

NO / BODIES:

CARCERALITY, CORPOREALITY, AND SUBJECTIVITY

IN THE LIFE NARRATIVES BY FRANCO'S FEMALE PRISONERS

by

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## Abstract

This thesis examines female political imprisonment during the early part of Spain's Franco regime through the life narratives by Carlota O'Neill, Tomasa Cuevas, Juana Doña, and Soledad Real published during the transition. It proposes the foregrounding notion of the 'No / Body' to describe the literary, social, and historical eradication *and* exemplification of the female prisoner as deviant. Using critical theories of genre, gender and sexuality, sociology and philosophy, and human geography, it discusses the concepts of subject, abject, spatiality, habitus, and the mirror to analyse the intersecting, influential factors in the (re)production of dominant discourses within Francoist and post-Francoist society that are interrogated throughout the corpus. In coining the concept of the 'No / Body' as a methodological approach, a narrative form, and a socio-political subject position, this thesis repositions the marginal and the (in)visible as an essential aspect of female carcerality. Read through this concept, the narratives begin to dismantle and rewrite dominant narratives of gender and genre for the female prisoner in such a way that the texts foreground the 'No / Body'. This thesis thus presents the narrative corpus of lost testimonies as a form of radical textual and political practice within contemporary Spanish historiography.

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## CONCLUSION

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*Si las mujeres habían desarrollado una labor en la guerra y en la retaguardia y habían sido convenientemente castigadas por ella, ¿por qué se eludía su presencia en los estudios específicos de la represión?*

(Egido León, 2009: 14)

-

*Son pocos los libros que han mostrado la represión ejercida sobre las mujeres republicanas.*

(González Duro, 2012: back cover)

-

*¿Por qué todo este sacrificio no se ha visto nunca reconocido?*

(Cuevas, 2005: back cover)

-

*In the context of prisoners Foucault writes, the strategy has been not to enforce a repression of their desires, but to compel their bodies to signify the prohibitive law as their very essence, style, and necessity. That law is not literally internalized, but incorporated, with the consequence that bodies are produced which signify that law on and through the body; there the law is manifest as the essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire.*

(Butler 1990: 182)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **No one, Nowhere, No / Body**

Under General Francisco Franco's near forty-year dictatorship tens of thousands of women were reprimanded, imprisoned, and executed in an attempt to protect the nation from the pernicious influence of the so-called enemies of New Spain. Despite these fervent displays of discipline and punishment, the female political prisoners of Francoism's authoritarian regime have been relegated to a footnote within history. In fact, the interest and inspiration for this thesis was sparked by such footnotes. Guided by this focus on the obfuscation of texts, bodies, and histories, this thesis seeks to contribute to the recovery of these lost narratives of female political imprisoned by analysing the life narratives by these women. It centres on the three inherently interlinked principles of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity to examine how the texts form a corpus that interrogates these notions within the contexts of authoritarian and post-authoritarian paradigms.

Stemming from burgeoning contemporary research on gender and oppression under the dictatorship, this thesis responds to the call for action that is contained within the many sources, projects, and associations that have recently emerged, which strive to uncover Spain's recent past. Since the transition to democracy, eminent scholars such as Paul Preston, Stanley Payne, Helen Graham,

Anthony Beevor, and Jo Labanyi in the United Kingdom and United States, and Spain-based critics such as Javier Tussell, Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, Paloma Aguilar Santos Juliá, and Julián Casanova, have all sought to bring to light the travesties of Francoism. Such research has blossomed with the 2007 Ley de la Memoria Histórica bringing political, legal recognition, albeit problematically,<sup>1</sup> to the cultural and academic practice of contemporary Hispanic studies. Much of the scholarship to emerge from this memory boom has focussed on high-ranking public figures or the male masses. Nevertheless, female perspectives, too, have been brought to the foreground through the examination of women's experiences during the dictatorship,<sup>2</sup> and more specifically, female militias,<sup>3</sup> and the women of the Sección Femenina de la Falange.<sup>4</sup> Within this recovery of the silenced past, Franco's female political prisoners have begun to experience some share of the spotlight through the (re)publications of narratives of female imprisonment,<sup>5</sup> the appearance of critical monographs,<sup>6</sup> and the production of archives and projects<sup>7</sup> concerning

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars such as Georgina Blakely and Jo Labanyi have examined this law and its consequences for issues of memory within contemporary Spain. See Blakeley (2013, 2005); Labanyi (2006); and the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* Special Issue on The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Spain (2008).

<sup>2</sup> See Alcalde (1996); Brooksbank Jones (1997); Morcillo (2008); and Ruíz Franco (2007); amongst others.

<sup>3</sup> See Ackelsberg (1991); Alcalde (1976); Lines (2012); Nash (1995).

<sup>4</sup> See Carbayo-Abengózar (2001); Domingo (2007); Graham (1995); Ofer (2010, 2009, 2005); Richmond (2003); and Ruíz Franco (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Such as Canales (2007); Cañil (2012); Chacón (2002); Cuevas (2005b, 2004); Fonseca (2006, 2004); García Madrid (2003); Gil Roncales (2007); Ginard i Ferón (2005); Mejías Correa (2006); Montero (2004); O'Neill (2003); Prado (2007); Vinyes (2004).

<sup>6</sup> These include di Febo, (1976); Duro (2012); Egidio León (2009a); Hernández Holgado (2003, 2011); Mangini (1995); Osborne Verdugo (2012); Vinyes (2010).

<sup>7</sup> See particularly Laraurri (2010a); the online archive, *Memòria de Les Corts. Presó de dones. Barcelona, 1939-1955* (Associació per la Cultura i la Memòria de Catalunya, 2006); and the Spanish

these women and their experiences. Since beginning the research for this thesis, interest in this topic has developed significantly: exhibitions and expositions on the plight of the women incarcerated under the dictatorship have spread across Spain,<sup>8</sup> whilst other researchers have also taken up the baton to explore these lost lives.<sup>9</sup> This thesis thus contributes to a growing body of research that is still in its infancy in striving to uncover the forgotten and obscured (hi)stories of Franco's female political prisoners. It develops the contemporary exploration of the socio-historical issue of female political incarceration under the regime by reading, analysing, and thus bringing to light the life narratives by these women themselves, with the intention to foster further consideration and discussion within contemporary Hispanic research and society.

In exploring the notion of female incarceration under the regime through the life writing by these prisoners as narratives, my approach demonstrates a shared focus on both socio-historical discourses and literature; I read these sources as political and historical texts that are contextually grounded, yet inherently literary. This thesis thus represents an original contribution to research on the question of female political imprisonment given that such life writing has previously been examined as historical and socio-political sources, on the one hand, or has been described with reference to genre categories, on the other. By

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Civil War memory project at the University of California, San Diego (2008).

<sup>8</sup> See especially Osborne (2012) and 'Recursos' within the project *Memòria de la presó de dones de Les Corts* (Associació per la Cultura i la Memòria de Catalunya, 2006) for a list of events.

<sup>9</sup> Such as Gallo González (2012) Littlewood (2014); and O'Connor (2013, 2012).

combining a literary and socio-historico-political analysis of the texts, I address these dual contributing factors within such narratives of the female incarcerated subject under Francoism. As a result, this thesis demonstrates a critical approach to historiographico-literary narratives that encompasses the contributing factors of social discourses, literary practice, and critical analysis in order to read the corpus of texts in consideration as new discourses and conversations on gender, belonging, and representing.

In considering the portrayals and constructions of female carceral, corporeal subjectivity, it has been necessary to bring together a diversity of methodological frameworks and focal points throughout my analysis. I employ a range of critical tools informed by the work of such philosophers as Foucault, Butler, Kristeva, Bourdieu, and Althusser. I also make use of work from the fields of gender studies, literary analysis, and carceral geography in my explorations of the narrative corpus in question. This cross-disciplinary approach serves to enrich my analysis of the narratives and additionally represents a further point of originality within my research. By using such diverse fields in conversation with one another I seek to demonstrate and to interrogate the intersecting combination of issues informing the construction and reproduction of the embodied, contextually-embedded subject, in this case the female political prisoner under Franco. As a methodological toolkit, this range of theories, frameworks, and approaches enables an examination of the narratives of, by, and about this figure, which reframes the texts as dialogues interrogating the re-constitution of problematical subjectivities.

The originality of this research thus lies in its combined historiographical, literary, and theoretical analysis of the life narratives of Franco's female political prisoners as a means to interrogate the construction of dissident or non-normative subjectivities.

My choice to explore this topic through life writing is influenced by my interest in the construction of female corporeal subjectivities as an ongoing act that is at once personal and individual, and socially informed and collective. Consequently, the primary source texts that this thesis examines are limited solely to those life narratives written by female political prisoners initially incarcerated under the early years of the Francoist dictatorship. As critically and publically ignored texts, these sources constitute important narratives of experiences condemned to historical amnesia that have been explored, to a limited degree, as historical sources; the focus of this thesis differs in that it examines the texts as discursive constructions of subjectivities within the context of Francoism, rather than as historiographical narratives. Matters concerning historical facticity are thus omitted from the ensuing discussion. Equally, although the question of memory is of undeniable importance for the source texts discussed herein, a theoretical framework and analytical lens influenced by memory studies has been omitted in favour of philosophical, literary, and gender-based analyses of the texts as discursive and constructive acts, as opposed to acts of memory.

As regards critical focus on aspects of the texts, I limit myself to exploring those issues pertinent to female corporeal subjectivities within (and without)

Francoist carcerality. Subsequently, although the narratives contain an inevitable consideration of Nationalist figures and subjectivities, these are only commented on when they directly relate to the narrative construction of female being and belonging for Franco's political prisoners. Additionally, issues concerning Spanish history, politics, and justice are only examined in direct relation to the thesis' exploration of the construction of carceral, corporeal subjects.

Focussing on four examples of life writing by female political prisoners under Francoism, I analyse the interrelated concepts of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity for the female political prisoner as demonstrated, constructed, and interrogated within their narratives. The texts in question have been selected so as to provide an overarching and heterogeneous examination of carcerality during the early years of the regime. Written by a range of women of a similar generation, they are the volumes *Presas* (2005) by Tomasa Cuevas,<sup>10</sup> *Desde la noche y la niebla* (1978) by Juana Doña, *Una mujer en la guerra de España* (2003) by Carlota O'Neill,<sup>11</sup> and Soledad Real's narrative *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* (1982) compiled by Consuelo García. The thesis examines these texts as radical narratives in terms of both form and content, the historiographical and the literary. Thus I analyse how social ideologies of gender, politics, and discipline are present in the life narratives; how the narratives serve to construct female political prisoner corporeal and carceral subjectivities; and how the texts additionally critique, challenge, and

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<sup>10</sup> This is comprised of testimonies originally published in Cuevas (1985; 1986).

<sup>11</sup> The three texts that make up this work were published for the first time separately, see O'Neill (1964a; 1964b; 1971).

interrogate such social, ideological perspectives such that they begin to rewrite the social discourses underpinning these.

A guiding premise behind this thesis lies in my concept of the 'No / Body' as the description of the simultaneous physical and figurative eradication and exemplification of the female political prisoner. This refers to the paradoxical social condition in which the individual is 'nobody' or 'nothing', insofar as they are socially, politically, historically, and culturally ignored or rendered invisible; simultaneously, however, the 'No / Body' is also overtly and explicitly reduced to the corporeal, and thus made inherently visible as a body. As a term, I use this to depict both the socio-historical content and the literary form of the narratives as interrelated political issues and to explore the works as interrogations of discourses of gender, genre, and (in)visibility. In foregrounding this concept, I consider to what extent the narratives begin to move beyond this subject position. I argue that the narratives re-frame the position of the ex-prisoner through this notion of the 'No / Body' such that the corpus rewrites female carcerality in a manner that foregrounds their simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility and interrogates questions of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity for the female political prisoner within the context of Francoist and post-Francoist discipline.

Throughout the thesis, I favour this 'No / Body' terminology over other terms such as 'minority' and 'subaltern' in order to underscore the specific problematics of subjectivity and corporeality for the female political prisoner under Franco. Visually, the split between 'no' and 'body' enforced by the addition of

the forward slash represents the schism between self and body enforced by Cartesian dualism and the problematics thereof for the subject. As regards the context of Francoist punishment and women, this notion provides an illustration of the paradoxical nebulous state of their existence: at once facing social exclusion, condemnation, and historical amnesia, in conjunction with their reduction to a grotesque, yet inextricably public body marked by decrepitude and filth. The term 'No / Body' therefore indicates and explains the contradictory status of Francoist punishment and discipline as both pre- and post- Foucault's definition of the modern punitive system.<sup>12</sup>

I apply this term both as a description of the social and subject situation for female political prisoners under Franco, and as a loose generic definition for their life narratives. In regards genre, I approach the texts as 'No / Body Narratives'; I use this as a concept to unite the sources as a narrative corpus about and of female carcerality. As a generic notion, the 'No / Body Narrative' stems from work on life writing genres by critic G. Thomas Couser and journalist Lorraine Adams. Its origins lie in a review-essay published in April 2002 in the *Washington Monthly* written by journalist Lorraine Adams. The essay, entitled 'Almost Famous: The Rise of the "Nobody Memoir"', provides an overview of the memoir boom and seeks to further categorise the expansion in this genre by distinguishing between two specificities of memory narratives: the 'somebody memoir' and the 'nobody

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<sup>12</sup> This notion forms an important reading of Francoist punishment that has been explored further by critics González-Ruibal (2014; 2011) and Oliver (2007).

memoir'. According to Adams, the difference between these is simple and depends on whether the author had been known to the public prior to the publication of their text, as is the case of the 'somebody memoir', or only became known through the publication of their text, in the case of the 'nobody memoir'. Adams' article, however, further develops this categorisation by examining in some detail the sorts of texts published. She notices a growth in those concerning traumatic circumstances, most especially those dealing with three specified situations:

the childhood memoir – incestuous, abusive, alcoholic, impoverished, minority, “normal,” and the occasional privilege. The second largest type is the memoir of physical catastrophe – violence, quadriplegia, amputation, disease, death. The third is mental catastrophe – madness, addiction, alcoholism, anorexia, brain damage. (Adams, 2002)

In surveying these conclusions alongside the titles of recently published memoir texts, Couser emphasises this tendency to write the 'worst-' case scenarios that 'issu[e] from marginal sites and minority populations' (2011: 230). That is to say, these memory texts dominating contemporary literary trends focus on specific experiences of trauma as endured by certain peoples defined by a 'minority' or 'marginal' status. This observation has led Couser to re-consider the boundary of the nobody memoir, declaring it to be 'often the memoir of *some* body' (italics original) (2011, 230). He elucidates:

the nobody memoir is far more likely than the somebody memoir to be concerned with what it's like to have, to inhabit – to be – a particular body. In the some body memoir, the experience of the body is in the foreground, not taken for granted, as it is in most life writing. Not surprisingly, and not insignificantly, many of these bodies are anomalous in some way. Thus, the nobody memoir is often an odd body memoir. (2011: 230)

He thus defines this subgenre as an account of trauma as experienced by and in a 'particular body'. 'Some body memoir' is therefore specified and foregrounded in the body.

Within this thesis, I take this work by Couser one step further in the concepts of the 'No / Body' and the 'No / Body Narrative', which foreground the experience of the socially eradicated individual who is reduced to a denigrated body. In terms of life writing, the 'No / Body Narrative' also highlights the rupture with traditional life writing forms, such as the autobiography, as occurs within this narrative corpus. This allows me to emphasise the transgressive nature of these texts and the exclusionary politics of the normative and Western conceptualisation of autobiography (Smith and Watson, 2010).<sup>13</sup> The critical reading of autobiography as a specific narrative form pertaining to a limited social demographic forms an important part of my analysis. Based on this, throughout the thesis I opt to describe the texts as life writing or 'No / Body Narratives' rather than autobiographies. Similarly, the 'No / Body' terminology I employ, underscores the radical socio-historical, political position of the texts' content. As a concept informing the analysis within this thesis, both the 'No / Body' and the 'No / Body Narrative' thus designate the problematical and paradoxical position of the female political prisoner as a subject (and narrative) that is socially and historically eliminated and therefore invisible, whilst simultaneously reduced to a socially

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<sup>13</sup> For more on this see especially Benstock (1988), Smith and Watson (1992; 1998; 2010), and Stanford Friedman (1988).

exemplified and publically denigrated body and as such rendered hypervisible. This conflict of invisibility versus hypervisibility, erasure versus survival, and the radical versus the normative, constitutes a grounding principle throughout the thesis that informs my exploration of historiographical and literary paradigms of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity for the female political prisoner.

As a methodology for analysis, the notion of the 'No / Body' thus provides a critical construct that allows me to highlight the continuing position of discourses of gender and genre, and literature and history within Francoist and post-Francoist society for the female political prisoner. In analysing the life narratives with reference to this, I use the 'No / Body' as a means for examining how the texts replicate, reject, and, ultimately, interrogate these discourses. In so doing, I emphasise how the narratives attend to social and ideological discourses of being and belonging and thus bring their 'No / Body-ness' to the foreground in a manner that embeds the conflict between the invisible and the hypervisible within their very narratives as a radical socio-political position.

## ***Structure***

Structurally, the thesis begins with two contextualising chapters that serve to ground the proceeding discussions historically, politically, socially, and textually. Chapter One provides a brief overview of early twentieth-century history, with a

particular focus on Francoism and gender politics. In this chapter I explore the models of femininity endorsed and enforced by the regime through a dichotomous paradigm of ideal mother versus red whore. This simultaneous veneration and condemnation of women, primarily as bodies, provides a central element within the analysis of subjectivities and their constructions that runs throughout this thesis. By examining these social ideologies of gender with reference to a Foucauldian framework of punishment and discipline, I contend that these paradigmatic models serve to literally construct such subjectivities. The influence and importance of discourses, which Butler describes as written 'on and through the body' (Butler, 1990: 182), constitutes a guiding principle throughout the thesis; as such, this chapter not only provides a contextual historical, social, and political grounding for the ensuing discussions within this research, it also serves as a theoretical and philosophical backdrop for my analysis of the texts' constructions of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity for female political prisoners under the regime. In Chapter Two I develop this contextual focus further by introducing the texts that have emerged from this historical and political backdrop. Here, I introduce my methodology for selection, present each narrator and narrative individually, and frame the texts as a corpus in relation to existing scholarship.

The main discursive body of the thesis is comprised of five analytical chapters that explore an array of separate yet interlinked concepts present throughout the narratives. The first two of these both concern the construction of the subject, albeit from complementary perspectives. Chapter Three explores the

narrative constructions of subjectivity with reference to (in)visibility and representation. This is framed by the notion of the 'No / Body', through which the chapter seeks to question how and to what extent the texts recapitulate and critique discourses of normativity as regards visible female subjectivities. The discussion focuses on both the form and the content of the narratives. As such, this opening chapter foregrounds my combined focus on discourses of gender and genre, which are both (de)constructed throughout the narratives. Chapter Four develops this discussion of the female carceral subject by examining how the texts represent prisoners as object and Other. These portrayals are discussed with reference to the Kristevan concept of abjection, in order to examine the presence of visceral and grotesque physical imagery within the narratives as a strategic device that intersects on a very literal level with the notion of the 'No / Body'. Through Kristevan theory, I thus consider such portrayals of the abject and the Other as the (re)establishment of the subject's boundaries, on the one hand, and as a response to trauma and an interrogation of Francoist discourses of femininity, corporeality, and carcerality, on the other.

The two following chapters move away from the question of the individual subject per se to consider the issues of prison space, place, and collectivity as constituent elements throughout the narratives. In Chapter Five, I explore representations of prison spatiality with regard to themes of confinement, isolation, and discipline, using references to carceral geography and spatiality studies. I examine how the texts construct prison space and place and how these

portrayals demonstrate intersections of spatiality and subjectivity for the female political prisoner. Further engaging with my notion of the 'No / Body', this chapter explores questions of corporeality, materiality, and carcerality through Augé's concept of 'non-place' in order to highlight the interrelated nature of social discourses and disciplines for the prisoners' constructions of life, experience, and subjectivity. Chapter Six builds on this exploration of punitive and disciplinary spatiality by examining the prison as an inherently social and collective place. Here, I discuss how these conditions of collectivity, upon which prison spatiality is based, generate specific behaviours that are inherently gendered, corporeal, and carceral. This analysis uses Bourdieu's notion of habitus, especially as developed within the field of carceral geography. In addition to exploring the portrayals of these behaviours, I extend the concept of habitus further to posit that the texts themselves constitute inter- and intratextual examples of a narrative carceral habitus.

