, confirming for his wife that the assumption of power proves as easy as dressing

oneself in *pantalones*. Ironically, he also equips Clotilde with a reason to rebel against him, elevating the importance of the pants and providing her with an idea of how to exact her revenge, subjugating and emasculating him through forcing him to wear women's garments. Indeed, when Abréu tells her she can take the pants off, he further strips her of equality in their marriage.

The young and innocent Clotilde initially exhibits confusion by his demand, stating to herself, “sería *moda* de novios,” similar to the societal norms dictating that women wear skirts rather than pants (3: 108, emphasis added). Just as Clotilde presumably would not question elements of sartorial fashion, she initially goes along with Abréu's request. Quickly, however, she experiences feelings of embarrassment. The narrator clothes Clotilde not only in silence, but in an air of innocence and “resignación” as well, fashioning her as a dutiful *ángel del hogar*. Nevertheless, she, like Gladys of “Por España” exhibits her strong character when the opportunity arises for her to avenge her honor.

Clotilde exacts her revenge by appropriating the ritual of cross-dressing in order to demonstrate to Abréu—representative of antiquated views of marriage—that he no longer holds the power in their relationship. Curiously, however, Clotilde maintains her traditionally fashioned femininity, much like her literary creator, never donning the pants again. Instead, she orders her husband to put on her petticoat maintaining her “vocecita dulce y aflautada” (3: 108). Clotilde accompanies the daily ritual of emasculation with the words “para que sepas que las llevas ya toda tu vida, mientras yo sea tu enfermerita” (3: 109). By mimicking his words and through ironic use of the diminutive, Clotilde

demonstrates the often unrecognized importance that nurses as well as women in general play in marriage and society at large.

Pardo Bazán appropriates society's apprehension towards transvestism, particularly male transvestism, to advocate equality in marriage as well as to illustrate society's unequal perception of men and women. According to Marjorie Garber, cross-dressing is about many things. She states that:

Cross-dressing is about gender confusion. Cross-dressing is about the phallus as constitutively veiled. Cross-dressing is about the power of women. Cross-dressing is about the emergence of gay identity. Cross-dressing is about the anxiety of economic or cultural dislocation, the anticipation or recognition of "otherness" as loss. (390)

Pardo Bazán not only demonstrates that men's position in society is more favorable than women's, but that restrictive female fashion is undesirable. "Feminista" raises the question: If a self-respecting—albeit fearful and ignorant—man does not want to dress himself in a petticoat, why would a woman? The short story's humor does not rise from the fact that a woman wears pants, but rather that a man would dress himself in a symbol of domesticity and lack of power.

Like "El encaje roto," "Feminista" takes place in the *balneario*, a space divided by gender where women enjoy the right to freely express themselves. In the words of the female narrator of "El encaje roto," "no hay cosa que facilite las relaciones como la vida de balneario" (1: 332). "Feminista" begins as a traditional framed tale, but differs from other similarly structured short stories—as does "El encaje roto"—in that the narrator has acquired his knowledge first-hand. However, his knowledge is not imparted from the protagonists themselves, but from a doctor who has sews the story together through

rumors he has heard from servants and interactions with Abréu. Unlike the female narrator of “El encaje roto,” the narrator’s gender in “Feminista” is not referred to explicitly, whether by a gendered article or adjective or reference to a husband or wife. In fact, the doctor states to his interlocutor, “Verdad que Usted se marchó unos días antes que los Abréu,” denying the reader concrete information regarding the narrator (3: 108). One can suspect, however, that he is male.

Regardless of gender, the unnamed narrator himself proves to be sympathetic of Spain’s changing gender roles. When listening to Abréu’s sexist rants, he admits that “adopté el sistema de darle la razón para que no se exaltase demasiado.” When the narrator encounters the spa’s medical director in the street shortly after learning of Abréu’s death, the doctor exclaims “¡Ah, el señor Abréu! ¡El de los pantalones!” (3: 107). Instead of exclaiming “el de las enaguas” and furthering the homophobia and misogyny espoused by Abréu, the narrator’s interlocutor mocks the husband’s sexism. As the doctor relates to the narrator, Clotilde complies with her husband’s demands because “¡Obedecer es ley!” The narrator and the doctor show themselves to be attuned to women’s needs and feelings and align themselves with Clotilde rather than Abréu. The narrator explains that “si no le pudo aplicar la divisa de la matrona romana, ‘guardo el hogar e hilo lana asiduamente,’ fue porque hoy las fábricas de género de punto han dado el traste con la rueca y el huevo de zurcir” (3: 108). Due to the advancements that the Industrial Age has ushered, women no longer need to remain by the hearth or the loom. Clearly, changes in technology require changes in societal attitudes and roles of women and men, attitudes that the doctor and narrator have adopted.



The theatricality of “Feminista” is emphasized by the action that originally occurs behind the curtain. Clotilde’s private experience reflects the difficulty in mobilizing Spanish women to bring about large-scale change in families throughout their country. As Helen Graham points out, in addition to the “double burden” of working inside and outside of the home, “female socialization too—including female illiteracy and cultural expectations—meant women so often excluded themselves” from unionization or political organization (101). By bringing to light a reality experienced by many bourgeois women, Pardo Bazán raises awareness of the need for mobilization, by women as well as men, in order to bring about equality in marriage and in wardrobes. Ultimately, the author demonstrates that women possess the means to defend their honor and need not wait for a man to do so for them. Stories of knights in shining armor rescuing damsels in distress belong to the bygone era of the Golden Age drama, not to that of the modern New Woman.