The thesis concludes with a final chapter in which I bring together the various issues of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity through the notion of the mirror. This chapter uses the mirror as a metaphorical and analytical construct to examine the (re)constitution of the female carceral, corporeal subject. I explore how the narratives portray the body as mirror, how they use the mirror literally and symbolically within the texts to consider the development of the prisoner as subject, and how the texts themselves constitute a form of mirror. Using the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage, I examine how the prisoner as subject is

constituted through the experience of jail, and how the texts serve to interrogate this subject position as typically delimited within the narratives of literature and history.

The main chapters within this thesis represent five key theoretical areas as distinct yet interrelated sites influencing and contributing to paradigms of female imprisonment. Throughout the thesis I examine these areas with reference to the notion of the 'No / Body' as elements within the discursive (re)productions of the simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility of the female political prisoner under Franco. Focussing on these five aspects not only allows me to consider how dominant social paradigms are (re)produced through a variety of influential factors, but also how the narratives demonstrate awareness of and respond to this interrelated constitution of discourse. Indeed, rather than a mere reproduction or rejection of ideologies, the texts draw on the dominant discourses of female corporeal, carceral subjectivities to repeat, re-construct, de-construct, and interrogate the social, literary, and histori(ographi)cal narratives of the 'No / Body'. In so doing, they construct new dialogues and discussions of female carcerality that counter the historical amnesia to which this topic has been condemned. As a corpus, the texts thus serve as a form of radical textual practice that brings the 'No / Body' to the foreground as a socio-political and literary statement.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Franco's Female Bodies: Mother Incarnate / 'Putas'**

#### **Incorporate**

In this chapter, I examine the Francoist regime's gender politics as a dichotomous paradigm of femininity. This is comprised of a dualist conceptualisation of 'good' femininity - the ideal mother - and 'bad' femininity - the 'puta roja' -, which I argue represents a continuation of the conservative gender roles within Spain. I start by providing a brief outline of social, historical, and gender politics in twentieth-century Spain in order to highlight consistencies and developments during this period. I then introduce and examine the ideal mother / 'puta roja' paradigm. By demonstrating what this paradigm entailed and how it was enforced, I show how each side of this dichotomy served to (corporeally) encompass aspects of regime rhetoric: the ideal mother is an embodiment of the strict morals of Francoist ideology, enforced in order to ensure successful regime imposition; whilst the image of the red whore constitutes a rendering of that which the regime opposed, a symbol of Spain's degeneration.

Using Foucault's notions of discipline, docility, and bio-power to analyse the Francoist treatment of women as both ideal mothers and red whores, I emphasise

the disciplinary mechanisms within each of these paradigms with a specifically corporeal focus. I thus show how discourses of gender politics delimit and demarcate the female body, with the result that regime ideology is physically engendered. Through Butler's notion of incorporation,<sup>14</sup> I highlight how political ideology comes to be embodied within these paradigmatic images of femininity for the purposes of regime imposition and population control. I thus conclude that these female paradigms use the female body for policy, propaganda, and punishment central to the dictatorship; the female body, as altered, delimited, and determined by Francoism, constitutes the very centre of regime dogma. This analysis of dichotomous femininity provides a contextual grounding for the discussion of the source texts throughout this thesis.

### ***A nation in crisis***

The 1936 rebel uprising that instigated the Civil War and subsequent National-Catholic dictatorship occurred at a moment of great political turmoil. Marred by conflict and social, political division,<sup>15</sup> the twentieth century dawned with the

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<sup>14</sup> The term incorporation refers to the preservation of objects, ideas, and discourses 'on the surface of the body' (Salih, 2003: 54). As a notion, this originates in the work of Freud on the process of identification. It is additionally central to Butler's theories of gender, sex, and the body, as particularly outlined within *Gender Trouble* (see especially 1990: chapter 2 part III).

<sup>15</sup> Robinson affirms that political conflict in Spain was 'longer-lasting, more bitter and more profound' (1971: 14). Similarly, according to Beevor social conflict was inherent in Spain and

destruction of what the regime later deemed the image of 'eternal Spain' (Beevor, 2007: 10). Such destruction was caused by the loss of the nation's colonies, which brought about 'a sense of national, historical and cultural failure' (Payne, 1999: 11). Amidst this crisis in national identity, burgeoning social rebellion<sup>16</sup> was countered by the re-emergence of the army within Spanish politics (Robinson, 1971: 28), thereby ensuring the 'entrenched position of the military establishment' (Beevor, 2007: 10). Alongside increasing socio-political polarity, Spain was situated within a context of wider European political conflict. The end of WWI brought about the 'collapse of the old liberal order [...and] closed political systems run by urban elites' and Spain entered 'deep political and social crisis' (Vincent, 2009: 189).<sup>17</sup>

In this climate, the army pronounced their lack of faith in the government, thus beginning the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1921-1930) (Robinson, 1971: 28). Initially proposed as a transitional period (Tusell et al., 2004: 26), the dictatorship lasted throughout this decade. However, economic depression, degenerating social conditions, further political disparity, and an increase in social action all contributed to its breakdown.<sup>18</sup> By January 1930 Primo de Rivera's regime was over (Beevor, 2007: 22; Preston, 1994: 26). His resignation was

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traceable to the 1492 reconquest.

<sup>16</sup> Rising social rebellion constituted a social threat to Spain (Payne, 1961: 2): the early 1900s witnessed increasing socialist activism as the Partido Socialista de Obreros Españoles (PSOE) fought to improve working conditions, maintain wages, and ensure fiscal stability (Preston, 1994: 11). These actions, however, were quashed by the government (Ibid.: 12-13).

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the early years of the twentieth-century see: Beevor (2007); Payne (1999; 1961); Preston (1994); Robinson (1971).

<sup>18</sup> More detailed information about the disintegration of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship can be found in the following sources: Payne (1999, 1961); Preston (2012a, 1994); Robinson (1971); Tusell et al. (2004).

followed by the government of General Berenguer, which failed to produce a return to the constitutional monarchy (Preston, 2011: n.p.) and king Alfonso XIII, deemed to have accepted an illegal regime, was ousted (Robinson, 1971: 29).

With the political right in disarray, the remaining Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) was left to form a broad coalition government and begin the Second Republic (1931-1936) (Preston, 1994: 27). This contravened Spain's trend for conservatism (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa, 1979: 1) and the wider European move to authoritarianism, promising great social reform, which ultimately failed.<sup>19</sup> Amidst global economic depression, worsening social conditions, and rising political tensions, state control crumbled.<sup>20</sup> After a narrow victory for 'Frente Popular', the broad left-wing coalition descended into a volatile, out-of-control government, which army generals sought to oust through a coup led by General Francisco Franco on 17th July 1936.<sup>21</sup> Held off by working-class resistance in large cities, industrial areas, and the agricultural south (Preston, 2009: 5), the uprising resulted in three years of bloody civil warfare, lasting until April 1939. With propaganda,<sup>22</sup> military, and church support legitimising the institutionalised violence of the rebels as a 'crusade' for the nation (Grugel and Rees, 1997: 11), the

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<sup>19</sup> These reforms were prevented by the ruling classes (Preston, 2009: 3-4) and caused widespread disillusion amongst the members of the left (Beevor, 2007: 24).

<sup>20</sup> As Preston contends, political tensions kept rising and 'the left saw fascism in every action of the right; the right smelt revolution in every left-wing move' (Preston 2009: 4). Both sides thus played on the wider climate of fear and political polarity (Beevor 2007: xxix; Preston 2012a: intro), whilst government control disintegrated.

<sup>21</sup> Franco's doubts and reluctance for involvement in this have been commented by Bolinaga Irausegui (2010: 40); Payne (1968: 7-9).

<sup>22</sup> Propaganda was in the hands of the ruling classes (Preston, 2009: 4) and had a vast impact on foreign perspectives of Spain and the conflict, as well as securing strong right wing support.

Nationalists were better placed for victory; by contrast, the left-wing was damaged through the lack of ideological cohesion and infrastructural support, and raging factionism.<sup>23</sup> The period of the Civil War was also instrumental in establishing the ideological, political, and structural foundations of Francoism (Grugel, 1997: 3)<sup>24</sup> through the concept of 'National-Catholicism' and the founding of the coalition party the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de la Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (FET y las JONS).

Following the declaration of Francoist victory on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939, the regime sought to rebuild the nation destroyed by a war that 'había concluido con una tan generalizada persecución' (Tusell, 2005: 30).<sup>25</sup> Francoism instigated the 'Nuevo Orden', founded on the three pillars of the military, the Falange party, and the Catholic Church (Carr and Fusi Aizpurúa, 1979: 21) and promised a return to normality (Molinero, 2005: 210), promoting itself as a moral crusade that would save the nation (Grugel, 1997: 28). The regime focussed on two enmeshed aims: the social, political, and economic regeneration of the country; and the eradication of those enemies threatening this country (Grugel, 1997: 23). This was achieved through enforced, overtly Christian, politicised morality, political and economic

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<sup>23</sup> For more on the details of the Civil War see Beevor (2007); Bolinaga Irausegui (2010); Preston (2012a, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> See especially Molinero and Ysáas (2008; 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Although the material destruction was not comparable to that of Europe following WWII (Tusell, 2005: 29), the Civil War witnessed extensive social destruction: Javier Tusell remarks that 'más grave que la destrucción fue la ruptura social que se produjo a consecuencia de la represión' (2005: 30). Critics Molinero and Preston also confirm this in their condemnations of the many lives lost in the Nationalist zones (Molinero and Ysáas, 2001: 23; Preston, 2012b). Preston references the figure 150,000 killed in Nationalist zones during warfare (2012b), however, Tusell highlights that this only constituted 1% of the population (2005: 29).

autarky,<sup>26</sup> and ‘a culture of repression that functioned through mechanisms, carried out by the winners, that steadily cranked out the daily humiliation, political atomization, and economic and social repression of the losers’ (Herrmann, 2003: 11).

### ***Nationalising gender***

Fray Luis León’s *La perfecta casada* (1583), which provided a treatise ‘legitimizing the glorious past of true Catholic womanhood’ and outlining ‘women’s virtues and vices’ (Morcillo, 2008: 38), served to describe and discursively reinforce the traditionalist gender politics of early modern Europe. The text constructs a national image of womanhood based on separate spheres, strict biologically-essentialist gender politics, and Christian domesticity.<sup>27</sup> These attitudes remained ingrained within nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century gender discourses which depicted women as ‘ángeles del hogar’ (Scanlon, 1986: 59) whose social duty was encompassed within the roles of dutiful wife and mother (Nash, 1995: 10-11). Such a model of gender politics was enforced through ‘legal discrimination, work segregation, and unequal educational opportunities’ allowing the state to ‘play a

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Richards describes as ‘an imposed quarantine or silencing [that] signified the continuation of war as a work of cultural destruction in the broadest sense’ that served to ‘seal off Spain’ (1998: 2).

<sup>27</sup> See Enders and Radcliff (1999: 5); Harvey (2008: 283; 292); Morcillo (2008: 39); Nash (1999: 28; 1995: 10); Vincent (2009: 191).

decisive role in the articulation of power relations between the sexes' (Nash, 1995: 15). Conservative gender roles within Spain are thus historically rooted and of great socio-cultural, national, and political significance.

The early twentieth century witnessed some, albeit limited, social changes for women, particularly as regards education,<sup>28</sup> work and unions,<sup>29</sup> and the establishment of groups, such as the Lyceum Club, the Feminine Youth University Group, and the Feminine Socialist Group (Mangini González, 2001; Scanlon, 1986). The Republic provided opportunities for further change through reforms legalising divorce, abortion, and women's suffrage<sup>30</sup>, and promoting an increased involvement in politics. Nevertheless, reforms were only top down and thus did not produce any change in social attitudes (Folguera, 1998; Graham, 1995; Scanlon, 1986). The outbreak of the Civil War served as a further catalyst for social development (Gómez, 2001).<sup>31</sup> On both sides, propaganda targeted women for the war effort, predominantly seeking to mobilise the female labour force. As a result, women joined the labour market and carried out vital war work, largely in the rearguard (Scanlon, 1986: 296; Vincent, 2009: 210). Despite this, Republicans, and even some Nationalists avidly participated in front-line activism (Folguera, 1998: 515; Lines, 2009; Scanlon, 1986: 292; Vincent, 2009: 211). However, these progressive attitudes were overshadowed by the 'double burden' for front-line

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<sup>28</sup> For information on the education debates see Charnon-Deutsch (2001); Morcillo (2008); Nash (1995, especially 17-23); Scanlon (1986).

<sup>29</sup> See Folguera (1998); Nash (1995: 30).

<sup>30</sup> This was a very contentious issue, see Vollendorf (2001).

<sup>31</sup> For more on this, see Prats (2009).

militias who endured 'the responsibility for the bulk of the domestic tasks in addition to their combat duties' (Lines, 2009: 180). As Lannon further emphasises, even on the front line women had to fulfil traditionalist gender roles; moreover, following the prohibition of front-line work for female militias in 1937 (Lines, 2012: 73), 'their removal back to the home front soon re-established the clear demarcation between what was a man's task and what was a woman's' (Lannon, 1991: 222). In response to this continuing conservatism, women also established their own political groups (Folguera, 1998: 521; Gómez, 2001; Martínez Gutiérrez, 2001: 279).<sup>32</sup> These groups engaged in vital war work, particularly aided by the fact that the women could carry out illicit operations unsuspected on account of their gender (Vincent, 2009: 209). Whilst this work was encouraged, such social changes were merely viewed as temporary measures for the Civil War and traditionalist attitudes remained (Graham, 1995: 110), which the incumbent regime sought to further enforce.

Indeed, the regime put great emphasis on traditional gender roles and thus represented the continuation and exaggeration of conservative sexual politics. Implementing these attitudes was of the utmost importance for regime success and was enforced through Francoism's 'política social'<sup>33</sup> consisting of National-Catholic policy, law, indoctrination, and propaganda (Molinero, 2005; Molinero and

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<sup>32</sup> These groups included the Asociación de Mujeres Anti-fascistas; the anarchist group Mujeres Libres, which featured some 20,000 members; and the right-wing Falange group, Sección Femenina, which counted 580,000 affiliates by the end of the war (Scanlon, 1986: 317). For more on these groups see Ackelsberg (1991); Ofer (2010).

<sup>33</sup> This term is from Molinero (2008).

Ysáas, 2008). As Grugel and Rees highlight, national regeneration would be achieved 'through a return to properly Catholic and truly Spanish ideals of family life and morality, and a respect for hierarchy' (1997: 133). Conservative traditionalist gender roles were crucial to this vision of morality encompassed in the family model and reflected within the nation. Crucial to regime success, women adhering to this feminine model were venerated and celebrated as mothers regenerating the nation. By contrast, the regime sought to simultaneously eradicate the 'pernicious' women who failed to adhere to such a model through public demonisation. This constituted a dichotomous paradigm of femininity based on the opposition of the ideal Christian mother and the red whore. Such binary thinking replicated good/bad polarised images of femininity, espoused throughout Western Christian thought. In the context of Francoism this model took on a nationalist focus: adherence to the ideal figure of mother constituted a literal embodiment of regime doctrine and support, as I explore below.

### ***Ideal mother incarnate***

The idealised feminine paradigm as promoted by Francoism was inherently rooted within the family and thus constituted a continuation of traditionalist models of gender politics previously illustrated during the sixteenth century by Fray Luis de León. During the dictatorship, the family was revered as 'a source of social stability'

and 'was idealised as the basic fixed unit of society, in which all proper social relationships were founded. The family was [...] a model of society in microcosm' (Grugel, 1997: 133-134). This social institution was governed by what critic Aurora Morcillo refers to as 'Spiritual/Catholic values, authority, and discipline', as well as 'social and gender relations' (Morcillo, 2008: 31). Thus the family represented a social microcosm that reflected and reproduced Francoism's National-Catholic ideology. Moreover, it provided a stable unit and safe space for its members to evade external hostility, which conversely complimented the regime's promotion of the Catholic family (Graham, 1995: 189). The family was therefore a crucial aspect for regime success; central within it were the women who, 'represented an essential element in the reconstruction of the fatherland' (Morcillo, 2008: 31). Indeed, Francoist discourses 'dictated that women were to serve the *patria* with self-denial, dedicated to the common good' and to 'fulfill their motherly destiny' (Morcillo, 2008: 3; 5). Morcillo terms such a model of femininity 'true catholic womanhood' (Morcillo, 2008), through which women 'embodied the victorious new nation' (Morcillo, 2007: 737).

Such idealised maternal femininity was enforced through a variety of means. Ruiz Franco describes this as enforced by the regime's 'política de feminización', which consisted of:

[p]olítica natalista, [...] promoción del hogar y de la maternidad, difusión de un arquetipo femenino basado en identidades de madres, esposa y ama de casa, promulgación de leyes que limitan la participación de las mujeres en la producción, reduciéndola – mayoritariamente – a la economía doméstica, perpetuación de la estructura patriarcal familiar, prohibición de la

coeducación, y canalización de la participación pública femenina en organizaciones que movilizaban a grupos de mujeres de clase media para cumplir con los objetivos de género del régimen. (Ruíz Franco, 2007: 25).

All aspects of the regime thus served to enforce these traditionalist gender politics. This was firstly ensured through legal reforms prohibiting divorce, abortion, women's suffrage, coeducation, women's sole ownership of property, and night work for women (Grugel, 1997: 133-134; Morcillo, 2008: 33). Further policy changes served to enclose women within the domestic sphere by defining the husband as the head of the household and requiring a male signatory for employment contracts, by relieving married women of employment, and by preventing married women from shift work, or work based in the home (Morcillo, 2008: 34); simultaneously, pro-natalism was encouraged by way of tax breaks and governmental prizes for large families (Domingo, 2007: 114). Alongside such laws and state policies, propaganda and indoctrination were also utilised to impose this form of womanhood. The Church, medical profession, and media all reinforced the image of woman as mother, with sources denigrating single childless women as 'un cuerpo incompleto'.<sup>34</sup> Education also played a vital role in the indoctrination of the nation's children from an early age (Morcillo, 2008: 43).

Additionally, women's groups further perpetuated this model of femininity, most notably, the women's section of the Falange Party, the Sección Femenina de la Falange Española Tradicionalista. The Sección Femenina was established by Pilar

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<sup>34</sup> From *El libro de la joven* cited by Domingo (2007: 115).

Primo de Rivera<sup>35</sup> in 1934 and constituted a vital arm of support for the regime, boasting some half a million volunteers in its heyday during the Civil War (Ofer, 2009: 583). Demographically, members tended to be upper-class, financially independent women due to their low-waged volunteer status (Richmond, 2003: 102-103). Nevertheless, the Sección Femenina provided women with many opportunities otherwise unavailable to them; they carried out crucial work in health and social care, education, and state propaganda, managed social aid and female national service, and controlled women's unions as the 'sole secular women's organization in nationalist Spain' (Ofer, 2005: 663). Most especially, the Sección Femenina was responsible for 'conveying political dogma' (Richmond, 2003: 14-15) and projecting an 'ultraconservative construction of 'ideal' womanhood, perceived as the fundamental guarantor of social stability' (Graham, 1995: 182). Significantly, this contravened the apparent independence and opportunities espoused by members.<sup>36</sup>

The regime's 'política de feminización' also had significant implications for the female body. Centred on the qualities of modesty, self-sacrifice, and maternity, the regime's all-encompassing 'política social' targeted these qualities within all aspects of female life. Women's social spaces, roles, and biological function were all enshrined within Francoist policy, which reduced women to biological

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<sup>35</sup> Pilar Primo de Rivera (1907-1991) was daughter of previous dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera and sister to Falange founder José Antonio Primo de Rivera.

<sup>36</sup> Many critics have commented on the contradictory aspects of the Sección Femenina volunteers; for more on this see especially Domingo (2007); Grugel (1997); Ofer (2010, 2009, 2005); Richmond (2003).

essentialism. The legal reforms and policy changes which prescribed women's roles within the domestic sphere not only served to enforce regime ideology; rather, they determined a specified physical enactment of political dogma encompassed within the delimited behaviours of the female body. Through these very behaviours, the ideal mother came to embody regime ideology; this model provided a corporealised rendering of the dictatorship and the return to moral normality it promised. Crucial within this was the conceptualisation of the female as a reproducing body, as Morcillo highlights, 'the identity of a woman emanated from the objectification of her body' particularly in the 'consecrat[ion of] the female body as the receptacle of human life through motherhood after marriage' (Morcillo, 2008: 40). For Francoist National-Catholic ideology, this was intrinsically linked to the nationalist cause: 'motherhood and the politics of the body (or "bio-power" in Foucauldian terms)<sup>37</sup> were inherent to authoritarian body politics. [...] Motherhood represented the essence of national strength and orchestrated an orderly relation between the sexes' (Morcillo, 2008: 162). As well as a potent symbol of the regime and its ideologies, the ideal mother also acted as the arm of moral and social law, constituting 'the first agents of indoctrination for the regime' (Morcillo, 2008: 162). Women represented a further vital aspect of the regime as mothers literally and emotionally bearing a new generation; Tusell highlights that propaganda promoted need for 'fertile families to send members of our race out

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<sup>37</sup> This notion will be discussed further below.

into the world to build and uphold empires' (Tusell, 2011: 30).

This model of ideal maternity was, however, limited to the confines of Christian morality. Indeed, as Abad Buil comments, maternity and procreation in itself was not always acceptable, particularly amongst non-Christian or anti-Francoist women (Abad Buil, 2009: 75). These ideals were enshrined within the law: the regime enforced extreme sexual regulation with so-called 'sexually related crimes' being 'severely punished' (Morcillo, 2008: 33). As such, sexuality was limited to procreative conjugal intercourse with women blamed for original sin (Domingo, 2007: 128). Critic Domingo highlights the 'imagen de la mujer pecadora por antonomasia, culpable, inductora del pecado y corruptora de la sociedad' (Domingo, 2007: 126). Consequently, female sexuality was curbed by medical discourse declaring that 'la mujer es fisiológicamente frígida' (Botella Llusia cited in Domingo 2007: 127). These discourses served to label the female body as both dangerous and submissive to men. The political concern with the female body is further evidenced within the demands for physical representations of doctrine. Morcillo emphasises that 'a woman's body and appearance became objectified as the paramount proof of her modesty' (Morcillo, 2008: 39). Domingo affirms: 'el decoro y la moral, que sólo era cuestionable en la mujer, obligaba a tener unos comportamientos estéticos determinados: cuidar el largo de la falda, evitar escotes y bañadores' (Domingo, 2007: 125). The focus of the regime on the physical social position and sexual behaviour of women as Christian mothers, as well as their appearance and dress served to promote a state-determined embodiment of

regime ideology. Tusell emphasises this, stating that members of the church 'gave specific guidance on the length of women's sleeves and skirts and on their necklines' (Tusell, 2011: 30). The emphatic implementation of highly moralised Catholic maternity encompassed within location, behaviour, and aesthetics served to both exemplify and enforce Francoism through the 'docile' female body.

### ***Putas roja incorporate***

In contrast to the veneration of the feminine maternal ideal, women who failed to adhere to this model were condemned as 'putas rojas'. This term designated a physical and social enactment of transgression and referred to 'depraved, sick, degenerate and brutal women' (Osborne, 2011: 515), 'without morals and shame' (Osborne, 2011: 511). The 'puta roja' model of femininity conflated sexually, socially, and politically "inappropriate" feminine behaviours as dissent. Women who encompassed this model were 'incluidas en este "espacio de la disidencia"' (Abad Buil, 2009: 76). Indeed, the condemnation of Republican women centred on explicit treatment and social depictions rendering them dirty, immoral women, or the 'nemesis of the honest woman' who embodied the nation (Platero, 2013: 5). As Osborne highlights, they were deemed the cause 'of the destruction of Spain' (Osborne, 2011: 512) for their crimes of gender *and* politics within 'their transgression of their traditional female role under the Second Republic' (Osborne,

2011: 512). As part of the regime's dualist aim to promote National-Catholic ideology and rid the nation of elements contravening this, the dictatorship sought to 'isolate the country from pernicious cultural and social influences, to cleanse society of them' (Grugel, 1997: 133). Identifying such "pernicious influences", through the visualisation of the 'puta roja', constituted the first step in this socio-political annihilation. Domingo explains: 'de nuevo era la mujer la que, sin olvidarnos de que había sido designada por el régimen como la transmisora de la "nueva" España, sufrirá en sus carnes las nuevas fórmulas para "conducir por el camino correcto" al país' (Domingo, 2007: 170). The 'puta roja' thus constituted a symbol of social, sexual, and political transgression, to be punished for the sake of the nation.

Nevertheless, the 'puta roja' was, at best, a nebulous concept, undefined within propaganda and state discourse. In their study of the women's prison in Málaga, Barranquero Texeira et al. declare that 'la confusión entre los conceptos de "caída", "perdida", y "pecadora" vinculados al calificativo de "roja", actuaba de justificante para mantener las dudas sobre la causa del encarcelamiento' (1994: 21). Indeed, the term 'puta roja' itself represents the blurring of the notions of political dissidence and sexual or moral dissidence. Richards highlights that 'the derogatory label "Red", in the post-war, implied not simply a previous leftist political affiliation but a "dirtiness" or apartness, to be outcast' (Richards, 1998: 48). Official discourse thereby served 'to conceptualise the enemy as "inferior to animals" or "inhuman"' (Richards, 1998: 48). As a concept, the 'puta roja' thus

remained unclear; the feared symbol of the anti-regime was but a ghost. This moral and social ambiguity afforded the regime the chance for greater control and punishment.

In terms of discipline, Francoism implemented a 'systematic persecution of women' (Preston, 2012b), in which thousands of women were denounced, arrested, interrogated and tortured, imprisoned, and executed under the banner of legitimised martial law encompassed within the Ministerio de Justicia (Barranquero Texeira et al., 1994: 30-32). Statistics for the numbers of prisoners under the regime vary: Mangini highlights that when the war ended there were some 100,000 prisoners in Nationalist prisons, doubling over the coming months (1995: 101); in contrast, Domingo argues that recent studies indicate that there were 350,000 prisoners in 1939 (2007: 145), whilst Gómez Bravo cites some one million prisoners (2010: 6). The official figure published by the Ministerio de Justicia in 1940 confirms 270,719 prisoners; this is contested, however, by 'Le commission contre le régime concentrationnaire', which argues that the number of prisoners exceeded 300,00 (Rodríguez Teijeiro, 2011: 85; Suárez, 2012).<sup>38</sup> This numerical disparity highlights the difficulty in uncovering accurate statistical information on account of missing, destroyed, and closed official records, high numbers of infants in prison, and extortionate levels of executions; figures are particularly difficult to determine for female political prisoners. The Vital Statistics

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<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of some of the statistics available and the problems with quantitative data on this topic, see Rodríguez Teijeiro (2011: 85-94). See also Gómez Bravo (2010) and Vinyes (2010).

Office records show that there were 23,232 female prisoners in 1939 (Magini González, 1995: 101), whilst Domingo posits that approximately 35,000 women were arrested during the first year of the regime (2007: 149). Although the ministry provided the official front for the Francoist justice system, it also served to obfuscate prison reality, especially for women, through damaged, missing, falsified, and sealed records. Propaganda extolling the virtues of the justice system,<sup>39</sup> and, most perniciously, the refusal to recognise the political status of female prisoners additionally contributed to the veiling of statistical data. As well as serving to eradicate historiographical truths, these issues also illustrate the categorical exclusion of women from politics and political activism. Regime justice and punishment therefore disciplined “unacceptable” femininity by explicitly eradicating political forms of femininity.

Once behind bars, prisoners were subjected to brutal conditions and treatment. The prison space itself was central to this as it served to separate and mark those enclosed therein. Domingo Rodríguez Tejeiro explains:

[e]s indudable que los espacios de reclusión franquistas durante la guerra y en la inmediata posguerra [...] manifiestan como una de sus finalidades más destacadas la eliminación del vencido, y no lo hacen únicamente cumpliendo la función de retener al enemigo previamente a la “saca” o a un consejo de Guerra que, en muchas ocasiones, acaba con la condena a muerte, sin que las inadecuadas condiciones de habitabilidad que presentaban la mayoría de los centros de reclusión[. ... E]l hacinamiento en

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<sup>39</sup> Abad Buil comments on the public representation of life in prison in which ‘los funcionarios de prisiones trataban de ensalzar un aparente trato hacia dichas presas y sus hijos’ (2009: 77). She adds that this was especially evident within news reports in the newspaper *Redención*, which portrayed benign images of the relationships between prison workers and prisoners (Ibid.).

su interior, las deficientes condiciones higiénicas y los casi inexistentes servicios de sanidad, la pésima alimentación y la violencia con que se conducen muchos de los funcionarios de prisiones y soldados encargados de su custodia y vigilancia, contribuyen a que las tasas de morbilidad y mortalidad sean muy elevadas entre los reclusos. (2011: 192)

The prison thus served to enforce the annihilation of the “enemy” through death sentences and through the very conditions of the prison itself. Moreover, it also functioned as an institution of punishment, oppression, and, significantly, prisoner rehabilitation and re-socialisation for the Nationalist cause (Rodríguez Teijeiro, 2011: 209). As well as a symbolic place, the prison also included both miserable conditions and abusive treatment at the hands of prison guards. In addition to standard segregation by sex, the treatment of prisoners was often both gendered and sexualised. This is evident through the rife sexualised name calling using terms such as ‘putas’, or ‘zorras’ and the daily threat of sexual violence. In her analysis of the rape of Republican prisoners, Abad Buil emphasises that this violence was carried out to punish, humiliate, and render women submissive (Abad Buil, 2005: 84-85) thereby converting sexual abuse into disciplinary weapon. Imprisonment served a punitive and a representative function by punishing a construction of women as deviant destroyers of the nation.

In wider society, gendered treatment was similarly overt; widespread social images perpetuated a highly sexualised model of Republican woman that played on the conflated notions of sexual and political transgression. Critic Martínez Fernández highlights this stating ‘ya en 1937, la figura de la miliciana se equiparaba con la de la prostituta’ (2006). This constituted the ‘binomial miliciana-

puta que tan hábilmente retomó y difundió el franquismo' (Ibid.).<sup>40</sup> This attitude prevailed even amongst Republicans, as Lannon confirms: 'the soldiers presumed they [militia] were coming to offer sex' (Lannon, 1991: 220). Equally, Lannon declares that male anarchists believed women talking about freedom were 'freely sexually available' (1991: 219-220). Thus although the 'puta roja' was a Francoist construct condemning what was deemed as inappropriate femininity, it also demonstrated the continuum of attitudes regarding acceptable gender roles within Spanish thought.

Under Francoism, the sexualisation of the 'puta roja' served to reinforce the importance of Catholicism and 'moral correctness' (Osborne, 2011: 511); hypersexualisation, as encompassed by the almost parodic figure of the 'puta roja', also served to render this model the moral and social opposite of the ideal mother, and by extension, of the regime itself. As Morcillo posits:

If the vanquished were the incarnation of political evil, prostitutes were the embodiment of moral debacle. In contrast to the whole, closed, virginal body of the bride, the prostitute's body was presented as a threat to the public body politic. [...] The public body of the fallen nation after the Civil

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<sup>40</sup> This equation of Republican women with prostitution is also indicative of a wider social concern for prostitution in early Francoism. The terrible living conditions, exclusion of women from the labour market, and the high levels of single women and widowed women following the war, all contributed to an extensive rise in the levels of prostitution (Osborne, 2009). The Republican, and especially communist response to this association was to enforce strict self-control in order to eschew their characterisation as whores. Indeed, many Republican groups and individuals demonstrated deep-rooted conservative beliefs, such as Real's homophobia (see Osborne, 2011 for more) and Ibarri's prejudice against sexual emancipation (Martínez Fernández, 2006). Furthermore, Republicans actively endeavoured to separate themselves from prostitutes, particularly whilst in close quarters with prostitutes in prison. Osborne demonstrates how Republican prisoners condemned the prostitute common-law prisoners utilising similar images of decrepit morals and degeneration (Osborne, 2011: 514-516).

War was that of a fallen woman, a prostitute. (Morcillo, 2007: 740)

Morcillo here highlights the political and moral corruption encompassed within the respective examples of the vanquished and the prostitute; these are conflated within the figure of the 'puta roja', manipulated and manufactured by state discourses.

Forced public appearances by prisoners further reaffirmed this notion of 'las rojas' as opposing the maternal ideal. Female prisoners were stripped naked, force-fed the laxative castor oil, and paraded through towns on the back of a mule with their heads shaved<sup>41</sup> as a means of humiliating, and publicly shaming Republican women (Osborne, 2011: 513). Described by González Duro as 'un espectáculo público generalizado' (2012: 36), these macabre scenes both punished and exemplified Republican women through the brutal gendered destruction of their bodies. As Osborne explains:

Killing these women was sometimes not enough, they also had to be humiliated and exposed to public shame in two particular ways: one by cutting off all of their hair, a quintessential symbol of femininity. [...] Another typical way of humiliating women through the use of their bodies was with '*la purga de ricino*'. (2011: 513)

This highlights the specific treatment of female prisoners; critics Maud Joly and

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<sup>41</sup> Research into these public demonstrations highlight that this treatment of women was not limited to a few sole examples. Michael Richards refers to 'the purges' and the treatment of female prisoners with castor oil (1998: 55). Enrique González Duro cites first-hand accounts of occurrences in Pamplona, Cintruénigo, and Laguno, which he describes as 'generalizando en todos los territorios "liberados" por los militares sublevados' (2012: 35). Similarly, Joly states that this was 'practicada en todo el territorio nacional (de norte a sur hasta Marruecos)' (2008: 96).

Irene Abad Buil also examine these punishments from a gendered perspective, terming the Francoist treatment of Republican women 'violencia sexual' and 'represión sexual' respectively.<sup>42</sup> Joly emphasises how this treatment served to "matar" simbólicamente a la mujer del enemigo' (2008: 97). This was achieved through what Abad Buil analyses as 'dos dimensiones evidentes: la "sexual" y la "visual"' (2009: 85) which come together in these public demonstrations of shaved, naked women soiling themselves. These methods for punishment and humiliation all serve to make 'visible la puesta en práctica de la "represión sexual"' (Abad Buil, 2009: 85). Shaving women's hair was a means of ridding women of their femininity and marking them as prisoners. Joly explains:

rapar a estas mujeres es primero despojarlas de su integridad identitaria. En efecto, la desfiguración opera primero como una exclusión violenta: una exclusión de la comunidad de las mujeres dignas de pertenecer a la sociedad en desarrollo. La "roja" no es una mujer. Es una figura que desvía y que remite a su sexualidad fantaseada y estigmatizada. (2008: 97)

Such treatment thereby rendered these women a caricature of this state enemy encompassed within the degenerate female body for punitive and representative means. Joly contextualises this within the widespread practice of shaving female prisoners which has been characterised by Alain Brossat as 'asesinato simbólico, pero asesinato conjurado o evitado, rito de exclusión, pero temporal' and by Fabrice Virgili as:

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<sup>42</sup> For more on these notions see Abad Buil (2009, 2005); Duro (2012); Joly (2008); Yusta (2005).

una violencia punitiva que opera mediante la mutilación de la cabellera. Es violencia porque se ejerce bajo conminación, punitiva porque siempre hace referencia a un acto anterior represible, y es una mutilación porque se trata, por cierto, de una lesión a la integridad física. (cited in Joly 2008: 95)

Joly applies these comments to the Spanish context to arrive at her conclusion cited above; she also confirms the gendered nature of this punishment, highlighting that this 'afectó exclusivamente a las mujeres' (2008: 95) due to the symbolic gendered nature of female hair. Similarly, female nudity emphasised the corrupt nature of these women within a society marked by Christian morality and 'una estricta codificación cultural de los atributos identitarios sexuales' (2008: 97).

This physical degeneration was accompanied by the forced ingestion of castor oil which, for Abad Buil 'pretendía degradar a la víctima ante los ojos de todo el mundo' (2009: 86). This constituted a 'purging' of these women that simultaneously 'purified' the decrepit body, whilst rendering it grotesque and, as such, an illustration of 'filth'. Although male and female prisoners were subjected to castor oil purges, this treatment constituted a particularly gendered event for the shaved, naked, female body (Joly, 2008: 97). Indeed, the incontinence caused by castor oil provides a literal representation of the 'leaky' female body and the 'impure' nature of the Republican women deemed 'delincuentes', who were defined by their 'impulsividad' and 'la insuficiencia del control de su personalidad' by regime rhetoric espoused by infamous psychiatrist of the dictatorship, doctor Vallejo Nájera (Duro, 2012: 23). The procession of these vilified bodies constituted a humiliating and inherently sexualised, corporeal social punishment for transgressions of gender and state that served to destroy, fragment, and physically

render the women Othered.

Such treatment of female Republican prisoners overwhelmingly centred on the female body as the site to humiliate, punish, and terrorise political dissent (Abad Buil, 2009: 86) and instigate a climate of fear (Joly, 2008: 102). Moreover, the brutal violence inflicted upon these women functioned as a symbol of state control and authority (Joly, 2008: 102); Joly further adds that sexual violence enforced the need for 'a return to strict order [...], re-establish borders, and social purity' (Joly, 2008: 102). Analysing this with reference to the focus on the female body, Joly posits that Francoist sexual violence rendered women's bodies 'un verdadero *frente*. Un *frente* político, pero también sexuado' (Joly, 2008: 95). She explains:

La construcción de la figura de la enemiga opera mediante su asociación arbitraria con arquetipos femeninos que resumen las "faltas" incriminadas. La mujer republicana simboliza alternativamente la desviación sexual y la degeneración, la transgresión de las normas de los roles sexuales, la virago, la herejía y la revolución, la violencia, la pertenencia a un grupo politizado y subversivo... El cuerpo en la guerra se convierte también en el receptáculo de la punición de los delitos, y las formas de su degradación se deben analizar tanto desde el punto de vista de la violencia político-social como desde el punto de vista de la dimensión sexuada de los castigos en tiempos de guerra. Se trata también de un *frente* cuya agresión permita humillar y aniquilar al grupo enemigo en su conjunto. (Joly, 2008: 95)

Thus the female Republican body is made into a battlefield upon which sexual and violent war crimes are wrought for punitive and representative measures. This serves to transform the Republican women into a model illustrating both Francoist authority and socio-moral superiority through her body. As González Duro highlights, 'la imagen de la mujer roja se construía como expresión de máxima

transgresión de los valores que pretendía representar el nuevo Estado, dando sentido a la represión de género de la España franquista' (Duro, 2012: 38). The female Republican body was thus targeted by Francoist violence in order to materialise an image of the anti-Spain. Using the notions of Kristevan abjection and Foucauldian discipline to analyse this,<sup>43</sup> we can posit that the Francoist treatment of Republican women, as portrayed within the narratives, consists of disciplinary treatment rendering these women docile bodies through the process of abjection. The prisoners are made abject symbolically by expelling them from the social norms of citizenships, social positions, and political and gender tropes, as demonstrated within the social exclusion behind bars and the violent destruction of their bodies. Moreover, the body literally embodies abjection through the rupturing of moral and gendered borders, most espoused within nude displays of incontinence literally demonstrating the dissolution of corporeal borders. Francoist sexual violence of Republican women thereby becomes Francoist ideology writ large: the 'puta roja' is the image of that despised by the regime and physically demonstrated through the demarcation of the sexual violence of the female body.

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<sup>43</sup> See Kristeva (1982) and Foucault (1991).