## V. If the Shoe Fits...

From the Renaissance to the early twentieth century, feet, like the naked female form in general, were deemed both sacred and dangerous in Eastern and Western cultures alike. Similar association spread to women’s shoes. Specifically:

Many sources identify shoes with female sexuality. Among Anglo-Saxon tribes it was customary to give a bride’s shoes to her bride-groom, in token of his right of sexual access to her. Extreme smallness of the shoe, emphasized in the fairy tale of Cinderella, apparently represented the state of virginity. (Walker 154-5)

Due to the sacrosanctity and danger they represented, Spanish women were forced to hide both their feet and shoes from view. According to Brian Reade, in sixteenth- and

seventeenth-century Spain, “the feet of an upper-class Spanish woman cannot have been very conspicuous.” He adds that “from the aesthetic point of view of the cone-shaped skirt (with or without a *verdugado*) was one of several parts, including the bodice and the ruff, which fitted together to create a whole where Nature claimed attention only at three places—the head and hands” (Reade 7). As a result, from a young age Spanish women learned to walk by swaying back and forth, never showing their shoes from beneath their skirts. The New Woman wearing pants, therefore, not only caused alarm in traditionalists by drawing attention to the outlines of her legs, but by revealing her footwear as well.

The pages of *Blanco y Negro* provide evidence of the permanence of the value of women’s feet in Spain through its competitions for the smallest foot. A full-page advertisement in the January 1910 issue of the periodical, entitled “El pie mas pequeño de España,” asks “¿Qué privilegio es el del pie, que por si solo altera la belleza femenina...?” “Una mujer de hermoso rostro y cuerpo gentil no nos parece perfecta,” they continue, “si su pie rebasa la dedicada linea que corresponde a su espléndida arquitectura.” Similarly, the magazine states that a small foot can redeem a woman who is not blessed with beauty. After describing the benefits of diminutive feet, the writers refer to examples of Spanish poets who laud women’s feet in their poetry, such as Gil Polo and López de Ayala. Finally, the rules of the contest are carefully outlined. In case of a tie, the magazine attests that “se premiará al pie mejor proporcionado” (“El pie” Jan. 1910). Accompanying the text is an illustration of a bourgeois woman with her long skirt raised to mid-calf, her shoeless but stockinged foot resting on a piece of paper. Her servant kneels on the floor to draw an outline of the small foot, demonstrating that

*privilegio* encompasses not only beauty, but the magazine readers' economic status as well.

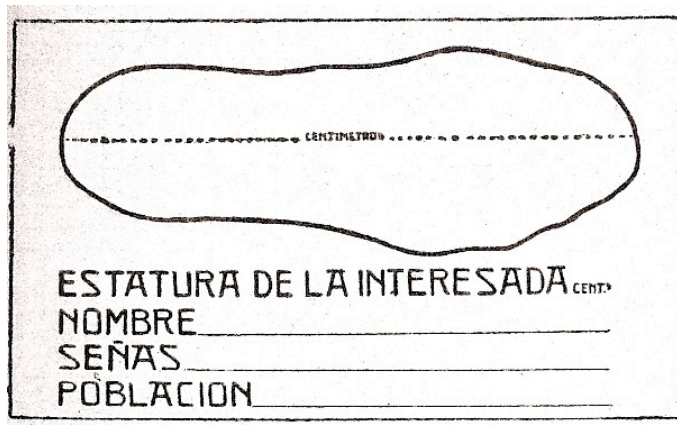


Fig. 2. Sample sketch outline, “El pie mas pequeño de España,” *Blanco y Negro* 1 Jan 1910.

In the February 19, 1910 issue of *Blanco y Negro*, doña Filomena García de Castro of Seville, is announced as the winner of “este bello y galante torneo.” Unlike the illustration appearing alongside the text of the original advertisement, however, doña Filomena is photographed with a garden scene in the background as she delicately lifts her skirt to reveal her petite, shoed foot. To confirm that Dona Filomena does indeed possess the smallest foot in Spain, *Blanco y Negro* reproduces for its readers the *acta notarial* of don Félix Sánchez-Blanco attesting that the size—191 millimeters—taken from don Francisco Chico Ganga, a shoe store owner, is correct (“El pie” Feb. 1910). Clearly, the magazine nor its readers takes the competition lightly.

Another fundamental question posed to the readers of *Blanco y Negro* in the contest description is “¿Quién ha olvidado la historia de Cenicienta, en cuyo zapatito quedaron prisioneros un corazón y un trono?” (“El pie” Feb. 1910). Like the magazine

contest, the fairy tale associates small feet and a woman's value, revealing not only society's traditional high estimation of small feet—read “virginity”—, but the lengths some young woman would go to secure a suitable husband. Cinderella's stepmother urges her two daughters to cut her toe and part of her heel, respectively, so that the golden slipper will fit and marriage with the prince will be secured. It is evident that physical disfigurement and immobility are preferred over life as an unmarried woman. The contest sponsored by *Blanco y Negro* effectively functions as a modern adaption of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, seeking—and eventually finding and rewarding—the woman with the “perfect foot.”