## ***Embodying ideology***

Francoist ideologies constructed a dichotomous paradigm of femininity that focussed on the body through the state's 'política social'. This combination of policy, punishment, and propaganda both venerated and denigrated women's sexual and reproductive functions as whores and mothers. The common focus on the corporeal and sexual as the delimiting construct of femininity illustrates a Francoist uptake of the long-established cultural association of women with their bodies. As critics state, it has long been believed that women 'just are their bodies in a way that men are not' (Price and Shildrick, 1999: 3) and women are 'more biological, more corporeal, more natural than men' (Grosz, 1994: 14).<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Francoist bodily paradigms of femininity inherently rooted within the female sexual body highlight what Shildrick and Price refer to as 'the age-old relation between hysteria and the womb' in which women must be controlled for fear of 'inevitable irrationality' (1999: 3).

In the context of the Spanish dictatorship, this virgin / whore paradigm was imposed by means of the state's aforementioned 'política social', which physically and figuratively delimited the female body and served to control women for the purpose of national security and regeneration. This treatment can be analysed using Foucault's theories of modern discipline as explicitly focussed on the body.

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<sup>44</sup> For more on the reduction of women to the body see Grosz (1994); Price and Shildrick (1999); Spelman (1999).

Examining this notion, sociologist Chris Shilling states that 'governments displayed a growing concern with power over the life and welfare of people, instead of with their death. This included [...] a general concern with people's corporeal habits and custom' (Shilling, 2003: 76-77); similarly Grosz describes Foucauldian discipline as 'a variable series of technologies of the body, procedures for the subjugation, manipulation, and control of the body' (1994: 151). She further explains:

the body becomes a book of instruction, a moral lesson to be learned. Within disciplinary technologies, the body is an intricate yet pliable instrument, capable of being trained, tuned to better, more efficient performance, a fine machinery of parts to be regulated, segmented, put to work, reordered, and replaced where necessary. (1994: 151)

These quotations illustrate the overarching focus of discipline upon the body: Foucault himself remarks that 'in every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions of obligations' (1991: 137), which he describes as obtaining 'infinitesimal power over the active body' (1991: 137).

Under Francoism, these powers were enforced through policy, propaganda, and punishment which served to limit female space to the domestic, or the prison; to control female sexual behaviour through coerced motherhood or violent rape; and to define female appearance through strict moral codes and the abusive public stripping and shaving of prisoners. Francoist models enacted what Foucault depicts as 'a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. [...] Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies' (Foucault, 1991: 137-138). 'Docility' is

ensured through a variety of disciplinary mechanisms, which extend beyond the merely punitive aspects of the justice system. Foucault states 'a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (1991: 136). This 'project of docility' is mobilised by 'methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called "disciplines"' (1991: 137). Thus these measures exist at all levels in 'an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*' (emphasis in original) (Foucault, 1978: 139). These constitute 'the subjugation of the bodies and the control of populations' (Foucault, 1978: 140) that was enforced under Francoism through the dichotomous female paradigm discussed above.

In prescribing and imposing such a paradigm of femininity, the dictatorship additionally established embodied representations of regime rhetoric, which venerated National-Catholic ideology, on the one hand, and vilified Republicanism, on the other. The female forms, rendered docile and made to enact a form of bio-power by means of Francoist discipline, constituted embodiments of the dictatorship's politics for symbolic and representative purposes. Such 'infinitesimal power over the active body' (Foucault, 1991: 137) was enforced through a totalitarian focus of regime rhetoric on the subject that centred on the body. By making the subject embody political ideology, discourse is encompassed materially. Butler describes this process of incorporation, stating:

In the context of prisoners, Foucault writes, the strategy has been not to

enforce a repression of their desires, but to compel their bodies to signify the prohibitive law as their very essence, style, and necessity. That law is not literally internalized, but incorporated, with the consequence that bodies are produced which signify that law on and through the body; there the law is manifest as the essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire. In effect, the law is at once fully manifest and fully latent, for it never appears as external to the bodies it subjects and subjectivates. (Butler, 1990: 182)

Thus, the body is constituted by those acts that are an effect of social discourses, or the law. We can apply this to the constitutive aspects of Francoist paradigms of femininity. Through discipline, these paradigms served to enact regime doctrine on and through the female body, and thus the subject. This renders the female body a central issue of state concern for the dictatorship. Discipline and docility wrought by the totalitarian state replicate discourses of both biological essentialism and a reduction of women to this biological body. Moreover, the physical and social treatment of this body as, on the one hand revered as domesticated mother, and, on the other, brutally punished as state enemy, serves to establish regime rhetoric through incorporation. Thus the female body under Franco not only enacts and embodies National-Catholicism, this very incorporation constitutes regime doctrine. The dichotomous paradigm of women under Franco espouses two sides of the same coin in the effort to control women and enforce the ideologies of the dictatorship. This is literally written 'on and through' the body, thereby rendering women's bodies under Franco a 'state matter'.

The Francoist simultaneous veneration of the ideal mother and condemnation of the 'puta roja' constituted a dichotomous paradigm of femininity that inscribed doctrine 'on and through' the female body. This, however, did not

occur in a context divorced from Spanish gender politics; rather, such a model of appropriate/inappropriate, good/bad femininity represented a political continuum of ideologies of gender paradigms stemming from Western Christian thought and immortalised within Fray Luis de Leon's *La perfecta casada*. Indeed, gender politics within Spain is rooted in this very divide, which provides a constituent element within political and social attitudes contemporary to the period that this thesis examines.

Within the context of the dictatorship this dichotomy was not only exaggerated, it was also inherently linked with the nationalist cause. 'Ideal' femininity constituted a representation and embodiment of National-Catholic regime ideology, whereas 'bad', transgressive femininity posed a threat to the nation state. Although ideologically opposite, both sides of this paradigm shared a concern with gender performativity and corporeality; the (re)inforcing of both models represented a physical, material enactment, or incorporation, of regime ideology. Highlighting this provides a demonstration of how the female body is utilised for nationalism, both through positive reinforcement and punitive methods.

As the ideological basis for female corporealities and subjectivities, this dichotomous paradigm formed a grounding principle within Francoist discourse. In the following chapters, I draw extensively on the question of the female body as state matter and the links between ideologies and corporealities. The gendered status of subjectivities and corporealities as central to political rhetoric thus

provides a constituent component within this thesis. In the next chapter, I begin to explore matters of female subjectivity as constructed and interrogated within the narratives, with particular reference to this paradigm of femininity under Francoism.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A 'No / Body' Corpus of Francoist Carcerality

Faced with the brutal repression and ongoing historical amnesia regarding the experiences of Franco's female prisoners, the women themselves turned to life narratives to get their stories heard. Critic Ángeles Egido León highlights the significance of this, stating 'fueron las propias mujeres, conscientes de la importancia de la *memoria*, las que se ocuparon de rescatarla' (2009: 16) (emphasis in the original). Following the death of Franco, narratives extolling the experiences of Nieves Castro, Tomasa Cuevas, Juana Doña, Lidia Falcón, Soledad Real, and Carlota O'Neill, amongst others, were published.<sup>45</sup> In this chapter I introduce the four texts analysed within this thesis as a narrative corpus of carcerality; I highlight significant features within the works and the lives of the protagonists, as well as analysing existing research concerning these texts. Within the national context of a limited tradition of women's autobiographical writing, these texts represented a testimonial phenomenon that paid homage to female-

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<sup>45</sup> These narratives include, but are not exclusive to the following: Castro (1981); Cuevas (1986, 1985a, 1985b); Doña (1978); Falcón (1981, 1977); García (1982); Malonda (1983); O'Neill (1979); Ríos Lazcano (1986).

authored life narratives. As critic Romera Castillo affirms, ‘nunca antes, las mujeres plasmaron sus vivencias en tan abundantes textos, donde el recuerdo de lo vivido y perdido – especialmente la guerra civil de 1936, con sus terribles consecuencias con el franquismo imperante – aflorará con recio vigor testimonial, en algunas ocasiones y calidad artística, en otras’ (2009: 177). These texts, which served to uncover the Francoist oppression of women prisoners, thus constitute a development in women’s writing within Spain, and promote the inclusion of women within discourses of literature and history. Indeed, Egido León, for instance, highlights the ‘auge de la biografía’, which occurred during the latter part of the twentieth century and provided a way to integrate these (hi)stories within ‘la historia general, a la que enriquece y contribuye’ (2009b: 85). These narratives, however, were obscured and lost in the oblivion caused by political censoring and historical amnesia emerging from the concept of the ‘pacto de olvido’<sup>46</sup> of the Transition and its social consequences.

Influenced by governmental policy encompassed within the 2007 Ley de Memoria Histórica, and the establishment of social groups such as the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, the early 2000s saw a return to critical focus on issues of uncovering repression under Francoism. This period witnessed a wave of interest in women’s experiences of Francoist oppression, as

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<sup>46</sup> The notion of the ‘pacto de olvido’ or the ‘pacto de silencio’ is a contentious issue within Spanish historiography. It particularly refers to the 1977 Ley de Amnistía that prevented punishing those for crimes of Francoism as a means to avoid further conflict. For more on this, see especially Molinero and Ysás (2006); Davis (2005); and Aguilar (1996).

evidenced through the publication of a diversity of sources; these included the life narratives by Lola Canales, Jacinta Gil Roncales, Mejías Correa, and Remedios Montero;<sup>47</sup> the publication of biographical works<sup>48</sup> and archives;<sup>49</sup> the production of documentaries;<sup>50</sup> the re-publication of several testimonial texts, such as those by Cuevas, García Madrid, and Carlota O’Neill;<sup>51</sup> and the publication of fictional works, all dealing with the experience of prison under Franco.<sup>52</sup> Critical studies concerning these sources and experiences have also emerged, predominantly engaging with the primary texts as historical sources.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Conxita Mir affirms: ‘Llibres pioners i emblemàtics [...] avui s’han convertit en fonts historiogràfiques primàries de les quals molts historiadors n’han sabut treure excel·lent partit’ (2002). Similarly, Gómez Bravo highlights the importance of these texts as primary sources that provide information otherwise inaccessible (2011: 816); whilst both Egido León, and Díaz Sánchez and Gago González extol the virtue of both primary and oral sources ‘como complemento, o y a veces como única fuente, de la historia’ (2009b: 87) for the purpose of ‘rescatar [la memoria] del olvido’ (Díaz Sánchez and Gago González, 2006). Prison narratives by female ex-

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<sup>47</sup> See Canales (2007); Gil Roncales (2007); Mejías Correa (2006); Montero (2004).

<sup>48</sup> See especially Fonseca (2006, 2004); Ginard i Ferón (2005); Vinyes (2004).

<sup>49</sup> Such as *Memoria de Les Corts Prisión de mujeres, Barcelona, 1939-1955*, (Associació per la Cultura i la Memòria de Catalunya, 2006) and *Las Ventanas de Soledad Real* (Fundació Pere Ardiaca, n.d.).

<sup>50</sup> Such as Ferrán Acózar (2006); *Izarren argia* (2010); Larrauri (2010); Martínez and Larreategi (2010); Martínez Lázaro (2007); Montes Salguero (2007); Vigil and Almela (2004).

<sup>51</sup> See Cuevas (2005b, 2004); García Madrid (2003); O’Neill (2003).

<sup>52</sup> These include Cañil (2012); Chacón (2002); Prado (2007).

<sup>53</sup> Some of the most prominent studies focussing on female prisoners under Franco include di Febo, (1976); Duro (2012); Egido León (2009a); Hernández Holgado (2003, 2011); Mangini (1995); Osborne Verdugo (2012); Vinyes (2010).

prisoners thus constitute an essential body of texts for the study of recent Spanish history, particularly from a gendered perspective.

This thesis examines a selection of these narratives as a heterogeneous narrative corpus of female political incarceration. It considers Carlota O'Neill's *Una mujer en la guerra de España* (2003), *Desde la noche y la niebla* (1978) by Juana Doña, *Presas* (2005) by Tomasa Cuevas, and Soledad Real's narrative *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* (1982) compiled by Consuelo García. This group of texts encompasses a variety of experiences faced by women of differing class and education backgrounds, who served prison sentences ranging from 5 years to 18. As a narrative corpus, they are united by their common period of incarceration during the Civil War and the early years of the regime, and by their shared focus on the particularly gendered experience of imprisonment during this period. In analysing the heterogeneity of this corpus, I draw on their narrative diversity and similarities within a range of themes, which allows me to consider how the texts interrogate constructions of carcerality, cororeality, and subjectivity within the context of contemporary Spain.

The narratives all focus on the brutal first years of the regime, termed the 'primer franquismo'.<sup>54</sup> Spanning the period from the uprising on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1936 to the final death sentence issued for a political prisoner in 1947, the texts allow me to examine the most explicit examples of female repression. In order to highlight

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<sup>54</sup> This term has been widely used by critics to refer to the first decade of the regime. See especially García Delgado (1989) and Payne (1997).

commonality, and diversity, of experiences throughout this period, the narratives within this corpus have been selected to depict experiences across a range of prisons throughout Spain. By examining national carcerality as a whole, this thesis considers the heterogeneous experience of Franco's prisons. This national focus also addresses the fact that many of these women were frequently moved between prison locations, rendered their experience of carcerality one of geographical, locational diversity. The reasons for incarceration also emphasise variation across female political criminality. All arrested for political acts against the state, their sentences vary from five years to the death penalty. Similarly, their alleged crimes include membership of the communist party, attending a political rally, and being the wife of a Republican captain, as well as terrorism and assassination. This focus on political imprisonment has been chosen to examine the demonisation of female behaviours and subjectivities under Francoism, within which gender performativity and politics were so irreducibly linked to the nationalist state.

The protagonists themselves also serve to highlight the heterogeneity of Francoist carcerality: they are from various geographical, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. Nevertheless, the women all belong to a similar generation, born between 1905 and 1917. As such they all experienced the vast socio-political changes of early-twentieth-century Spain during their formative years and were imprisoned under Francoism whilst young adults. Incarceration would thus have been an informative period within their lives and for the construction of female corporeal subjectivity. After release, the women all suffered

further persecution at the hands of Francoist authorities and spent some time in exile.

The texts by these protagonists form a corpus of self-life writing that examines how the women themselves experience, construct, and interrogate their female corporeal subjectivities within the carceral. Written after release, the texts reflect on and explore these aspects through hindsight and endeavour to uncover the silenced histories of these women. On account of the censorship of the regime, they could only be released after the death of Franco; consequently each of the narratives was only published in Spain during the years of the Transition (1977-1982). In spite of this moment of great political change, however, this period was affected by the 'pacto del olvido' and the androcentrism of dominant narratives of repression and resistance, both of which further condemned their texts to relative obscurity. The narratives thus constitute a corpus of resistance, overwriting the silence of the regime and subsequent democracy.

During the above-mentioned surge in scholarship concerning Francoism, the texts forming this corpus were re-issued or re-published, with the exception of *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*. The narratives examined within this thesis include the texts *Desde la noche y la niebla* and *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* as originally published in 1978 and 1982 respectively and *Una mujer en la guerra de España*, republished in 2003 and 2006, and *Presas* as abridged and published in 2005. This contrast allows me to highlight the continuing narrative urgency informing these texts; the differing contexts of publication also emphasise the on-going relevance of

these discourses of female carceral and corporeal subjectivity.

As well as demonstrating historico-political resistance, the narratives also serve as sites of literary resistance. The texts form a corpus that contests typical autobiography genre traits through the use of polyvocality, marginal perspectives, generic hybridity, oral language, and textual mediation. As such, the narratives rupture literary norms to produce testimonial works that question and contest social, literary, historical, and political discourses about female representation and participation within politics and literature.

### ***Carlota O'Neill - Una mujer en la Guerra de España***

Carlota O'Neill de Lamo (1905-2000)<sup>55</sup> was born to Mexican diplomat Enrique O'Neill Acosta and Andalusian writer and pianist Regina de Lamo Ximénez. She grew up in Madrid in a middle-class family 'rodeada de cultura, arte e inquietudes sociales' (Cruz González, 2006: 49). They later moved to Barcelona, where she began a relationship with Teniente Virgilio Leret Ruiz; they married in February 1929, and had two children, Mariela and Carlota, 'Lotti'. When Virgilio was posted to Melilla as Captain of the Republican army, O'Neill and her daughters accompanied him. During the 17<sup>th</sup> July uprising Virgilio, O'Neill, and their maid,

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<sup>55</sup> Her life has been reconstructed through her memoir texts, as such many details remain vague or contradictory.

Librada, were detained: he was assassinated, O'Neill and Librada were imprisoned for five years in the 'Victoria Grande' prison,<sup>56</sup> and the children were put into the care of strangers. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1940, she was given conditional release (Cruz González, 2006: 55), at which point she returned to mainland Spain to fight for custody of her children. She later went into exile, fleeing first to Venezuela,<sup>57</sup> then settling in Mexico in 1953, where she remained until her death in 2000.

Throughout her life, O'Neill was a prolific writer: she published her first novel in 1924, writing three further novels, as well as theatre and journalism, during the Republic;<sup>58</sup> she was also involved in the communist theatre group 'Nosotros', founded the magazine *Nosotras* in 1934, and collaborated on the magazine *Estampa* (Cruz González, 2006: 50). Behind bars, she wrote *Romanzas de las rejas* (O'Neill, 1964a); her experiences of incarceration and the years that followed are recounted within the texts *Una mujer en la guerra de España*<sup>59</sup> and *Los muertos también hablan* (1971). During the 1940s, she wrote under the pseudonym Laura de Noves publishing in magazines, such as *Lecturas*, as well as several romantic novels.<sup>60</sup> In exile she continued writing a wide oeuvre including

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<sup>56</sup> According to Cruz González, O'Neill enters the prison 22 July 1936 and Virgilio is shot 18 July 1936 (2006: 52; 57).

<sup>57</sup> Dates for her journey into exile vary, see Cruz González (2006); Pages i Blanch (2004). Personal correspondence with Carlota Leret O'Neill confirms that they arrived in Venezuela 15<sup>th</sup> July 1949 (2014).

<sup>58</sup> See O'Neill (1924, n.d.).

<sup>59</sup> This was originally published in Mexico under the title *Una mexicana en la guerra de España* (1964b) before being published in Spain (1979). It later appeared in translation in English as *Trapped in Spain* (O'Neill and Paul Avrich Collection (Library of Congress), 1978).

<sup>60</sup> See Noves (n.d.a; n.d.b; 1930; 1942; 1944; 1943a; 1943b; 1955a; 1955b; 1955c).

romance, journalism, and theatre.<sup>61</sup>

In 2003, *Una mujer en la guerra de España* was republished by Oberon alongside the texts *Los muertos también hablan* and *Romanzas de las rejas*. This edition thus comprises all of O'Neill's writing on her experience of oppression under Francoism, published together in Spain for the first time. Consequently, it constitutes a significant source for the recovery of lost historical memory, as the introduction by journal Rafael Torres states, 'podemos hoy ofrecer a los lectores españoles esta edición inédita e íntegra de uno de los testimonios esenciales (y mejor escritos) para la recuperación de la verdad histórica, brutalizada por el franquismo' (2003: 15).

The text proper spans the period from July 1936 to March 1940, the dates of O'Neill's incarceration, and is comprised of three parts: *La cárcel negra*; *La cárcel blanca*; and *Condenada*. The first explains O'Neill's arrest, the disappearance of her husband, Captain Leret, and her separation from her children. It describes the explicit suffering endured in the penal system, as well as the debilitating effect of the news of Virgilio's death. The second section, set in a prison hospital, depicts O'Neill's experience of illness. Finally, the third section details O'Neill's return to the prison, at which point she is sentenced to five years imprisonment. These pages describe her daily life and survival behind bars within the community of prisoners, whose stories she also shares. The text ends with her release: the poignant final

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<sup>61</sup> See O'Neill and Hormigón (1997); O'Neill (1982, 1968, 1963, 1960). For more information about O'Neill's publications see especially Cruz González (2006); Ferrero Hernández (2004); O'Neill and Hormigón (1997); Romera Castillo (2010, 2009).

pages describe her on the boat leaving the port of Melilla and saying goodbye to her husband and the experience of prison.