In Pardo Bazán's refashioning of the Cinderella story, she demonstrates how ideas about women's feet, upheld by the fairy tale and *Blanco y Negro*'s contests, pertain to an outmoded set of values. While Cinderella must rely on the help of pigeons to discover her stepsisters' mendacity, Meli, the protagonist of “El zapato” acts alone to defend herself. Moreover, it is she, not her “prince,” who develops a ruse. However, her goal is not to secure marriage, but rather to avoid the restrictiveness of an exclusive and harmful relationship with her suitor. Unlike Cinderella, Meli will not permit herself to be held prisoner by inadequate footwear or society's sexist values. Instead of remaining inside once arriving home from the ball, Meli returns in order to dance with whomever she wants.

While Cinderella's imprisonment springs from her stepsisters' jealousy, the imprisonment of female characters in a number of Pardo Bazán's short stories, from “Las medias rojas” to “Casi artista,” is brought about by the jealousy of husbands and fathers.

While the use of male narrators is a recourse upon which Pardo Bazán depends in a number of her short stories, the narrator of “El zapato” distinguishes himself in one important way: he admits fault when he describes his jealous nature. The male narrator of “El zapato” admits that, when hearing “el amor es felicidad,” is tempted to add, “si con tal que no anden por medio los celos” (3: 424). Although he willingly admits to being controlled by jealousy, he proves unable to admit fault in the dissolution of his relationship with the *marquesa*, Meli Padilla, but rather claims himself as her victim. Ironically, while the purpose of his re-telling of his tale is to expose the cruelty of his former girlfriend, his actions unwittingly expose his mistreatment of her, revealing his true nature more clearly and honestly than his confession in the story’s opening paragraph.

Focusing his attention on her clothing, the positive descriptions the narrator provides of Meli are strictly sartorial. Indeed, he portrays Meli as a diabolical figure and himself as a passive victim. He introduces the tale with the following statement: “Recuerdo siempre la aventura que tanto hizo reír a cuenta mía, y fue, por cierto, una de las primeras, puesto que contaba veintitrés años cuando me ocurrió.” This description not only reveals his feelings of victimization, but demonstrates to the reader that he has not modified his behavior or treatment of women and therefore did not learn from his experiences with Meli. He describes Meli as possessing what “los revisteros califican de ‘juveniles beldades,’” which presumably represent the source of his attraction to her. Rather than referring to Meli’s feelings, he expresses the happiness that her parents and indeed both of their families found in their relationship, which “llevab[a] el honestísimo

fin matrimonial” (3: 424). The use of the superlative, “honestísimo” draws attention to the seriousness of their courtship, but also hints at Meli’s lack of veracity in the eyes of the male narrator.

Nevertheless, he goes on to state that “ni el demonio, que todo lo añasca, podía haberme buscado novia más inquietadora.” The narrator’s characterization of the New Woman as *femme fatale* appears throughout the short story. He recounts how “me traía literalmente enloquecido con sus coqueteos y sus caprichos perversamente infantiles.” Theirs is a relationship characterized by “desvíos, llantos [y] amenazas” that worsens when she dances with other men (3: 424). He will not state, however, that Meli maintains relationships with these other men. He does, nonetheless, briefly catalog Meli’s suspicious actions, such as walking on the arm of “Periquito y Menganito y bailar como una peonza” (3: 425). When he admits to harboring suicidal thoughts as a result of Meli’s cruelty, the narrator confesses to his inability to share those thoughts with Meli because “parecía complacerse en mi sufrimiento.” From her “lindas uñas de gata” to her teeth “¡que después han mordido a tanta almas!” she represents both desire and danger not only to the narrator, but to all “honest” men (III 425 ). While the comparison he makes between Meli and a child insults her, comparing her to a spinning top and a cat dehumanizes her.

Throughout “El zapato,” the narrator demonstrates his confidence in reading women, whom he stereotypes. He describes how, “halagué su vanidad femenina” when courting Meli (3: 426). Reinforcing his objectification of women, he continues by stating how he admired “la satinada vislumbre rosa sobre la dulce *carnosidad* que transparentaba

la media caladísima” (3: 426 emphasis added). After characterizing her as a cat, he treats her like an animal in two additional ways: he values her for her necessarily virginal “flesh” and believes she can be “trained” to behave according to his wishes. Meli employs similar language in response to the narrator’s threats. When he implores her not to dance at the benefit ball hosted by la “duquesa de Ambas Castillas,” she exclaims, “a ver si me prendes, o si me das una cuchillada, como los carniceros a sus novias!” (3: 425). In fighting for her rights, even in the face of a phallic weapon, Meli will not easily give up. She recognizes the danger her suitor represents not only to her freedom but to her safety as well.

Despite Meli’s allusion to domestic violence, irony throughout the short story adds humor to “El zapato.” For example, similar to the words used by the machista husband in “Feminista,” the suitor assures Meli that “no bailarás, hija mía.” He then adds, “es preciso que al cabo te convenzas de que no soy un Juan Lanas” (3: 426). Instead of convincing herself that he is not a hen-pecked husband, she demonstrates that he is indeed a jealous tyrant. Just as the wife in “Feminista” does, Meli rebels against the restrictions imposed by her suitor. Although the narrator asserts that no one can take her seriously, it is he who is ridiculed by Meli.

The narrator believes that he has “conquered” Meli when he removes one of her shoes during the ball. He displays not only his inflated self-confidence, but also that he underestimates Meli by leaving the ball once she has returned home with one shoe. The narrator’s friend, however, later relates his own story, informing him that he, like many other men, danced with Nati after she “se calzó [y] volvió,” adding that she “nunca ha

bailado con más *entrain*.” The narrator describes his own reaction in violent terms, approximating himself to the knife-wielding butcher. He states, “el sufrimiento era agudo, y mi impulso, abofetear, herir...” (3: 427). What he fails to mention is toward whom he wishes to direct his anger—the friend or Meli? Either way, his efforts to avoid being a Juan Lanas and to remove Meli’s freedom of movement and expression fail.

“El zapato” illustrates the permanence of sexist values in twentieth-century Spain, but also demonstrates the impact of socioeconomics. Whereas in “Medias rojas” Ildara falls victim to her father’s violence and succumbs to his control, Meli finds freedom in her suitor’s perception of women’s weaknesses. The narrator employs antiquated methods to secure a twentieth-century wife who refuses to “pensar menos en cotilliones y más en el serio deber de una futura madre de familia” (3: 424). By possessing Meli’s shoes, he feels he has gained possession and exclusive rights to her affection. Despite receiving verbal abuse, the New Woman is afforded clothing and mobility denied to her working-class sisters. Unlike Cinderella or Ildara, Meli, *la marquesa*, possesses a noble title and attends cotillions as a member of high society. As a result, her need to marry figures much less prominently than in Cinderella’s or Ildara’s stories. Wealth is not only Meli’s greatest defense, but represents her empowerment in the face of imprisoning shoes or men.

## VI. Conclusions

In *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*, Valerie Hotchkiss states that:



To the medieval mind, it seems, man was indeed the measure of all things: women's activities in male spheres were invariably judged against the standard of the male. It follows—although not without inherent paradoxes—that the transvestite heroine finds enthusiastic approbation when she performs as a man. (3)

Pardo Bazán's characters of the early twentieth century who embody the New Woman do not seek approbation or parity with men. Rather, they prove themselves able to make gains as mobile, independent women in search of equality without clothing themselves as men. The female protagonists of the aforementioned stories all assert their independence in the face of tyrannical husbands or suitors. These short stories demonstrate not only the need to turn the dream of equal rights for men and women into reality, but also the role that economics play in feminism. Indeed, as later twentieth-century feminists argue, we can no longer speak of "feminism" but rather "feminisms."<sup>23</sup> The New Woman can quite literally afford to wear the pants—if only doing so figuratively—, silencing the voice of the *macho* without threatening her livelihood. Freed from hunger or other social ills, the middle class New Woman can pursue her dreams while her working class sisters strive merely to exist.

Unlike the fashion victims, women who un/dress for men and seamstresses, the New Woman protagonists provide the male characters with a lesson to be learned. Similarly, the narrator is not always privy to all the information needed to make sense of the stories. The stories do not exist as the narrators', but rather of the female characters who figure prominently in them. Once freed from the antiquated perception of women's

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Humm.

subjection in marriage or courtship, the characters enjoy the rights fought for by the leaders of the feminist movement.

Clothing, often serving as a metaphor for antiquated ideals, proves crucial in the liberation of women as well, converting itself into a symbol of hope in a modern age. Pants, comfortable shoes and relaxed attitudes provide women with the mobility they need to empower themselves both within the pages of Pardo Bazán's short stories and in the streets of Madrid. Through her short stories featuring the New Woman, Doña Emilia proves that changing the frame of reference in fiction holds the possibility of changing frames of mind in reality. As Antonio Machado expresses in his poem, "XXX S," men may have a voice (and, consequently, wear the pants), but it falls to the "skirts," such as Emilia Pardo Bazán and other feminist writers, to resolve the important issues of the day, especially related to gender equality, regardless of how they choose to clothe themselves.

## CONCLUSION

In her modernist short fiction published between 1901 and 1921 Pardo Bazán emphasizes profoundly serious matters, such as domestic abuse and poverty, within the context of the seemingly arbitrary subjects of dressing, fashion and sewing. Specifically, her short stories address the central issues—from dress reform to equal education—facing men and women as modernizing influences begin to shape their lives in new and permanent ways. Drawing on typically female, apolitical sartorial interests, the author makes the case for gender equality in language “clothed” in humor, satire or hyperbole. The multi-textured nature of her fiction allows her to criticize sexism without appearing overtly feminist and thus alienating the conservative, bourgeois subscribers of the periodicals in which her short fiction appears. By undressing the texts, the reader uncovers Pardo Bazán’s vision for a modern Spain where imitation and an over-reliance on men are shunned and a woman’s labor, femininity and independence are revered.