As regards genre, the text resembles traditional autobiography, most especially through the use of the 'autobiographical pact'.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, O'Neill's volume does serve to rupture with both dominant historical narratives and the autobiographical tradition through the inclusion of multiple marginal voices and perspectives, rendering the narrative both biographical and polyvocal. As O'Leary affirms, the text 'represents a continued struggle against the regime and its legacy' (2012: 155). This collectivised focus coincides with the socio-political nature of the text and its aims to write the stories of the silenced masses. Hence *Una mujer en la guerra de España* constitutes a hybrid narrative form combining 'testimonio', 'resistance' or 'out-law' narratives, and autobiography as a contestation of dominant discourses of prescribed autobiographical genres.

### ***Juana Doña - Desde la noche y la niebla***

Juana Doña (1918-2003)<sup>63</sup> was born and raised in a working class area of Madrid.

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<sup>62</sup> This refers to the use of a common name shared by narrative, author, and protagonist. See Lejeune (1989) for more on this concept.

<sup>63</sup> Although she is a venerated figure due to her activism as a feminist and a communist, little information is available about her life. Moreover, of the various sources available, many are contradictory about various facts of Doña's life, such as dates and years spent in prison. The information within this section has been compiled with reference to Doña (1978); Larrauri

In 1933, aged just 15, she joined the youth communist party (Vinyes, 2003). Throughout the Second Republic she campaigned voraciously, was arrested various times, was elected secretary of Comité Central de las Juventudes Comunistas (CCJC), and became romantically involved with Eugenio Mesón, leader of the Madrid section of the Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (JSU). During the Civil War she gave birth to one child in 1937, who died at seven months, and a second child, in 1938. At the end of the war, the family was detained: Eugenio was sent to prison, whilst the women were condemned to concentration camps and later returned to Madrid. Doña then became involved in clandestine activity with the communist party, for which she was arrested, brutally tortured, and imprisoned from 1939-1941. After her release, Eugenio was executed; despite this, she continued to work clandestinely for the party and for the Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas, whilst caring for her child. In 1947 she was arrested again and was the last prisoner in Spain to be sentenced to death, although this was later commuted to thirty years imprisonment at the request of visitor Eva Perón. Upon her release in 1962, aged 44, she fled to France where she once again made contact with the communist party. She continued as a militant for feminist and communist beliefs until her death in Barcelona, 2003, at the age of 84.

A self-taught writer, Doña penned several memoir texts about her experiences under Franco. The first, titled *Mujer* (1977), explores the gendered

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(2010b); Vinyes (2003).

experiences of women in twentieth-century Spain. Her second text, *Desde la noche y la niebla* (1978), which could only be published after Franco's death, depicts the experiences of prison for women during the dictatorship. In 1992 she released a memoir text depicting her years in clandestinity, entitled *Gente de abajo* (1992). Finally, in 2003, she published her final text, an extended love letter and narrative to her beloved Eugenio called *Querido Eugenio* (2003).

Written in 1967, *Desde la noche y la niebla* is a 'novela-testimonio' concerning the experiences of female incarceration under Francoism, as depicted through the third-person narration of the protagonist, Leonor. The volume contains an introduction by Doña herself and a prologue by renowned playwright and political activist, Alfonso Sastre. These sources frame the narrative as an important socio-political source; Doña explains that 'me urgía que se conociera todo el horror de veinte años en las cárceles franquistas de mujeres' (1978: 15). In her introduction, she also highlights the need for protection owing to her continuing clandestinity, affirming 'entonces decidí hacerlo en forma de novela con nombres supuestos, pero quiero dejar constancia, que ni uno solo de los relatos que se cuentan aquí, son producto de la imaginación' (1978: 17).

In terms of content, the narrative focuses explicitly on Doña's years of imprisonment: it begins with the chaotic final months of the Civil War and Doña's imminent arrest, and ends with an epilogue depicting her release from prison in the 1960s. This specific focus allows Doña to engage with issues of female experience, activism, and subjectivities behind bars as a communist at the hands of

Francoist authorities.

Featuring a third-person narrator whose name does not match that of the author, *Desde la noche y la niebla* represents a break with the typical self-disclosure of autobiography. As stated, this constitutes a narrative decision taken in order to protect the identities of the protagonists throughout her text. This allows her not only to disrupt traditional autobiographical form, but also to rupture with the discourses of silence and oblivion concerning Franco's female political prisoners. The inclusion of additional third-person voices in the myriad characters that comprise *Desde la noche y la niebla* further renders the text a narrative that resists literary and socio-historical paradigms through the collective transgressions and interrogations of these paradigms.

### ***Soledad Real – Las cárceles de Soledad Real***

Soledad Real (1917-2007) was born in the working class area of Barcelona, 'la Barceloneta'. Her father, Valeriano Real was a politically active metal worker and her mother a seamstress, a trade she soon introduced to the young Soledad (Hernández Holgado, 2009: 26). La Barceloneta was an area of activism by workers' syndicates; her father's ready participation within union strikes got her expelled from school aged just 7 (Fundació Pere Ardiaca, 2008). Given the fraught economic situation for the family, Soledad was sent to work as a seamstress so that

she might provide some financial support for the family (Hernández Holgado, 2009: 32). During the Second Republic and the Civil War she was an activist within the Catalan Communist Party and the JSU, with whom she fled to France at the end of the war. With the outbreak of WWII, she and her fellow companions were forcibly delivered to fascist troops at the Hendaye-Irun border of France and Spain. She briefly carried out guerrilla work in Barcelona in 1940 before her arrest in 1941 for threatening state security (Hernández Holgado, 2009: 48). After this, at the age of 24, she was sent to various Francoist prisons, where she spent the next sixteen years of her life.

Released in 1957 but prohibited from returning to Barcelona, Soledad settled in Madrid. She married fellow political prisoner and activist 'Paco', to whom she had been introduced through letters whilst in prison. After her release, Soledad continued as a fervent feminist communist: she set up women's groups<sup>64</sup> discussing polemic issues,<sup>65</sup> she fought for women's inclusion within local area groups, she travelled to Eastern Europe and Cuba, and even stood as a candidate for the Feminist Party in European Parliament aged 81. In 2003 she returned to Barcelona and continued appearing in public to give talks and receive awards<sup>66</sup> until her death in 2007 aged 89. Her obituary describes her as 'una de esas

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<sup>64</sup> In 1965 the Sección Femenina, propelled by Francoist policy, encouraged creation of housewives' groups. These were considered open platforms for gaining communist support by members of the communist party. See more on this Hernández Holgado (2009: 71-74).

<sup>65</sup> Such as Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres; Asociación Castellana de Amas de Casa y Consumidoras, and Centro Cultural de las Mujeres del Lucero, the latter of which still exists today, see Fundació Pere Ardiaca (2009a).

<sup>66</sup> She was awarded the Rosa Manzano prize, the Ana Torán Prize, and made 'socia de honor' [an honorable member of] in the Fundació Pere Ardiaca, see Fundació Pere Ardiaca (2009a).

militantes indispensables en la resistencia antifranquista' (Hernández Holgado, 2007). She is cited as a 'referente de lucha' by the Fundació Pere Ardiaca, which published a book, documentary, and website celebrating her life in 2009.<sup>67</sup> In the introduction to the book, Carmen Plazuelo, coordinator of Fundació Pere Ardiaca, states 'recordar a Soledad Real es recordar a todas esas mujeres, anónimas la mayoría de ellas, que son y deben seguir siendo ejemplo a seguir' (Plazuelo, 2009: 7).

Following the death of Franco, Real narrated her experiences to journalist Consuelo García, who published these within the text *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* in 1982. The narrative tells the story of Soledad Real's life from her childhood in Barcelona and political development during the Second Republic and Civil War, to her sixteen years spent incarcerated in various Spanish prisons from 1941-1957, to the years spent in Madrid following her release, until the death of Franco and Spain's transition to democracy in the late 1970s. Narrated using the first person, the text is 'ghost written' by journalist Consuelo García, who originally self-published the narrative in Germany in 1981 under the title *Die Hand des Herzens. Leben und Kämpfe der Spanierin Soledad Real* [The hand of the heart. The Life and Trials of Spaniard Soledad Real] (García and Cordes, 1981). Comprised of a series of interviews between García and Real, the text is described by critic Fernando Hernández Holgado as 'una recopilación de entrevistas transcritas sin apenas

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<sup>67</sup> See Fundació Pere Ardiaca (2009a; 2009b).

modificación' (2009: 26). Indeed, it reads as a first person monologue, with an unattributed introduction, seemingly written by García. In this introduction García explains the text's aims to personalise a history that has been both forgotten and dehumanised. The narrative is an intensely politicised testimony from one woman depicting a lost history, which is representative of an entire lost generation.

Spanning Real's life the text's second half predominantly focuses on the sixteen years she spent in various prisons throughout Spain. It details the carceral conditions, the relationships developed and maintained, and the acts of resistance and transgression experienced behind bars during this period, with a particular emphasis on her position as a communist.

As a narrative comprised of oral interviews, *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* differs substantially from the two previously-discussed texts in terms of genre: the language is markedly informal and oral, the narration is fragmented throughout, and the text is polyvocal and collective. Additionally, it is informed by intense political rhetoric from the Spanish Communist Party. The text thus constitutes a form of resistance 'testimonio' outlining the experiences of the politically and socially forgotten in a radical narrative form that contests both literary and socio-political discourses of narrativity.

### ***Tomasa Cuevas – Presas***

Tomasa Cuevas (1917-2007) was born in Guadalajara, 1917, into a working class family. Her mother's ill-health forced Tomasa out to work aged 9. In order to support the family, she took on three jobs working from dawn until night-fall. At one of these jobs she was introduced to socialism and aged 14 she joined the youth section of the Spanish Communist Party, with whom she worked during the Second Republic and the Civil War.<sup>68</sup> She was arrested in May 1939 and sentenced to 30 years, of which she served five. Upon her release in 1944, she was prohibited from returning home and sent to Barcelona, where she found a job and also started working for the communist party. Re-arrested at the end of 1945, she was brutally tortured for information on the Party, and imprisoned in Les Corts until February 1946.<sup>69</sup> After her release she married Miguel, and they continued clandestine work together. In 1947 she had her first baby in hiding whilst the authorities searched for Miguel.<sup>70</sup> The following years were spent moving between cities, separated from each other, avoiding the authorities whilst continuing to work for the Communist Party.<sup>71</sup> In 1953 she moved to France without her daughter to escape the authorities, who were searching for her. She did not see her daughter until 1957 and only returned to Spain in 1961. With Miguel in prison once again from 1958 until 1967, they continued living clandestinely, and only obtained legal documentation in 1976 (Cuevas, 1998: 234). They stayed in Catalunya working for

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<sup>68</sup> This information is constructed from her own testimonies in *Presas* (2005: 13-32).

<sup>69</sup> This period is detailed in Chapters 16 and 17 *Prison of Women* (1995:151-172).

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 22 *Prison of Women* (1995: 207-218).

<sup>71</sup> Chapter 23 *Prison of Women* (1995: 219).

the Party and Tomasa was awarded the St. Jordi Cross in 2004; she died in 2007.

During the final years of Francoism, and as part of her work against the regime, Tomasa began to gather the memoirs of the women with whom she had been imprisoned as a means of preserving these memories. Her prison experience, alongside that of her fellow inmates, is documented in these memoirs, which Tomasa transcribed and first published as *Mujeres en las cárceles franquistas* (Madrid: Editorial Casa de Campo 1982). The text was later extended and published as a trilogy comprised of *Cárcel de mujeres I*, and *II*, and *Mujeres en la Resistencia*, published in 1985 and 1986 by Ediciones Siroco. In 1998, North-American academic Mary Giles published an edition and abridged translation of some of the testimonies from this trilogy in English, under the title *Prison of Women*. Giles edited a further collection of these testimonies in Spanish published in 2005 as *Presas* (Barcelona: Icaria).<sup>72</sup> The original trilogy was additionally republished as a large single volume in 2004 by Jorge J. Montes Salguero with the title *Testimonios de mujeres en las cárceles franquistas* (Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses). The content of these texts has also been used within the documentary *Del olvido a la memoria. Presas de Franco* (2007) directed by Montes Salguero.

The volumes by Tomasa Cuevas are amongst the most well-known works by

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<sup>72</sup> Although *Prison of Women* and *Presas* are presented as the same text in differing languages, they differ enormously: the former focuses on Cuevas' own life narrative from her birth until the end of the regime, which is only punctuated with testimonies from other prisoners; conversely, the latter is a more polyvocal text that celebrates the narratives of a diversity of women without focussing solely on Tomasa's life.

and about female political prisoners under Franco. Of her works, *Presas* constitutes the most easily attainable and accessible version. It is comprised of a series of twenty-two testimonies from various prisoners, which were originally orally narrated to Cuevas before being transcribed and edited. Throughout the text each testimony is introduced and commented on by Cuevas; the narrative also features an editorial note, an introduction by editor and collaborator Mary Giles, and an introductory chapter that presents Cuevas' own narrated testimony. Framed with reference to Cuevas' original collection of testimonies as an act of resistance against the 'pacto del olvido', the text is characterised by narrative and political urgency for the recovery of memory.

In terms of content, the various chapters all detail experiences of Francoist incarceration from differing perspectives. Thematically, the narrative focuses on both the physical and emotional experience of torture and oppression in prison on the one hand, and solidarity, friendships, and camaraderie behind bars, on the other. Moreover, the narrative serves to comment on politicised, sexualised, and 'normative' female subjectivities through themes of motherhood, prostitution, and party political work.

Owing to the polyvocality, orality, and narrative stylistic variation, the text is fragmented and diverse. Consequently, *Presas* represents a radical divergence from traditionalist genre norms that is further problematic due to the volume's use of textual mediation.

## ***Exploring the narrative corpus***

Research on these life narratives by female political prisoners under Franco constitutes a little-studied aspect within contemporary Spanish history. Of the scholarship that has been carried out, criticism has predominantly emerged from mainland Spain and North America during the 1990s and 2000s. This research tends to follow one of two methodological trajectories, focussing on either a body of thematically similar texts for general and descriptive explorations, or on one or two texts with a more specific examination of one aspect, such as geographical location, or thematic questions concerning such notions as gender or oral memory.

The majority of this scholarship demonstrates an historiographical approach that predominantly reads the female-authored life narratives from a very general perspective, as social, political, and historical sources. Critic Conxita Mir affirms that ‘llibres pioners i emblemàtics com el de Tomasa Cuevas [...] amb els de Juana Doña [...] s’han convertit en fonts historiogràfiques primàries’ (Mir, 2002: 870). Similarly, Taillot argues that the texts uncover ‘una realitat olvidada’ (Taillot, 2009: 38) and Ferrero Hernández confirms that the narratives ‘reivindican la memoria de los silenciados’ (2004: 126). Criticism thus examines the texts as vindications of a silenced past; indeed, Gómez Bravo even argues that in some cases, these narratives provide the only record of events otherwise obfuscated by censorship and missing, destroyed, or closed official archives (Gómez Bravo, 2008:

3; Gómez Bravo, 2011: 816). Egido León (2009, 2009b), and Díaz and Gago (2006) additionally underscore the merit of these texts, particularly those of oral origin, for the recovery of historical memory. Furthermore, Almeda (2005), Casanova (2008), Lluch Prats and Soldevila Durante (2006), and Yusta (2005) all also read the texts within this narrative corpus as sources providing information on women's prisons, social memory, social history, and anti-Francoist resistance.

Other historiographical scholarship focuses on more specific historical, geographical, and contextual issues. Fernández Prieto's research project *Nomes e voces* (2006) uses these texts as sources for the recovery of memory within Galicia. Likewise, the digital archive project *Preso de Les Corts*<sup>73</sup> utilises life narratives to depict the history of Catalan prison, Les Corts. In the same vein, the work of Hernández Holgado<sup>74</sup> examines Ventas Prison in Madrid and Barcelona Prison through the life narratives of the women incarcerated there. Similarly, *Una mujer en la guerra de España* represents a crucial source for the understanding of the early days of the Civil War in Melilla. Sánchez Suárez describes the text as 'fundamental para el conocimiento de la suerte que corrió Melilla el 17 de julio del 36 y para el conocimiento de los inicios de la Guerra Civil Española', adding, 'para rescatar del olvido a las mujeres víctimas de la sublevación fascista, se revela vital' (2004: 48). Consequently, authors such as Moga Romero and Perpen Ruedan uses O'Neill's narrative as a means to reconstruct historiographical accounts of the uprising in

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<sup>73</sup> This can be accessed online via [presodelescorts.org](http://presodelescorts.org). For more information on this archive project, see Hernández Holgado (2008).

<sup>74</sup> See Hernández Holgado (2011; 2003).

Melilla (2011; 1990: 67). Scholarship also addresses more specific political issues such as prison-based political periodicals (Sierra Blas, 2005), anti-Francoist intellectuals (Taillot, 2009), propaganda and 'el mundo carcelario' (Núñez Díaz-Balart, 1999), and anti-Francoist resistance by working-class industrial women (Díaz Sánchez, 2005). Additionally, research has further considered the gender dimensions within the narratives: Taillot (2009: 37), Ferrero Hernández (2004: 126), Perpen Ruedan (1990: 67), and Torres (2003: 13-15) all emphasise the female point of view encompassed within O'Neill's text as an important feature due to its uniqueness. Focussing on other narratives, Alonso Valero (2011) explores the interrelation of the concepts of gender and memory. This perspective is further evident within criticism examining the texts with reference to specific historical and social themes. De la Cinta Ramblado Minero uses Cuevas' work to consider the figure of the mother with relation to political resistance (2008). The representation of sexuality within the source texts has also been explored, most extensively by critic Raquel Osborne (2012; 2011; 2010; 2009a; 2009b). Osborne examines the texts by Real and Doña focussing on attitudes towards non-normative female sexualities, such as lesbianism and masturbation. Critic Gina Herrmann also focuses on sexuality in her exploration of representations of guerrilla activist Remedios Montero. Discussing several different texts, Herrmann concludes that, although sexual violence marked the every-day existence of female political prisoners under Franco, 'the landscape of Republican women's post-war experiences looks remarkably devoid of reports of gendered violence' (Herrmann,

2012: 133). Central to this landscape is the work of Cuevas, which alludes to such instances of abuse through ellipsis and silences. Herrmann declares 'sex and sexual violence stand as the resounding silences of the complete corpus of Communist women's testimonies about [...] the Francoist penitentiary system' (2012: 132).

As well as examining specific themes and more general historical significance, criticism also discusses the specificities of individual people or groups, particularly engaging with the notion of collectivity. Pages i Blanch, for instance, highlights that O'Neill's narrative forms 'parte de una memoria colectiva que afectó a miles de personas' (2004: 149). She thus reads *Una mujer en la guerra de España* as a narrative that is representative of the wider collective experience of female Francoist incarceration. This perspective is further demonstrated within criticism on Cuevas' work, which defines it as a documentation of female imprisonment under Franco (Carrillo, 2005; Cuevas, 2004; Montes Salguero, 2007). Herrmann declares Cuevas' collection of oral histories to be 'the single most substantial and longest collection of women's testimonies about the Francoist penal system' (2012: 133). Historiographical research has also served to vindicate the lives of the protagonists narrating their experiences, by reading their texts as historical sources that uncover the (auto)biographical. Articles use the life narratives as historical sources to compose biographies celebrating these women: Larrauri (2010a) and Cruz González (2006) both use extensive references to Doña's and O'Neill's respective texts as a means for reconstructing and celebrating their lives. Similarly, Soledad Real is venerated within the project 'Las ventanas de

Soledad'<sup>75</sup>, whilst *Del olvido a la memoria. Presas de Franco* (Dir. Jorge Montes Salguero, 2007) pays homage to Cuevas and her peers, aided by extracts from Cuevas' volumes. The testimonies contained within these texts are also the source for many biographies presented in the online archive *El preso de les Corts*.