Many of the characters Pardo Bazán creates, particularly those of the *petit bourgeoisie*, uphold Flügel’s notion of fashion as mimicry. Nevertheless, the Galician author fashions her own unique writing style in the last two decades of her career, relying primarily on the genre of the short story and, alternately, modernist and naturalist elements to suit her needs. She reserves the oneiric qualities of the modernist short story for the depiction of the New Woman in such tales as “Sud-Exprés,” while Naturalism lends itself to the depiction of crippling poverty in “Medias rojas” and “El pañuelo.” By referring to classic as well as contemporary literature, the author does not imitate merely to adhere to fashion, but rather to criticize the sexist tendencies harbored in the Spanish imaginary. She thus proves herself

exemplary of the independent woman she lauds in her later short stories, providing her readers with an example, akin to a clothing pattern, with which to guide the design of their own, new realities for a new century, ever mindful of respecting class boundaries. Whether they choose to outfit themselves in *pañuelos* or *pantalones*, Pardo Bazán urges her readers to dress to suit their own hopes and desires, but above all, to unabashedly display their self-worth, valuing sensible clothing over slippery silk and imitative, obstructive hats.

### I. The Question of Style

Roland Barthes reminds us that we do not “just talk” nor do we “just dress”; we dress and talk in styles of our own—and others’—fashioning. Style allows a person to express her individual values and tastes while, paradoxically, also permitting her to confirm her membership in a particular group, characterizing herself, for example, as a modernist writer or New Woman. Although E.B. White states that “there is no satisfactory explanation of style,” he attests that style “is what is distinguished and distinguishing” (97). As Barthes and White illustrate, style applies to both sartorial and verbal expression. White maintains, “Style is an increment in writing. When we speak of Fitzgerald’s style, we don’t mean his command of the relative pronoun, we mean the sound his words make on paper. All writers, by the way they use the language, reveal something of their spirits, their habits, their capacities and their biases” (97-98). An author’s style therefore applies to both the visual—in the images it projects or conjures—and auditory elements. Style reveals information regarding an individual’s socioeconomic class as well. In *All Consuming Images*, Stuart Ewen states, “Following patterns that have persisted for centuries, distinctions of wealth and social status continue to set standards for those who wish to be ‘in style.’ For people without

money or cachet, particularly those who desire to be admired or accepted, the acquisition of style is a must” (xviii). Conversely, the maintenance of a stylish appearance is a requisite for those who are admired or accepted.

Applied to Pardo Bazán’s writing, Barthes’s and White’s observations provide critical insight into the role modernizing, external influences and a unique internal spirit play in her later short fiction. While Ewen’s statement may be readily applied to the plethora of characters Pardo Bazán fashions that are helped or hindered by finances, it also serves to enlighten her struggles as a female author often shunned by the male-dominated fiction-writing elite. Indeed, her marginalization persists into the twenty-first century, manifesting itself in the exclusion of the author’s name, as well as those of other women, in Spanish modernist literary anthologies. This exclusion may be explained in part by the fact that Pardo Bazán and other women writers dedicated themselves to “social modernism,” a term coined by Roberta Johnson that focuses on interpersonal relations within formal and informal social parameters (vii). According to Johnson, “women’s fiction, although less aesthetically innovative than male fiction, was known for its presentation of themes such as women’s social roles and unconventional sexual arrangements that were revolutionary by comparison to male novelists’ treatment of the subjects” (vii-iii). The short stories depicting a New Woman protagonist provide evidence of Pardo Bazán’s alignment with her female peers. Nevertheless, the writing style she employs from 1901-1921, particularly her use of irony, oneiric sequences and introspection, allows doña Emilia to define herself in relation to her male peers who traditionally comprise the modernist canon. Like her male contemporaries, she depicts some of her female protagonists in a negative light, such as the imitative *cursis*

seen in “Una lección” and others, who dress and undress for men at the expense of their families’ well being. Positive depictions of women abound in her later short fiction, too, such as those who work for a living and the New Woman. As a result, she creates balanced, life-like images of women that are neither blindly laudatory nor unnecessarily critical, demonstrating a fair treatment her subjects unlikely would receive elsewhere in contemporary literature or early twentieth-century Spain.

The short story, a genre favored by her modernist contemporaries, permits Pardo Bazán to fashion multi-faceted, credible images of her characters with an economy of words during this crucial period in her literary career. Indeed, her later short stories illustrate the complexity of plot and language that the relatively brief short story embodies. The “smallness” of short fiction proves appropriate for the exploration of how *pequeñeces*, such as small accessories and *mínimas circunstancias*, from a sudden rainstorm or a lost shoe, symbolize global questions of equality. Moreover, like Poe’s and Joyce’s short fiction, the genre is characterized by its veracity (or at least its ability to appear truthful), which also plays a central role in Pardo Bazán’s modernist *oeuvre*. In her “Apuntes autobiográficos,” Pardo Bazán states that all the elements of a fictionalized story “han de ser reales, sólo que la verdad se ve y resalta mejor cuando es libre, significativa y creada por el arte” (727). By contextualizing stories often featured in the press, the author obligates her readers to ponder the significance of the real-life events she fictionalizes and their importance in the struggle for equal rights.