From a different perspective, criticism emerging from an anglo-american context, has also taken a more literary approach. This scholarship is overwhelmingly descriptive, often providing overviews of and introductions to the life narratives. Standing out amongst such research is North-American critic Shirley Mangini whose work *Memories of Resistance* (1995; 1998) can be said to have opened out this side of research on female prison narratives under Francoism. She describes both style and theme, arguing that the narratives constitute a body of resistance texts that testify to the suffering of women under Francoism and are defined by a common 'urgent solitary voice' (1995: 113). A similarly descriptive approach is also favoured by critics Conxita Mir (2002), Egidio León (2009a, 2009b), Christina Dupláa (1995), Berta Carrasco de Miguel (2011), and Mercedes Yusta (2005) within their work on these narratives.

Research focussing on more in-depth analyses engaging with literary and theoretical criticism and concepts is largely lacking. Indeed, scholarship on style within the narratives is limited to a few comments highlighting literary quality (Mangini González, 1995: 113) and the use of narrative voice (Mangini González,

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<sup>75</sup> Comprised of a documentary, an accompanying volume, and a website. These sources are all available online via the project website: <http://home.soledadreal.org>

1995: 116; Perpen Ruedan, 1990: 67). Theoretical examinations are also missing from research, with the notable exception of the work of Nancy Vosburg, which explores prison space and the female body in O'Neill's text with relation to a Foucauldian understanding of discipline (1995, 1993). In terms of genre analysis, the narratives have been more widely considered, particularly as regards the autobiographical. Romera Castillo argues that they are part of 'un verdadero esplendor en el cultivo de lo autobiográfico' (2009: 177), which he attributes to the concern for 'la memoria histórica' (2009: 181). He continues by emphasising that rather than focussing on the intimate, these narratives explore more social and political themes (2010: 186). Mir, too, considers the use of alternative autobiographical genres, arguing that these life narratives constitute 'la proliferación d'altres formats autobiogràfics' (2002: 929) demonstrating a 'reivindicació de gènere' (2002: 917). Moreover, through references to the concepts of out-law genres, resistance literature, and 'testimonio', Cavallo highlights the hybrid testimonial nature of Cuevas' work (1996). Cavallo and Egido León additionally emphasise the orality underscoring the texts as significant to their use of genre (1996; 2009b).

Existing analyses of these texts are thus limited to the descriptive, focussing either on literary overviews or on historiographical significance, whilst leaving substantive gaps in the research. This thesis addresses these gaps by exploring the chosen texts as a heterogeneous narrative corpus of socio-political, historical, and literary significance, that I address through my concept of the 'No / Body narrative'.

Physically and figuratively written out of both national society and discourses of history and literature, whilst being epitomised and hypervisual as a decrepit subject, the female political prisoners examined in this thesis constitute the 'No / Body' subject, brutally disciplined by state doctrine and Francoist prisons. Their texts respond to and recognise these experiences of oblivion through radical form and politicised content; the corpus is the 'No / Body narrative'. As a generic phenomenon, this provides me with a methodological framework for analysing my narrative corpus that allows me to attend to socio-political, historiographical, and literary issues concerning female carceral corporeal subjectivities as interrogated within these texts. Through this methodology for analysis I explore the political, historical, and literary erosion of female subjectivities that is enacted by exclusionary genre trends, brutalist discipline, and traditionalist discourses of being and belonging.

In the following chapters, I explore these works as a body of socio-politically, historiographically, and generically radical texts in which the female political prisoners construct, contest, and interrogate discourses of gender, the body, and imprisonment within a twentieth-century Spanish context. Their life narratives thus provide a site for examining Francoist carcerality through which the narrator (and indeed reader and critic) comes face to face with ideologies of living and belonging and the problematics therein. Ultimately, the texts in this corpus write their own ways of *being* in the context of twentieth-century Spain that attend to social, political, and historical; experiential and judicial; and gendered

and corporeal discourses, all of which are rooted within the concept of the 'No / Body' that forms a grounding premise to this thesis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Interpellating the 'No / Body'?

As I have previously examined, the paradigm of femininity under Franco was predicated on the binary of ideal mother versus red whore that encapsulated the divisions of victor and vanquished, Nationalist and Republican, and Spain and anti-Spain, which ravaged the nation during this period. For the female prisoner under the regime, this paradigm resulted in their simultaneous societal exclusion, or invisibility, and their hypervisibility as denigrated bodies epitomising the anti-Spain. This paradoxical status for the female political prisoner lies in the notion I term the 'No / Body'; in this chapter I trace how the texts construct carceral subjectivities in response to these intersecting discourses of femininity and self-representation. This analysis draws on Althusser's notion of subject-ideology-interpellation in which he argues that socio-political discourses 'always-already' (1984: 50) interpellate 'concrete individuals as concrete subjects' (1984: 47). I integrate my examination of the construction of subjectivity through socio-political discourses with an exploration of how these subjectivities are represented through the narratives. Indeed, a focus on genre and narrativity is essential within this discussion given the central position of what Smith and Watson refer to as 'the complexities of autobiographical subjectivity' (2010: 61). For Hall, 'subjectivity as a

critical concept invites us to consider the question of how and from where identity arises, to what extent it is understandable, and to what degree it is something over which we have any measure of influence or control' (2004: 4). Situating my exploration of subjectivity within the contexts of Francoist discourses of femininity and genre theory allows me to attend to the multiple complexities affecting the representation and (in)visibility of carceral subjectivities. Using this as the grounding basis for this chapter, I thus examine how the narratives respond to, interrogate, and ultimately, begin to rewrite these discourses and representations of female prisoner subjectivities.

In this exploration, I begin by examining how these reproduce the inherent invisibility of the 'No / Body'. This is most apparent through both the literal silencing of female voices in narratives that eclipse and veil their carceral experiences and the formal erasure of subjectivities in the use of the third-person. My analysis of these techniques is framed within the context of traditional autobiography and the contemporary criticism of this as an exclusionary genre. In the second section, I consider how the narratives counter this erasure through the need to tell that impregnates the texts. As a response to psychological trauma, on the one hand, and socio-political invisibility, on the other, this narrative urgency, evident through form and content, provides the protagonists with a means for visibilising the brutalities of female carceral subjectivities. By contrast, however, the texts also use more normative images of idealised femininity as a means of humanising the inmates. I explore this use of normative femininity through the

notion of 'readability' as outlined by critic Vosburg, which refers to the normative social readings of transgressive bodies and subjects through the use of such paradigmatic models. In terms of the narratives, this is mirrored by the more normative genre practice employed across the corpus. In the final section, I explore how the narratives move beyond these images of female prisoner (in)visibility through portrayals of more transgressive, alternative models of female subjectivities. This additionally coincides with the more radical textual strategies employed, most especially within *Presas* and *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*. By highlighting the disruption of normative genre tropes, I draw attention to how the texts interrogate social discourses of gender and genre within history, politics, and literature. Through this final section, I thus frame the corpus as an interrogation of female prisoner subjectivities and the representation(s) of these both within society and narrative.

### ***Invisibility***

The notions of invisibility and the erasure of subjectivity are problematic within a traditional, Gusdorfian definition of autobiography as a narrative concerned with 'consciousness of self' (1980: 30), in which 'the individual reflects his [sic] own image' (Ibid.: 33) and 'assumes the task of reconstructing the unity of a life across time' (Ibid.: 37). It is, nevertheless, a central component within the experiences of

the female prisoners under Franco as marginalised and forgotten subjects, which is readily apparent throughout the narrative corpus' use of third-person protagonists, anonymised narrators, and non-speaking subjects. This is most clearly evident within *Desde la noche y la niebla*, which not only uses a third-person narrator, but also pseudonyms and anonymity throughout. In her introduction Doña explains:

[n]o pretendía más que dar testimonios vivenciales de mi pequeño entorno, pero me topaba con la clandestinidad, donde no podía poner nombres auténticos para relatar hechos reales como la "fuga de Ventas", la ayuda que desde el interior de la prisión de "Ventas" se prestaba a las guerrillas allá por los años cuarenta y tantos o hechos contados por sus protagonistas, pero desconocidos por la policía. Entonces decidí hacerlo en forma de novela con nombres supuestos, pero quiero dejar constancia, que ni uno solo de los relatos que se cuentan aquí, son producto de la imaginación; quiero aclarar así mismo, que no es una novela auténticamente autobiográfica; yo por entonces estaba incorporada a la lucha clandestina y tuve que desfigurar algunos hechos para no dar mi propia identidad, confiaba que de alguna manera, el relato podría editarse y guardé esas elementales precauciones. (1978: 16-17)

Through this explanation, Doña describes the auto-eradication of politicised subjectivities that occurs through self-censorship and self-silencing. This is portrayed as a direct result of the political context of Francoist oppression. Using pseudonyms and the invisibility this affords the protagonists constitutes a strategy of self-protection for anti-Nationalist activists, which simultaneously and problematically replicates the annihilation of the dissenting subject that occurred within wider society under the regime. Given the period of publication, after the death of the dictator, such self-censorship additionally reveals the continuing silencing of marginal subjectivities even during the Transition. Moreover, Doña's need to use this technique and obscure her identity is further illustrative of an

internalisation of Francoist, conservative socio-political discourses that particularly prohibited female politicised subjectivities. Such eradication of political women as visible subjects, however, was not limited to the Nationalists; as Doña outlines, ‘tenía la vana pretensión de que alguna editorial hiciera una edición “pirata”, pero las editoriales no hacían “piratería” tratándose de una “cosa” de mujeres’ (1978: 15). The silencing of women’s voices thus extended beyond the regime both temporally and ideologically, with female political figures eradicated in ongoing social discourses and cultural representations.

Doña’s struggle to publish additionally calls into question the issue of the place of women in the literary establishment, particularly within the field of life writing. Indeed, contemporary criticism frequently regards traditional autobiography as predicated on a ‘politics [...] of exclusion’ (Smith and Watson, 2010: 3) that does not encompass the self-representation of minorities. As a tradition that ‘entwines the definition of the human being in a web of privileged characteristics’, autobiography enforces a ‘politics of centripetal consolidation and centrifugal domination’ (Smith and Watson 1992: xvii). Consequently, Smith and Watson argue that ‘the term *autobiography* is inadequate to describe the extensive historical range and the diverse genres and practices of life writing’ (emphasis in original) (2010: 3). Similarly Stanford Friedman confirms, ‘the very sense of *identification, interdependence, and community* that Gusdorf dismisses from autobiographical selves are key elements in the development of a women’s identity’ (emphasis in original) (Stanford Friedman, 1988: 38). Benstock further

contests that 'the very requirements of the genre are put into question by the limits of gender' (Benstock, 1988: 20). Marginal visibility is thereby endangered by the very genre of autobiography that sanctions a specific subject position. For Doña, the publishers' refusal to publish her material forms an additional layer within her eradication as a visible political subject. The literary establishment is complicit in her silencing; this is evident from a formal textual level in her use of a third-person pseudonymous narrative voice and through the refusal to publish her work clandestinely. The silencing of female minority subjects by prescribed genre trends and the market is thereby reflected in the narrative technique employed within *Desde la noche y la niebla*.

From a further perspective, Doña's necessary use of anonymised personae and events also highlights significant issues encountered in autobiography concerning self-representation. Her need for secrecy emphasises the privileged self-referential practice of autobiography whereby minority groups are limited in their narrative self-representation due to the threat of social and political marginality, oppression, and persecution. Smith and Watson emphasise the repercussions of this, stating 'we might keep in mind that testimony also involves telling stories that put the narrator in jeopardy because what is told is in some sense publicly "unspeakable" in its political context' (Smith and Watson, 2010: 85). As they confirm, life writing as an act 'is fraught with risk' (Ibid.). In emphasising her need to write her text using both the third-person and a pseudonym, Doña brings this risk to the front of her narrative. Visibility is thus a political status that

is unavailable to the female political prisoners of Francoism; Doña responds to this by absorbing and using this invisibility as a shield in order to publish her narrative. As a literary technique, however, her anonymity still serves to obfuscate the subject and internalise the Francoist silencing and eradication of dissent.

In a similar manner, Cuevas maintains the anonymity of one of her protagonists within the testimony 'Cárcel de Ventas' (2005: 83-92). She introduces this with the following passage:

[u]na gran camarada y compañera que nunca olvidaré. [...] A] petición suya respeto su anonimato. No me da su testimonio, por lo que respeto sus razones. Su nombre no pasa por alto en varios testimonios [, ...] sabemos lo que ha sufrido, cómo la torturaron en los calabozos de Gobernación, pero ella no ha querido hablar de ello y a cambio nos ofrece esta serie de datos (Ibid., 83)

In preserving her anonymity, these statements confirm the eradication of the subject through Francoist discipline and carcerality. By stating 'sabemos lo que ha sufrido, cómo la torturaron', about which the protagonist does not want to speak, Cuevas directly attributes her loss of voice to these experiences of regime oppression and violence. We can read this desire for anonymity and silence with reference to Althusser's notion of subject-ideology-interpellation as the interpellation of discourses of deviant Francoist female subjectivity based on the concept of the 'puta roja'. Anonymity is therefore not just a political necessity, but also an inherent aspect within the subjectivity of the female political prisoner.

In many of the other testimonies contained within Cuevas' *Presas*, this interpellation of carceral subjectivity is further demonstrated through a series of

self-censoring, self-silencing narrative acts. The texts are punctuated with the following statements: 'no voy a repetir todo el calvario de la cárcel, ya que es más o menos el de otras camaradas que han hecho su relato' (Cuevas, 2005: 57); 'pero ya lo explicarás tú' (Cuevas, 2005: 63); and 'no lo voy a contar yo todo, quiero dejar algo para las otras' (Cuevas, 2005: 78). These phrases use deferrals to emphasise the continuum of experiences of Francoist carcerality. In so doing, they not only underline the collectivity of the experience of regime imprisonment; they also demonstrate how the individual is subsumed within the prisoner group. Consequently, these statements can be read as examples of self-censorship in which the subjects silence their experiences of carcerality. For Smith and Watson, '[e]xperience, then, is the very process through which a person becomes a certain kind of subject owning certain identities in the social realm, identities constituted through material, cultural, economic, and psychic relations' (Smith and Watson, 2010: 31). Given this affirmation, the erasure of experience is equivalent to the erasure of subjectivity. By silencing the accounts of their carcerality, Cuevas' protagonists are thereby complicit in the eradication of their own subjectivities. These statements are particularly significant given the historical oblivion endured by marginal women under Franco. As such, these phrases are indicative of the internalisation of an erased, or invisible subjectivity.

A similar approach is demonstrated by Real, who states that 'yo sé que soy un poco trágica para contar las cosas. Así solo [sic] te voy a decir..' (García, 1982: 94). This constitutes a further example of self-censorship and self-silencing within

her narrative that is illustrative of the internalisation of the invisibility of the erased subject. Such statements provide a form of anti-autobiographical act<sup>76</sup> that is akin to the individual turning their head in response to the policeman's shout in Althusser's example of the interpellation of the subject as 'No / Body'.

María Lacambre's testimony (Cuevas, 2005: 119-124) also contains references to the internal silencing of her experiences, albeit in a slightly different manner. She begins her testimony affirming that

[m]e resulta difícil recordar con detalles aquellos años vividos en una prisión. Tal vez porque me habría sido difícil vivir con la carga abrumadora de tantos trágicos momentos y como con un mecanismo de defensa trataba de no pensar sobre lo que estaba viviendo: "no pienses", "no pienses", me repetía. (Cuevas, 2005: 119)

Here, Lacambre illustrates her active denial and rejection of her experiences, which is framed as a response to trauma. Indeed, Lacambre demonstrates her awareness of this, terming her refusal to remember 'un mecanismo de defensa'. Considering the notion of trauma, Cathy Caruth argues that this is characterised by the recurrent appearance of an event, which was not wholly lived in the initial instance of its occurrence (1995a, 1995b; 1996). Caruth adds that trauma narratives provide a way for the narrator to 'bear witness to a past that was not fully experienced at the time' (Caruth, 1995b: 151). Trauma is thus defined by a rupture between experience and subject and the resultant recurrence of the original event

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<sup>76</sup> For Smith and Watson, the notion of the autobiographical act refers to a complex, situated 'symbolic interaction [...] in the world' (2010: 63). This concept has been widely examined: see Bruss (1976) and Smith and Watson (2010: Chapter 3) for an introduction.

that results from this schism. In the example above, the narrator stifles the reoccurrence of the trauma and as a result she does not visibilise her experiences. Consequently, she fails to counter her trauma and her socio-political erasure; rather she internalises and enacts her own eradication. Although framed as a psychic survival strategy, Lacambre's repression of her own thoughts, nevertheless, reproduces the silencing of the female political prisoner within Francoist and post-Francoist society.

The subsequent inability to remember and construct her life story is of further consequence when considering the question of subjectivity with reference to invisibility. In terms of genre, this is narratively problematic given the archetypal paradigm of autobiography as rooted in a coherent subject and life, which Smith and Watson describe as 'the autonomous individual and the universalizing life story as the definitive achievement of life writing' (2010: 3). By stating that it is hard for her to remember her experiences of prison, Lacambre calls into question her reliability as a narrator due to the erasure of experience and subjectivity. This not only excludes her historiographically and socially; it also precludes her inclusion within a genre predicated on subject coherence. Her subjectivity cannot be constituted because she cannot tell her story, silenced by trauma, ideology, and literary prescriptions.

The invisibility and silence of the female political prisoner subject is additionally apparent from a more literal and embodied perspective. This is particularly demonstrated within those narratives that feature non-speaking

subjects, such as the testimony 'Rosa Estruch: Valencia' (Cuevas, 2005: 107-110) within *Presas*. Introducing this chapter, Cuevas explains '*su vida se iba apagando poco a poco. [... C]on mi amiga y camarada Joaquina, fui a ver a Rosa Estruch, ya no podía hablar, y su mirada inteligente me saludó*' (italics in original) (2005: 107). The testimony itself similarly highlights the physical state of Rosa Estruch, describing:

[e]n el Sanatorio Marítimo de la Malvarrosa de Valencia, una mujer, Rosita Estruch Espinós, se encuentra desde hace 22 años, inmóvil en una cama. Sus miembros superiores e inferiores están totalmente atrofiados. Los dedos de las manos retorcidos, anudados entre sí, inservibles para el tacto. La columna vertebral no la sostiene, ni siquiera puede incorporarse! Los ojos, ahora atacados de cataratas, son inoperables dado su estado general. (Ibid.)

Cuevas' depiction is illustrative of the physical eradication of the subject. Estruch is portrayed as the embodiment of her erasure: she cannot tell her story, and by extension, she cannot constitute her subjectivity; she cannot even sit up. In terms of social position she has also been eradicated, having been positioned within what Foucault regards as the heterotopic space of the asylum – a space of deviance outside of all spaces, where those outside of the social norm are housed (1986: 25). Her physical location thereby mirrors both her corporeal state and her figurative position within society and histor(iograph)y. By using the third person to describe the voiceless subject, or even object, the narrative emphasises the historical and social erasure of female political prisoner subjectivities to which these women were subjected.

A similar approach is utilised in the homage to María Blazquez del Pozo (Cuevas, 2005: 69-73) posthumously related by friend and fellow inmate Manolita

del Arco. The testimony outlines her arrest and imprisonment, beginning 'fue detenida en abril de 1939. Estaba embarazada de la niña. La torturaron bárbaramente' (Ibid., 69). It ends with the declaration

cayó enferma de un sarcoma de mama, un cáncer de los peores. Estuvo sufriendo de una forma tremenda abrasada por las radiaciones de la bomba de cobalto. Quedó ciega y gangrenada. Murió en París, en un hospital anticanceroso. (Ibid.: 71)

Through this portrayal, the testimony in this chapter highlights the figurative, situational, and corporeal erasure of the female political prisoner subject. Blazquez del Pozo is irreducibly destroyed: figuratively socially annihilated through her exile in a hospital and physically eradicated by death and disease.<sup>77</sup> The choice to include these third-person silenced figures within the narratives creates a literal image of the consequences of subject-ideology-interpellation for the female political prisoner under Francoist discipline.

Third-person narrating subjects also call into question the issue of silence and invisibility for the female prisoner on a further level by obscuring the first-person protagonists. This is apparent within *Una mujer en la Guerra de España*, which begins by focussing not on O'Neill herself but on her husband. The opening sentence declares: 'Virgilio tuvo una feliz ocurrencia de hombre enamorado' (2003: 21). The text ends with a similar focus on Virgilio, as Carlota leaves Melilla by boat looking towards 'el cementerio' which 'era una mancha oscura en la oscuridad'

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<sup>77</sup> This introduces the concept of the prisoner as the physically abject body, which will be examined within the next chapter.

(2003: 245). This affords him a central position within the narrative, which, although understandable, lends the text a biographical element. Read with reference to both the exclusionary practice of traditional autobiography and the erasure of the female political prisoner within Spanish histor(iograph)y, this biographical element contributes to the silencing of women's voices even within autobiographical practice.

The narratives demonstrate a further silencing of subjectivity through the use of the impersonal 'se'. This is particularly employed within Cuevas' text, which states 'toda la cárcel se levantó muy temprano' (Cuevas, 2005: 169) and 'había organización del Partido y se sabía casi al día cómo iba la guerra' (Cuevas, 2005: 149). Such a representation of the impersonal subject serves to distance the subject from experience. This provides a linguistic illustration of 'No / Body' subject-ideology-interpellation within the narrative, whereby the individual is subsumed within the group. The impersonal 'se' serves to dehumanise and de-individualise the many subjects depicted within the impersonalised group.

### ***Paradigmatic visibility***

In response to the ingrained silencing and invisibilisation of female prisoner subjectivity, the narratives strive to render visible their protagonists' and narrators' subjectivities. Indeed, this visibilisation constitutes a driving factor

behind the textual production, as demonstrated within the introductions. O'Neill, for instance, states that 'era como un mandato que me desasosegaba. Que me obligaba' (O'Neill, 2003: 19). She is compelled by an inner need to communicate; the experience seems to take over, forcing O'Neill to construct her narrative, and by extension, her subjectivity. Similarly, within the main body of *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*, we are told that the experience of imprisonment produces 'una presión y lo vas hundiendo dentro de ti misma, [...] y si no puedes desahogarlo te produce una amargura; sufres, implica sufrimiento. Y si no puedes desahogar esa rebeldía, es una amargura, es una desesperación, es algo tan grande, sufres' (García, 1982: 131). Here Real reveals the personal desperation that she feels as a result of carrying her experiences – and those of her generation – within. The narrators themselves thus depict the emotional and psychological need to communicate their experiences on a very personal level, which is inherently bound up within the narratives. Such a need to tell can be examined with reference to trauma theory. The continued revisiting of a traumatic event is described by Laub's notion of the 'imperative to tell' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 78), which he explains as the need of the individual to

tell their story in order to survive. There is, in each survivor, an imperative need to *tell* and thus to come to *know* one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life [...] this imperative to tell and to be heard can become itself an all-consuming life task. Yet no amount of telling seems ever to do justice to this inner compulsion. There are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in *thought, memory, and speech*. (emphasis in

original) (Felman and Laub, 1992: 78)

After the experience of trauma, then, the individual is compelled by an imperative to tell and communicate their story. This 'all-consuming life task' provides the narrators with the means to begin to psychically deal with their experiences of trauma; nevertheless, as Laub affirms, this task can never be completed. In the case of the female political prisoner under Franco, this need to tell responds on a further level to the social erasure of experiences and subjectivities, as well as functioning as a means to deal with the psychological and the emotional. The quotations by O'Neill and Real cited above can be read with reference to this imperative to tell as examples of this 'inner compulsion' and 'all-consuming life task'. Indeed, as both Real and O'Neill affirm, the need to tell constitutes a powerful catalyst for their narratives. For O'Neill this need surpasses the fear of Francoist persecution, as she describes:

[I]o tuve escondido, allá en España, bajo tierra, envuelto en un hule; también estuvo dentro de un horno apagado, pero su destino era el fuego. A él fue a parar, empujado por las manos que temblaban de mis dos hijas y mías, cuando la Falange empujaba la puerta de nuestra casa. [...]

Y lo escribí otra vez, segura de que no tendría que esconderlo, [...] Lo escribí, y al terminarlo, vuelta a esconderlo... "¡Es como una bomba encendida que llevaras en las manos!", me decían [...] este libro se volvía una amenaza. (O'Neill, 2003: 19)

These comments illustrate the intensity of O'Neill's desire to communicate her experiences. Given Smith and Watson's affirmation of the importance of experience in constituting the subject (2010: 31), this imperative is not just a response to trauma; it is also a constituent aspect within the construction of subjectivity. Thus

revisiting the traumatic past through narrative establishes a means for the affirmation of a form of female political prisoner subjectivity. The need to communicate their experiences is therefore not just a response to trauma but a need to construct and realise subjectivities on a very personal level. In terms of the concept of the 'No / Body', the compulsion to tell can be further considered as a response to this; by telling their stories, the narratives serve to visibilise the invisible.

From a more social perspective, the urge to tell also intersects with the social urge to make known, to render visible within public discourses of history and society. This is particularly demonstrated within the introductions to *Desde la noche y la niebla* and *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*. Doña states 'me urgía que se conociera todo el horror de veinte años en las cárceles franquistas de mujeres' (Doña, 1978: 15), demonstrating the desire for social recognition. Similarly, the introduction to Real's narrative declares 'había querido revivir una historia [...] que nos había sido silenciada, escamoteada o falseada, y que una vez desaparecido Franco sentimos la necesidad, ya que los héroes vivían, de oírla, palparla y verla' (García, 1982: 9). These phrases provide confirmation of the social, political, and historical, as well as the personal impetuses informing the narratives. The texts serve as socio-political sources that contest the invisibility and oblivion of female political prisoners under Franco, thus responding to Laub's concept of 'an event without a witness' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 80). This notion refers to an event of such horror that it was unable to be conceptualised, or an event deliberately

eradicated through the extermination of witnesses and the silencing of historical discourses.<sup>78</sup> As a result, truth is not recorded (1992: 81), which in turn creates a loss of identity given that ‘when one’s history is abolished, one’s identity ceases to exist as well’ (1992: 81). The socio-historical erasure of Franco’s prisoners is one example of the event without a witness. By writing these narratives, thus, the women respond to both a personal and a social imperative to tell their stories that additionally allows them to constitute an eradicated subjectivity.

The narratives further demonstrate a need to tell in order to recognise and pay homage to others. Doña states in her introduction: ‘estos nombres simbolizarán a miles de mujeres, aquellas valerosas mujeres de todos nuestros pueblos que también fueron héroes en el duro combate silencioso por sobrevivir a la más tenaz y negra represión que jamás hemos sufrido’ (Doña, Juana, 1978: 17). Similarly, *Presas* affirms that ‘este libro es un homenaje a todas las mujeres que durante el régimen franquista sufrieron represión, tortura, presidio e, incluso, la muerte’ (Cuevas, 2005: back cover). In Cuevas’ own testimony, she makes a comparable declaration, confirming that ‘[s]on a ellas, y a otras ex presas que han aportado sus testimonios vivos y han hecho posible esta publicación con la trágica experiencia de las cárceles franquistas, a quienes quiero agradecer de corazón su valiosa aportación’ (Cuevas, 2005). O’Neill also reiterates this within her narrative, in which she recounts the pleas of her fellow inmates who state:

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<sup>78</sup> Laub particularly gives the example of the Holocaust (1992: 75-92).

tienes que vivir. Vivir [...] para todas nosotras; para todos nosotros, porque tienes el deber de escribir algún día lo que has visto para que el mundo conozca nuestros sufrimientos; estos sufrimientos de gentes oscuras como nosotros que pasarán sin que nadie se haya enterado... ¡Y la muerte de los nuestros se perderá en el olvido! ¡Tienes que cumplir con tu deber! (O'Neill, 2003: 213).

This same narrative urgency is again emphasised upon O'Neill's release from prison: her fellow inmates shout '¡[q]ue te acuerdes de nosotras!' after which O'Neill states '[p]or eso escribo este libro' (O'Neill, 2003: 241). As a result of these statements, the narratives are rendered homages to all those women imprisoned and silenced by the dictatorship. Consequently, these testimonial narratives become personal, political, representative, and collective through the very act of telling experiences of trauma. This multiple effect corresponds with Laub's configuration of the three levels of witnessing; he explains, 'the level of being a witness to oneself within the experience; the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others; and the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 75). Such a tripartite division calls into question the implications of the process of witnessing that includes what Laub denominates the 'secondary witness', who 'takes on the responsibility for bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone' (Felman and Laub, 1992: 85). Applied to the prisoner life narratives and their quotations cited above, Laub's model of witnessing allows us to read the narratives as encompassing each of these levels. O'Neill, for instance, acts as witness to her experience, to the experience of her fellow inmates, and, to the very act of witnessing, as stated through her introduction concerning the lengthy production and re-production of her narrative.

Similarly, Cuevas' *Presas* explicitly demonstrates a tripartite paradigm of witnessing her story, and that of others, as well as witnessing the testimonial process itself. These texts thus highlight the construction of life narratives and experiences as a personal, political, and social action conducive to the establishment of previously erased identities. For each of the texts, the narrator is both witness and secondary witness, constructing their stories as a means to personally, politically, and socially pay homage to a lost experience and, by extension, eradicated female political prisoner subjectivities.

The need to tell is further evident within the narratives' affirmations of first-person subjectivities and experiences. In fact, the majority of the texts feature a prominent use of the first-person in accordance with Lejeune's autobiographical pact. This refers to the use of a common name for writer, narrator, and protagonist, which Lejeune argues is essential within autobiography. He declares 'in order for there to be autobiography [...] the *author*, the *narrator*, and the *protagonist* must be identical' (Lejeune, 1989: 5). O'Neill and Doña use this to declare their authorship within the respective introductions, stating 'me parece que he escrito este libro...' (O'Neill, 2003: 19) and 'cuando escribí este relato' (Doña, 1978: 15). Such statements allow the women to position themselves in regards to their own status as narrators of their own histories, their author-ity. These declarations constitute a narrative technique that (re)affirms the texts as a literary and autobiographical act. In these statements, the women claim a subjectivity - that of the writer - for themselves. As such, these phrases constitute performative acts, through which

Doña and O'Neill establish their subjectivities, or, to use the words of Smith and Watson, 'it is in the contextual, provisional, and performative aspects of our autobiographical acts that we give shape to and remake ourselves through memory, experience, identity, location, embodiment, and agency' (Smith and Watson, 2010: 102). Intriguingly, however, the text proper that follows in each of these cases contains fewer references to first-person declarations of subjectivity than those by Cuevas and Real: *Desde la noche y la niebla* solely utilises the third person, and, although *Una mujer en la guerra de España* is framed within the first-person, the narrative begins with and indeed favours throughout, the use of either the third-person or the first-person plural. By contrast, *Presas* and *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* both predominantly feature the first-person singular, in accordance with Lejeune's notion of the autobiographical pact. Within the context of the eradication of the subject, using the autobiographical pact provides the narrators with the chance to affirm their identities and their subjectivities. The testimonies' introductory statements demonstrate this through phrases such as 'el recuerdo que yo tengo de mí misma es...' (García, 1982: 11), 'soy de un pueblecito de la Alcarria, Brihuega' (Cuevas, 2005: 13), and 'me llamo Nieves Waldemer Santiesteban, nací y viví en Guadalajara' (Ibid., 33). These present the narratives in accordance with normative autobiography that provides a 'conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life' (Gusdorf, 1980: 29). As a result, the self-representation of the texts is situated within normative autobiographical practice; the narratives claim visibility through a traditional medium.

In a similar manner, the narratives also use archetypal images of the female political prisoner as perpetrated within Francoist society. In *Presas*, for instance, the testimonies portray horrific experiences of incarceration, declaring that ‘nos hicieron sufrir de una manera horrorosa, humillaciones y vejaciones que siempre recordaremos’ (Cuevas, 2005: 59). Examples of these ‘humillaciones y vejaciones’ fill the narratives; Cuevas states: ‘entre las cosas que le hicieron fue meterla en un baño y aplicarle corrientes eléctricas en los pechos’ (2005: 69). Such descriptions provide vivid illustrations of the brutal experience of Franco’s prisons and thus constitute vital sources for the recovery of memory and the representation of silenced experiences. Nevertheless, by visiblising these images of female political prisoners as brutalised bodies, the narrators frame their subjectivities within the socially portrayed model of transgressive, deviant femininity. Moreover, a focus on such physical encounters of brutality centres female political prisoner subjectivities within decrepit corporeality. This serves to portray subjectivities as inherently embodied and corporeal. Indeed, as Smith and Watson affirm, ‘life narrative inextricably links memory, subjectivity, and the materiality of the body [...] subjectivity is impossible unless the subject recognises her location in the materiality of an ever-present body’ (2010: 49). As a result, this renders ‘the body [...] a site of autobiographical knowledge because memory itself is embodied. And life narrative is a site of embodied knowledge (a textual surface on which a person’s experience is inscribed) because autobiographical narrators are embodied subjects’ (2010: 49). However, this physical focus additionally

incorporates female subjectivities within the material. As a result, such depictions posit women's subjectivity as rooted within their bodies.

The social perception of female political prisoners as morally, corporeally, and inherently decrepit resulted in the widespread image of the body of the prisoner as a site and symbol of disgust and degeneration. In striving for visibility, the narratives replicate images of such corporeal monstrous femininity. They state 'me dejaron hecha un monstruo' (García, 1982:94); 'era una masa de carne de las mujeres' (Cuevas, 2005: 63); and '[t]rató de echarse de nuevo y un quejido se escapó de su garganta. Su cuerpo, dolorido y magullado, se negaba a cualquier movimiento' (Doña, 1978: 99). In these descriptions, the narratives construct and reproduce images of female political prisoners that adhere to a Francoist model of the 'puta roja'. Indeed, they serve to demonstrate and render visible 'No / Body' subjectivity and its interpellation through social discourses and ideologies. This interpellation is portrayed as explicitly corporeal through the emphasis on material bodily state. By writing such descriptions, the narratives provide a 'puta roja' performativity that problematically reproduces and visibilises female political prisoner subjectivity within a paradigm predicated on her very socio-historical exclusion and physical destruction. The texts are interpellative acts that construct the 'No / Body' subject, which in itself is made more emphatic through its very visibility. Through these images, the narratives respond to and replicate the grotesque hyper-visibility of the 'No / Body', which presents a development from the ingrained invisibility of the 'No / Body', discussed above.

## **Readable subjectivity**

In addition to constructing images of female prisoner subjectivity that adhere to the social portrayal of the 'puta roja', the narratives also use paradigmatic and idealised images of normative femininities. These archetypes correspond with the paragon of femininity as encompassed by the Christian mother and wife, which are contained throughout the narratives. The use of such images is a particularly common trait within women's prison writing as a medium through which the narrator can contest the social criminalisation of female inmates. As critics Gelfand and Norris affirm, the textual construction of subjectivity is a response to the criminalization and denigration of female prisoners (1981: 194; 2003: 1) who are doubly punished for their transgression of laws, gender, and literature (Gelfand, 1980: 58) and characterised by their sex (Gelfand, 1981: 188). As a result, women's prison narratives contain images of normative femininity that combat the representation of prisoners as deviants (Tapia, 2008: 685) and respond to cultural attitudes regarding criminality (Gelfand, 1980: 58). In light of this, these narratives counter what Scheffler refers to as the 'hyperinvisibility' of female prisoners (2002: *xxiii*).

The texts make use of this type of portrayal of femininity by foregrounding their statuses as wives and mothers. Although these serve to humanise and visibilise the female political prisoner in a manner that counters both the

invisibility and the hyper-visibility of the 'No / Body', these images also fall within the confines of normative idealised feminine paradigms. This can be examined with reference to Vosburg's notion of 'readability', which she describes as:

the challenge [...] of displaying publicly the *real* bodies within, and of contesting through this humanization process the images that the prison authorities construct for public display. The humanizing process involves not only making the bodies visible, but, perhaps more importantly, making them "readable" to those outside the prison walls. (emphasis in original) (1995: 128)

The depiction of the self thus becomes a means of both attaining visibility for female political prisoners whose subjectivity is otherwise defined by state discourses of corrupt bodies, and of 'humanizing' these dehumanised corporeal subjects. Vosburg states that a woman's 'criminal offence is thus easily verifiable to the public that casts its gaze on her monstrous image' (Vosburg, 1995: 128). The law that is incorporated 'on and through' the body by means of Francoist discipline, and depicted via the textual visibilization of the decrepit female political prisoner bodies is therefore the very means of enforced subject-ideology-interpellation. She concludes that, in the case of the female political prisoner

her bodily appearance, particularly, as the object of the gaze, becomes not only the site of intense scrutiny and surveillance, on "public" display only to prison guards, but the defining mark of her delinquency in its "abnormality". (Vosburg, 1995: 129)

For Vosburg then, the body of the prisoner becomes the embodiment and symbol of crime and deviance. Such delinquency is particularly imposed through a Foucauldian model of discipline, partially comprised of disciplinary hierarchical

observation that Vosburg describes as ‘the gaze, invested with the power to judge, [...] to punish and humiliate’ (1995: 129). As a result of this punitive gaze, the female prisoner, who is marked by her deviance, experiences a need to retain her humanity; as Vosburg affirms, the prisoners endure

the need to restore an image that will make the body a site of positive “reading” through its conformity to societal expectations and aesthetic norms, as opposed to a physical image “readable” only as marginal, delinquent, criminal. (1995: 130)

The female prisoner thus clings to normative models and paradigms as a means to counter widely perpetuated image of the female inmate as inherent delinquent and monstrous.

In the case of the female inmates under Franco, resorting to traditional images of idealised femininity constitutes a strategy to humanise the protagonists. Vosburg particularly examines the example of the narrative *Una mujer en la guerra de España*, in which O’Neill depicts her feminisation before her court trial, wearing furs and striving to look elegant (O’Neill, 2003: 160; Vosburg, 1995: 130). This functions as a way to respond to the social image of female deviance through a form of Butlerian performativity (1990). Self-portrayal through normative models of femininity extends beyond the inmates’ actions to comprise a narrative technique. Indeed, the women foreground the ‘role as mother and wife’ (Vosburg, 1995: 130) as a humanising strategy. This form of ‘readability’ provides the narrators with a means for constructing their acceptable social visibility that addresses both the invisibility and the hyper-visibility of the female political

prisoner that is apparent across the textual corpus. Narrative depictions of the women protagonists as wives and mothers provide a particularly obvious way of portraying the inmates in accordance with the conservative model of idealised maternal femininity. Consequently, family roles constitute a common theme throughout the narratives. *Una mujer en la guerra de España* emphasises O'Neill's roles as wife and mother by beginning with a snapshot of idealised family life with Virgilio, Carlota and their two children living aboard a ship in Melilla (2003: 21). The representation and construction of O'Neill's subjectivity originates in the image of the nuclear family.

The narratives additionally emphasise female maternity through portrayals of the harsh realities of prison motherhood. Cuevas especially reiterates this, describing cases of 'un parto en la cárcel' (2005: chapter 1), 'dar el pecho a mi hijo' (Ibid., 39), and experiences within the 'prisión maternal de Madrid' (Ibid., 70). Doña also emphasises her role as a mother behind bars as she knits a jumper for her son, stating 'siempre que había podido para estas fechas le había confeccionado un regalo' (1978: 225). Through these images the texts demonstrate the difficulties of being a mother behind bars, as is particularly salient within the depiction of 'aquellas mujeres agotadas, sin leche para criarlos, sin comida que darles, sin agua, sobre míseros petates, sin ropa, sin nada, sufrían doble cárcel' (Cuevas, 2005: 83-84). Although these descriptions foreground the horror of prison motherhood, by emphasising the suffering of mothers within prison they additionally humanise these figures as maternalised human beings. This serves to distance them from the

typical perception of the monstrous femininity of the female prisoner.