Pardo Bazán draws attention to sexism by also highlighting an element described by Charles May and, as Federico de Onís points out, upheld by other Spanish Modernist writers:

crisis. Indeed, her short stories embody two crises. On a superficial level, they revolve around crises related to fashion or dress, such as a lack of proper attire due to financial constraints or a husband's mandate to never wear pants. On a more far-reaching level, however, the characters' crises reflect the inequality between women and men and among women of disparate socioeconomic classes. Worn or imitative clothing serves as an emblem of marginalized female protagonists in doña Emilia's *oeuvre*. The New Woman, on the other hand, uses articles of clothing to display her (desired) equality with men.

Mary Lee Bretz points out in *Encounters Across Borders* that clothing and speech, like mirrors, represent multiple selves. As evidenced by her treatment of women of disparate financial means, Pardo Bazán's short story *oeuvre*, like other modernist texts, exhibits a multitude of narrative perspectives, often within the same piece of short fiction. The stories' narrative style reflects the alienation of her female protagonists in Spanish society in general and male-authored Spanish Modernist literature in particular. Similarly, the use of a third-person narrator demonstrates the importance of outside observation on fashion. The first-person plural form, "*nosotros*," unites "us" but also separates "us" from "them." As the narrators are overwhelmingly male (albeit sometimes feminists), "us" translates into "us men." Similarly, the author's use of free indirect discourse reflects the detachment as well as intimacy embodied by her characters' clothing. On the one hand, garments become one with the wearer, inexorably linked with the body they clothe. Nevertheless, doña Emilia demonstrates that styling oneself—sartorially or otherwise—according to the dictates of fashion rather than personal preference can cause self-alienation.

“The power of style, and its emergence as an increasingly important feature in people’s lives, cannot be separated from the evolution and sensibility of modernity,” Ewen maintains (23). Related to style and its power, “stylus,” in the original sense of the word, means “weapon” (“Stylus”). Pardo Bazán appropriates the stylus to bring to life women who use the only tool within their reach—a sense of style—in order to fashion themselves new, independent lives, whether through the clothes they wear, those they sew or both. Doña Emilia proves that style, as well as matters related to fashion and clothing, is not purely hyperbolic or flamboyant, but substantive and potent. Relying on the mercurial nature of fashion styles, Pardo Bazán advocates permanent change in the style of seeing and treating women as inferior to men.

## II. Intertextuality

Although Pardo Bazán’s later short stories exhibit stylistic differences, whether sartorial or literary, the author’s use of intertextuality serves as a common thread, uniting the disparate texts. Typical of modernist writers, doña Emilia weaves references to myriad literary examples, from the Bible and Greek tragedies to the works of Gogol and Galdós, in order to question the values they espouse. Knowledge of the classics also demonstrates the breadth of her literary preparation (not only in Spanish, but English and French as well) despite a lack of formal education, providing a vivid example for the need and, indeed justification, for women’s access to educational opportunities available to men. By rewriting the stories of a bygone era, she illustrates the need to rethink traditional gender roles. However, by referencing the works of Spanish male Modernist authors, she creates a



fellowship with her contemporaries as well, who prove reluctant in admitting women to their ranks.

Although biblical references abound in nearly any piece of literature, allusions to the Bible are particularly evident in “Los rizos” and “El pañuelo.” Pardo Bazán, however, employs biblical references to two very different ends in the two short stories. In “Los rizos” she demonstrates the validity of the adage “A woman’s hair is her crowning glory,” by illustrating the lack of opportunity and objectification of the story’s young protagonist who tragically succumbs to illness caused by her blonde locks, her most prized possession. In “El pañuelo,” which also depicts the death of a young girl, Pardo Bazán fashions Cipriana, the protagonist, as a martyr. Unlike other female characters in classical traditions, Cipriana is not fashioned to approximate the self-abnegating Virgin Mary, defined by her relationship to men, but rather Christ, the powerful, male protagonist. Whether presented as an example to avoid or one to emulate, these characters serve to instruct readers in a way similar to the Old and New Testaments.

While also featuring death and serving as moralizing tales, European fairy tales overwhelmingly depict the lives of socioeconomically disadvantaged young girls. Their proverbial happy endings, however, do not provide insight into the quotidian reality that awaits them after marriage to the men who rescue them. In “Disfraz” and “Vergüenza” Pardo Bazán begins her parodies of fairy tales where the traditional stories end. Although not married to a prince, Nati is provided with an evening worthy of Cinderella’s in “Disfraz.” Nonetheless, hers is a disappointing end when her “prince” insults her, favoring her doctored look to her everyday appearance. Carmela *la Vergonzosa*’s situation demonstrates the

limitations placed on women who may become a wife or a nun. Opting for neither, Carmela lives in a self-imposed prison that, for women of her generation, differs little from marriage or the convent. In “El zapato,” the female protagonist, too, rejects her male suitor, but does so by rising above the challenge associated with losing a shoe. Unlike Cinderella, however, she does not remain at home, but returns to the ball to enjoy herself, dancing with a number of men. Exposing the myth of the fairy tale, none of the aforementioned female characters enjoys a traditional happily-ever-after ending. However, Meli, of “El zapato,” enjoys freedoms Cinderella or Snow White—not to mention their readers—dared not to imagine.

Like the Bible, it is difficult to find a literary text that, at least in some small way, is not influenced by *Don Quijote*. According to Nil Santiáñez, Miguel de Cervantes’s seminal work proves particularly relevant to modernist literature. Referring to the three “*durées* of Modernism,” Santiáñez claims that *Don Quijote* represents the beginning of Modernism’s *longue durée*. He continues by stating, “The main traits and techniques of *Don Quijote* are obviously Modernist, for instance its overlapping of narrative voices, its epistemological relativism, metaliterature, the importance of the act of reading in the novel, and the embodiment of literature in don Quijote and other characters” (481). While Pardo Bazán conjures a brief allusion to Sancho’s *ínsula* in “El disfraz,” parallels between “El frac” and Cervantes’s are readily apparent. Reading, often characterized as a feminine pursuit in nineteenth-century literature, plays a central role in don Pedro’s tale. Like the hero of Cervantes’s novel, don Pedro confuses his own reality with that of the historical characters he admires, ultimately succumbing to his vivid imagination.

The archetypal don Juan appears in a number of doña Emilia's short stories as well. While both "Casi artista" and "Instintivo" include characters that approximate the Spanish hero, it is the latter short story that relies on intertextual references with the Italian adaptation of the Golden Age play. Nevertheless, conjuring the plots of many Golden Age plays in which honor figures prominently, the narrator refers to "Casi artista" as a *capa y espada* tale. Descriptions of the hardworking seamstress, Dolores, in "Casi artista" provide a stark contrast to her lazy, womanizing husband. Although Dolores rises up to defend herself against her aggressor, Elvira, the protagonist of "Instintivo" proves unable to survive once her lover rejects her, taking her own life rather than fashioning a new one. Pardo Bazán playfully reverses roles in "Sud Exprés," creating a female don Juan who is capable of deceiving her male companion. With these three short stories, doña Emilia demonstrates men and women's equal, inherent ability to deceive, be deceived and thwart deceivers, although the law is not always on women's sides, as Dolores's probable implication in her husband's murder illustrates.

A modern rendition of the Golden Age trope of the cross-dressing female appears in "Feminista." Rather than willingly cross-dress herself, the female protagonist obliges her husband to, in effect, dress in drag, creating a much more dramatic image for Pardo Bazán's readers. While *Siglo de Oro* writers create proto-feminist characters who disguise themselves as men and live as such, the endings of plays return the once carnivalesque atmosphere to its rightful order, sealing the deal with a marriage scene featuring the bride in a gown, not pants. "Feminista" recalls the action after the marriage has taken place, during the very unromantic honeymoon. Tarnished honor, as it turns out, is something that many of

these male characters bring about on women—not the other way around—as propagated by Gold Age drama.

Well-versed in classic literature, Pardo Bazán proves equally familiar with novels, operas and short stories written during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While criticizing the genre's propagation of the self-abnegating *ángel del hogar* in “La vergüenza,” she garners a nod to Romanticism's literature with references to “Tenorio” in “El paraguas” and Lohengrin in “El disfraz.” Nevertheless, Pardo Bazán exposes the myths behind the romantic notions depicted in Wagner's opera, which ultimately harm the women they aim to laud, when she reveals the female protagonist's thoughts during her Cinderella-like transformation. She demonstrates that women desire—or should desire—to secure their husbands' respect through their deeds, not their physical appearance. Other short stories demonstrate Pardo Bazán's knowledge of contemporary writers' work within and outside of Spain. A keen consumer and commentator of Russian literature, “The Overcoat” by Nikolai Gogol figures in “Sud Exprés” and “El frac.” By appropriating characters' names from his *Fortunata y Jacinta* in “Lección,” Pardo Bazán playfully acknowledges her lover Benito Galdós as well as her parity with talented male writers. She garners a nod to her fellowship with Clarín as well, by fashioning a death in “Instintivo” that conjures doña Berta's demise.

Pardo Bazán's reliance on intertextuality allows her to carry out two important aims: parody elements, such as honor, embedded in the Western literary tradition from the Bible to *Lohengrin* and demonstrate her extraordinary literary foundation. By both honoring and criticizing men's contributions to literature, doña Emilia expresses the need for men to honor women who contribute in meaningful ways in society and within the home. Revealing

women's perspectives in her modern adaptations of literature from a bygone era permits her to make known the consequences of maintaining the status quo. Ignoring or diminishing women's contributions to society will impede Spain from progressing into modernity.

### III. Framing the Margin

"A pedestal," as Gloria Steinem stated, "is as much a prison as any small, confined space." Pardo Bazán's short fiction demonstrates how a woman is hindered rather than honored when placed on the proverbial pedestal that figures prominently in the depiction of Golden Age and Romantic heroines and aims to maintain her—read "her husband's or father's"—*honra*. She does so by fashioning images of women's imprisonment, both structural and sartorial. Tall, imposing walls and tight-laced corsets figure as obvious symbols, but it is a sartorial embellishment that may not be as apparent that gains importance in her several of her tales. Lace, which is featured most notably in "Encaje roto," "Los ramilletes" and "Casi artista," serves as an emblem of women's imprisonment in a number of ways. "Encaje" derives from the verb "encajar," meaning "to box" ("Encajar"). The English equivalent, "lace" means "noose," "snare," "to tie," or "to bind" ("Lace"). At once creating the bind between bride and groom, lace, like the pedestal Steinem mentions, also symbolizes the limitations women experience when "boxed into" a traditional, bourgeois marriage. Lace also encapsulates the traditional division of labor according to gender. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, "men were employed to perform their pure work of production, while women were regularly employed to do decorative work, often at a lower wage. They did lace-work and embroidery" (Ewen 130). Lace, therefore, demonstrates the lack of

respect associated with women's labor, which Pardo Bazán aims to change through publication of her short stories.

The brevity of the inherently liminal short story itself serves as a metaphor for the restrictions placed on women by admiring yet patronizing men. Short stories, which provide the busy modern reader with the opportunity to enjoy a work of fiction expeditiously, also embody the fragmentary, fast-paced nature of modern society. Short fiction suits the need or desire to highlight—or frame—a specific moment in time as experienced by its characters. Unlike the novel with its multitude of characters, short stories overwhelmingly focus on the experiences of a single protagonist. Indeed, the genre reflects the individual's growing isolation that modernity creates. It is fitting, therefore, that the genre was favored by modernist writers, as a new perception of space as framed and demarcated accompanied the rise of modernist literature. The Symbolist poets in particular relied on the use of framing, as seen in Antonio Machado's *Soledades* (Cardwell 505).

Like the short story, photographs and movies embody modernity for early twentieth-century Europe and the United States. Photographs and movies possess borders as well as frames that define their dimensions, highlight their contents and create space for embellishments. According to Ewen, "Photographs had the capacity to grab transient gestures, to enshrine the commonplace, the fortuitous, to hold onto things that previously survived only as faint, if potent, glimmers of recollection" (xxxiii). As photography makes portraiture available to the masses, Pardo Bazán's short stories capture the realities of all people, from poor seamstresses to debutantes. Regardless of income, however, the author communicates the characters' stories by highlighting small details. In this way her short

stories mirror “the motion picture camera” that “could move in, infusing the commonplace with uncommon significance, lingering expectantly on things which, in conscious life, might command little attention” (Ewen xxxiiii). These are the self-described *pequeñeces* that, like a movie director, doña Emilia frames throughout her *oeuvre*, bestowing credibility and reality upon her fiction.

The border or fringe of a dress acts in the same way as a photograph or film’s frame, providing details and drawing attention to the hem, or its limits. Seizing control of the typical feminine activity of decoration, Pardo Bazán “decorates” the borders of her short stories in a variety of ways. Most commonly, she employs a narrator who sets the stage of the action of the story for an interlocutor. The style of speech used by the narrator approximates that of spoken, informal language. When, in “Los ramilletes,” Severando stammers, “Se...se preocupó de un modo tal, que...que enfermó...y...al cabo...” and the narrator interrupts him by exclaiming, “¡Basta...!” represents one such example (3: 406).

Ironically, the borders of Pardo Bazán’s short stories reflect the dominant, male voice over the typically silenced, marginalized women the texts bring to life, upsetting the traditional power structure made apparent in the Bible, fairy tales and Golden Age theater. Her framed tales exhibit elements of the panopticon, which establishes and maintains an authoritative center in relation to a weakened peripheral. By turning the text’s structure (and, as a result, its power structure) on its head, however, Pardo Bazán reveals marginalized individuals’ plights while exposing the inequality maintained by those wielding influence. At the same time, she exhibits a disregard for framing as evidenced in previous literature by writing beyond the limits of fairy tales and other fiction that romanticizes marriage. Rather

than ending her stories with a wedding, she narrates the restrictiveness of day-to-day life as a married woman, regardless of class.

While borders characterize the structure of a modernist text, they also play an important role in its content. Modernists favor times of day or year that occupy the border, such as late afternoon and autumn. They also view international borders in a new light, advocating the exchange of ideas among nations. International borders are crossed physically and metaphorically in Pardo Bazán's writings. The Englishwoman in "El engaño" and the American newlywed in "Por España," travel through Spain, exerting their independence. The sole Spaniard to do so, the narrator of "Sud-Exprés," travels unaccompanied and witnesses sexual transgressions along the way. Characters attempt to blur class distinctions, another manifestation of boundaries, in a modernizing age in which individuals can falsify their images to mimic the upper classes. Modernists' expression of independence by destroying borders proves apropos for a feminist writer like Pardo Bazán, especially in her fashioning of the New Woman.

#### IV. Pardo Bazán's New Woman

Accompanying the rise of conspicuous consumption and marketing, images came to possess the power of persuasion. Nevertheless, as Ewen states, "the secret of all true persuasion is to induce the person to persuade himself" (xxxv). The didactic nature of Pardo Bazán's modernist and feminist short stories persuades her readers to see the world as she does, framed in a modernist, feminist perspective, and incite change. Ironically, the author uses images' power to illustrate the need to look beyond physical appearance. She urges women to rely on their skills, whether as music teachers, seamstresses or rural laborers,



rather than ill-afforded fashions, their sexuality or men in order to prosper. Therefore, Pardo Bazán does not “just talk” about fashion and dress. While using metaphors of clothing to express the need for change in Spanish society as it related to gender equality, she fashions her own New Woman. A New Woman based on an old model, she is hardworking, a mother, independent, feminine and a slave to neither fashion nor men.

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