Moreover, in highlighting the lengths the women went to care for their children, the texts further contest the image of the 'rojas' as bad mothers. The narratives thus engage with paradigmatic idealised models of femininity in order to re-construct female political prisoner subjectivities. Cuevas emphasises this by underscoring the regret and suffering of the prisoners who lost their families through their incarceration. One testimony describes the case of María Blazquez del Pozo who 'tuvo que dejar a su hijo con su hermana -igual que tuvo que hacer con su hija- y al criársele así los hijos ha sido la causa de que ninguno sintiera cariño por su madre' (Cuevas, 2005: 70). As Cuevas explains, 'le recriminaban que había abandonado a sus hijos para hacer vida de Partido, [...] ellos no la perdonaron' (Cuevas, 2005: 71). References to rehousing children with other "more suitable" members of the public highlights an important yet forgotten historical issue. Moreover, these references foreground the suffering and regret of the women, by highlighting 'la amargura de haber perdido a sus hijos' (Cuevas, 2005: 71). Such statements humanise and normalise the women in response to their social criminalisation.

For some of the protagonists, the role of wife and mother even becomes all-consuming, particularly after their incarceration ends. Blasa Rojo finishes her testimony affirming that '[m]is hijos han sufrido también las consecuencias por lo que habían sido sus padres, [...] después de la cárcel no me he metido en nada, sólo ayudar a mis hijos' (Cuevas, 2005: 68). This statement highlights how her political

actions were changed by the need to protect her children. Her maternal role is thus portrayed as incompatible with political activism and all-important. O'Neill's narrative presents a similar focus on her position as wife and mother. Upon learning of the execution of Virgilio she breaks down:

y ante los pies se me abrió una honda sima, tanto como la que Dante vio en el infierno, o tal vez se encendió ante mis ojos una luz cegadora que me los abrasó. [...] No veía más que a él cayendo con su sangre. [...] El corazón forcejeaba por escapar y me ahogaba. [...]

No comí; me dieron algo de beber. El corazón me pesaba; cada minuto se convertía en piedra; el pecho se agitaba con el trabajo; la respiración silbaba; parecía una asmática. [...] Yo hubiera querido vivir o morir en aquella hora sola, sola. (O'Neill, 2003: 95-96)

Through this description, O'Neill highlights her reaction to Virgilio's death, which portrays her as doting wife and mother rather than the anti-family 'puta roja'. Similarly, one testimony in *Presas* explains 'en una visita del director general de prisiones a Amorebieta, al preguntarle por qué había sido condenada, la mujer respondió: -por ayudar a mi hijo' (Cuevas, 2005a: 92). Thus, even the condemned, degenerate prisoner is represented as a self-sacrificing mother.

The idealised image of maternal femininity is extended further through representations of female political prisoners engaging in caring, communal behaviours whilst inside. In prison the women live together in groups, or 'comunas', as demonstrated within *Desde la noche y la niebla* in which Leonor is approached by 'la "comuna" de Paquita' (Doña, 1978: 134). These groups provide the inmates with a re-constituted family, as O'Neill affirms, 'encontré una nueva familia entorno mío: mis compañeras. [...] -¡Pero qué bien se está en la casa!'

(2003: 219). Within this group there was always a mother figure; Real affirms 'cada comuna tenía una a la que le llamabamos la madre, y que cambiaba cada semana' (García, 1982: 108). Even within the homosocial context of prison, thus the women engage in typical gender roles, as emphasised through their use of gendered terminology.

This coincides with the stereotypical behaviours of the prisoners. Real refers to 'la familia siempre alrededor de la cama' (García, 1982: 150) to care for a badly abused fellow inmate. The other narratives abound with similar depictions: 'todas lloraban conmigo' (O'Neill, 2003: 96); 'su voz, cálida y solidaria, la reconfortó' (Doña, 1978: 101). The representation of such mutual care-giving provides archetypal images of feminine qualities. This is further endorsed through the emphatic depiction of the prisoners as having specific character traits concerned with the ideal femininity, such as modesty, humility, and dignity. The back cover of *Presas* especially highlights this in its description of the prisoners in the following manner: 'todas ellas mantuvieron la dignidad y se negaron a ser humilladas' (Cuevas, 2005: back cover), whilst Ángeles Mora declares 'las mujeres comunistas hemos sido admiradas por nuestra disciplina y dignidad' (Cuevas, 2005: 45). Similarly, Doña's narrative underlines the dignity of the prisoners who, even amidst brutal, extreme experiences of physical and emotional violence 'luchaba por mantener su dignidad' (Doña, 1978: 104). The emphasis on humiliation and dignity is also highlighted by Real who describes the shame of prison as 'tan humillante, tan denigrante' (García, 1982: 131). Real later affirms

that 'hemos querido ser puros, puros, puros' (Ibid., 146). Representing female prisoners as dignified subjects demonstrates the rejection of negated subject-ideology-interpellation; this constitutes a means of reproducing subjectivity that rejects dominant discourses concerning the female prisoner under Franco. However, the onus on humility, dignity, and modesty forms a central component to both Francoist ideal femininity and communist 'purity'.<sup>79</sup> The focus on these traits thereby replicates further dogmatic models of female subjectivity determined by political rhetoric.

In their portrayals of female subjectivity, the narratives also engage with more typical physical enactments of paradigmatic femininity. Vosburg's notion of 'readability' particularly focuses on such corporeal displays that 'restore an image' and 'make the body a site of positive "reading"' (1995: 130). Examining O'Neill's narrative with reference to 'readability', she highlights the following passage as an example of corporeal readability:

Comí y me vestí. El traje de viaje era lo único que me quedaba presentable.  
[...]  
– no está bien que una señora como usted se presente poco elegante.  
¿Quiere que le preste estos *renards*?... Son plateados, véalos, muy bellos,  
están nuevos. Los traje aquí porque cuando me cogieron los llevaba puestos.  
¡La favorecerán mucho!  
[...] Tuve un gesto ambiguo, y la muchacha colocó sobre mis hombros sus  
pieles.  
– ¡está bellísima!  
(2003: 160)

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<sup>79</sup> See more Herrmann (2012, 2003), Osborne (2011, 2010, 2009a, 2009b).

This description refers to O'Neill preparing herself for her trial. It demonstrates the importance of appropriate aesthetics, as well as the communal process of making oneself 'readable'. As an illustration, this passage thereby represents the construction of subjectivity that is achieved by engaging with discourses of both genre and history. This notion of 'readability' brings to mind Butler's concepts of drag, parody, and, more widely, performativity (1990). Using these theories can help us explore O'Neill's 'readability' as an interaction with social discourses of subjectivity. As Butler argues, gender is 'produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity' (1990: 186). Subjectivities are thus produced through the interplay and interpellation of discourses of identity. By reading O'Neill dressing to present herself to the disciplinary gaze of the courtroom with reference to Butlerian parody and drag, her subjectivity is rendered an effect of performativity. If we extend this reading to cover the self-referential process of life writing, O'Neill's narrative itself can be considered an effect of discourses of identity. Life narrative and genre practice thus constitute a performativity of subjectivity in which discourses of belonging in politics, history, and literature are brought together. By extending the question of 'readability' thus, such representations of normative paradigms are not just constructions of 'readable' subjectivities; rather, they begin to interrogate and move beyond such discourses, as shall be discussed below.

From a genre perspective, the question of paradigmatic femininity further correlates with the use of traditional genre traits, such as the autobiographical pact

and narrative coherency. This is particularly apparent within the texts *Una mujer en la guerra de España* and *Desde la noche y la niebla*, which both boast one continuous, chronological, and coherent narrative. Although only O'Neill technically uses the autobiographical pact, Doña's introductory statements serve to frame her text, to some extent, within the autobiographical tradition through the statement 'ni uno solo de los relatos que se cuentan aquí, son producto de la imaginación' (1978: 17). Consequently, both texts are situated within autobiographical practise; this is made more emphatic by the extra-textual features adorning the narratives. These features, termed the paratextual, comprise the peritextual aspects including introductions, prologues, covers, and photos, and the epi-textual, such as interviews and reviews (Smith and Watson, 2010: 99-101).<sup>80</sup> Through statements in the respective paratextual features, both narratives are presented with reference to the autobiographical market: the backcover of *Una mujer en la Guerra de España* boasts the proclamation that '[e]l libro de Carlota O'Neill es de los más importantes' (2003: backcover). Additionally, the prologue affirms that 'el vibrante testimonio de Carlota O'Neill contenido en las páginas de este libro resulta de un valor excepcional' (Torres, 2003: 12). These elements confirm the narrativity of O'Neill's text and constitute sources that authenticate and 'lend credibility to the veracity of the life narrative' (Smith and Watson, 2010: 101). As a (para)textual strategy such statements thereby both determine and

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<sup>80</sup> For more on this notion, see Genette (1997; 1991) and Smith and Watson (2010: 99-101).

reinforce the literary nature of the narrative. By emphatically declaring ‘podemos hoy ofrecer a los lectores españoles esta edición inédita e íntegra de uno de los testimonios esenciales (y mejor escritos) para la recuperación de la verdad histórica, brutalizada por el franquismo’ (Torres, 2003: 15), the prologue serves to situate and validate the narrative within its literary and socio-historical context.

In a similar manner, Cuevas’ and Doña’s texts also contain paratextual features that serve to present the narratives in line with traditional models of autobiographical writing. Indeed, this is particularly significant in these cases due to the radical textual practice they employ, including polyvocality, oral narratives, and fragmented structures. By contrast, the texts are rendered significantly less radical through their textual mediation and paratexts. This is especially apparent within *Presas*, which is framed as re-edition to fill the gap created by growing interest in the subject (2005: ‘Nota para la edición’). Editor Mary Giles then depicts her process, stating ‘el primer paso fue seleccionar un número apropiado de testimonios representativos’ (Giles, 2005: 10). She describes ‘seleccionando y ordenando testimonios’ (2005: 11) and, in the English-language edition, even declares that ‘[t]he material itself had to be reshaped: first to reduce its length and number of different narrators and then to find coherence in those stories’ (1998: ix). These explanations confirm how paratextual aspects serve to mediate the narrative to render it more conventional.<sup>81</sup> As Smith and Watson state, ‘packaging

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<sup>81</sup> The use of paratextual features constitutes a significant and influential aspect within this narrative corpus for the intersections of textuality with dominant discourses of gender and genre

several heterogeneous stories as a collection can blur their differing contexts and truth claims, giving the misleading effect of a single, shared story' (2010: 101). In the case of Presas this is especially exacerbated through Giles' claims of having selected representative stories. Moreover, a homogenous coherence is further enforced through the process of editing and choosing a mere selection of the original testimonies. Narrative polyphony is thereby portrayed not as radical textual practice but as a representative device to ensure emphasis of the gravity, significance, and horror of the experiences narrated therein. Normative representations of femininity and genre practice thus coincide within the corpus and provide a means for visibilising both the invisible and the visibly denigrated, in each case through normative structures.

### ***Beyond Visibility***

On a further level, the narratives additionally serve to move beyond paradigmatic images of female political prisoners as invisible, hypervisible, and normatively visible. This is achieved through both the blatant visibilisation of the prisoner as an erased figure and through the portrayals of more radical and non-normative constructions of subjectivities, such as the use of alternative second-person and

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that unfortunately does not fit within the confines of this thesis.

plural subject pronouns and verbs, the use of polyvocality, and the portrayal of alternative female roles. These provide additional means for constituting subjectivities in terms of both narrative form and content, and thus the texts begin to move beyond paradigmatic social discourses of gender and being. For female prison writing, this form of alternative self-construction constitutes a vitally important opportunity to respond to cultural representations (Gelfand, 1980: 58-59) and to seize control of images of self and subjectivity (Scheffler, 1984: 64). Moreover, as Willingham argues, non-normative constructions of subjectivity provide discourses that resist dominant social narratives (Willingham, 2011: 59; 62). Within the context of the Francoist and post-Francoist silencing of “transgressive” stories that did not corroborate what Benjamin refers to as historicism’s “eternal” image of the past’ (1968: 262), the use of these radical narrative strategies additionally correlates with the socio-political dismantling of dominant discourses of the past that is inherent throughout the narrative corpus.

Such narrative resistance is primarily evident through the use of alternative narrating voices, most notably the second person singular, which in particular demonstrates a disruptive narrative technique within *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* and *Presas*. Each text is punctuated by oral interjections in the second person that are directed towards the interlocutor, or interviewer in the case of these narratives. Real makes statements such as ‘ya ves tú’ (García, 1982: 74) and ‘ya ves tú qué falta tenía yo’ (Ibid., 195), which are maintained within the published narrative. Similarly, many of the testimonies within *Presas* contain questions, exclamations,

and other interjections, including ‘¿Tú te acuerdas de...?’ (Cuevas, 2005: 34), ‘¡Madre mía!’ (Cuevas, 2005: 34), and ‘en fin, Tomasa’ (Cuevas, 2005: 38). These interruptions constitute relics of orality that emphasise the origins of the narratives within Cuevas’ interviews. The construction of subjectivity is thus portrayed as a discursive and dialogical process. Moreover, retaining such interjections provides a stylistic marker that serves to highlight and reiterate the marginal, oral, non-literary position from which the texts emerged. By underlining their oral origins, the narratives additionally emphasise their narrators’ illiteracy, or limited literacy and lack of formal education. On account of this, the texts are situated within an atypical literary surround rooted in marginality, which serves to distance the narratives from the autobiography genre, perceived as a genre of privilege.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, stylistically, such interjections also serve to rupture and fragment the narrative, thereby rendering the text unstable and queer. This contests the need for a coherent narrative and subject position as typically demanded by autobiography. Consequently, the texts dismantle the ‘master narratives’ of ‘universal history’ (Benjamin, 1968: 262) as regards both discourses of literature and society. As inherently transgressive and interrogative texts, thus, the corpus destabilises essential and historicised notions of history, subjectivity, and representation. Drawing attention to these qualities allows us to situate the

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<sup>82</sup> Critics argue that autobiography as a term refers to a specific Western demographic; see especially Benstock (1988); Smith and Watson (2010); and Stanford Friedman (1988). Similarly, Smith and Watson use the term ‘privilege’ in their introduction to *Reading Autobiography*, in their statement that autobiography ‘privileges the autonomous individual and the universalizing life story as the definite achievement of life writing’ (2010: 3).

texts within the life writing subgenre 'testimonio'. This term refers to 'a cultural form of representation which is forming not only on the margins of the colonial situation, but also on the margins of the spoken and written word and as such [it] challenges conventional literary forms for the representation of subaltern peoples' (Gugelberger and Kearney, 1991: 10). Reading the narratives through this allows the texts to be analysed as politicised marginal narratives: they contest the literary and historical invisibility of marginal subjects. Form aids such marginality; Beverley describes the 'testimonio' as

a novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events she or her recount. The unit of narration is usually a "life" or a significant life experience (for example, the experience of being a prisoner). Since, in many cases, the narrator is someone who is either functionally illiterate or, if literate, not a professional writer, the production of a testimonio often involves the tape recording and then the transcription and editing of an oral account by an interlocutor who is an intellectual, journalist, or writer. (1993: 70-71)

As a subgenre, 'testimonio' thus represents a subversive form of narrative that contests the norms of literary production. Framing the texts of this corpus within this textual practice renders them interrogative political acts.

Moreover, using 'testimonio' as a lens through which to examine these narratives additionally serves to highlight particular features within the texts as important issues. The use of narrative interjections within the texts has implications for both the production and reception of narratives. Indeed, within *Presas* these interjections are complemented by the inclusion of questions from the interviewer retained within the published narratives. Cuevas includes phrases such

as “‘Tenías un hijo [...] cuéntame algo de él’” (Cuevas, 2005: 41). These oral interjections render the text inherently dialogic; it thus counters the monologic tradition of autobiographical discourse. Moreover, by highlighting the interview origins through these second-person comments and questions the text draws attention to the question of mediation, whereby an additional person or persons is involved in the production and construction of the narrative. This introduces the notion of collaborative life writing, which Smith and Watson describe as a ‘complex nexus of telling, translating, and editing [that] introduces a set of issues about the process of appropriating and overwriting the original oral narrative’ (2010: 67). Narrative collaboration is particularly apparent within *Presas*, which contains several layers of mediation comprising of second person interjections, Cuevas’ own comments introducing each individual testimony, and the introduction by Mary Giles, who worked with Cuevas to compile the edition. Within *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*, mediation is implied through second-person statements, as well as through the text’s introduction by Consuelo García. Narrative mediation constitutes an important element that problematises the truth-claims of the text and the contexts thereof. In the case of these texts, references to such mediation serves to draw attention to the interplay of discourses and norms influencing and appearing in the construction of both narrative and subjectivity. The use of second-person interjections also includes the reader within the politics of the text as the implied interlocutor. Read with reference to Laub’s notion of the ‘secondary witness’, as discussed earlier, this serves to implicate the reader in the process of witnessing.

From a further perspective, including these interjections provides a metanarrative device that (re)affirms the text's often collaborative narrativity. By retaining the interviewers' questions, the reader is reminded that the text, and by extension the subjectivity therein, is a narrative construction. In terms of subjectivity, this feature is particularly important given the interrelation between subject and narrative and the statement that 'the self becomes a subject only by playing a role in a story' (Clark, 2010: 5). Through these narratives, female political prisoner subjectivity is thus constructed or presented as a construction. These interjections situate the texts within a discursive surround that extends beyond Literature and allows us to read the narratives as transgressive interrogations of discourses of subjectivity.

The narratives additionally provide alternative constructions of subjectivity through references to plurality within the grammatical depiction of subjects, as contained within the narratives by Real, Cuevas, and O'Neill. There are many examples of the use of a first-person plural subject pronoun, such as 'éramos' (O'Neill, 2003: 71) 'hablábamos' (Ibid., 75), 'nos levantábamos' (García, 1982: 102), 'pasamos la noche' (Cuevas, 2005: 142). Such statements provide a linguistic and grammatical affirmation of a collective or community female prisoner subjectivity. Real reiterates this further, describing 'nosotras sabíamos' 'nosotras hacíamos' (1982: 138). By repeating the redundant subject pronoun 'nosotras' frequently within such passages, the texts serve to reiterate the mass experience of incarceration. The texts thereby demonstrate the extent of Francoist incarceration,

which provides a means to visibilise the silenced demographic. The grammatical construction of the plural subject is complemented by descriptions of ‘nosotras, mujeres, mujeres y mujeres’ (O’Neill, 2003: 68), further contesting the erasure of the female political prisoner subject within discourses of Spanish history. In addition to rupturing historical discourses, the use of plural narrating subjects also disrupts normative autobiographical genre practice that is predicated on a single coherent narrating subject. As Beverley confirms,

[the] ideology of individualism in the very convention of the autobiographical form, [is] an ideology built on the notion of a coherent, self-evident, self-conscious, commanding subject who appropriates literature precisely as a means of “self-expression” and who in turn constructs textually for the reader the liberal imaginary of a unique, “free,” autonomous ego as the natural form of being and public achievement (1992: 103)

By employing collective representations of subjectivity the narratives thus contest and move beyond this typical visibility as presented in autobiography. For Stanford Friedman the notions of ‘*identification, interdependence, and community* [...] are key elements in the development of a women’s identity’ (emphasis in original) that are inherently excluded from a Gusdorfian prescription of autobiography (Stanford Friedman, 1988: 38). Women’s life writing, and moreover, subjectivity, are thus predicated on such collective self-representations and constructions. This is particularly the case within women’s prison writing. According to Elissa D. Gelfand, collectivity is a significant notion within female-authored prison narratives due to their awareness of ‘group consciousness’ (1983: 239). Critic Judith Scheffler makes a similar claim, arguing that much content within women’s prison narratives is

dedicated to depicting communal living and collectivity (1984: 62).

*Presas* develops this plurality further through the narrative's inherent polyvocality as encompassed within its form comprised of various testimonies narrated by a number of ex-prisoners. Indeed, Cuevas' text demonstrates the most radical example of plural subjectivity insofar as it is simultaneously explicitly collective, in containing various testimonies, and individual, in that each testimony is narrated by a different protagonist. As a result, *Presas* affords the protagonists the visibility garnered from the collective and surpasses what Young considers the false homogeneity imposed by female collectivity (1994: 714, 718). This approach is similarly evident within *Una mujer en la guerra de España* in which O'Neill alternates between the use of first-person plural and third person singular subjects. For instance, alongside the representation of her husband, she also describes the lives and experiences of other prisoners using the third-person. She introduces Maimona, 'una verdadera creyente esta campesina' (O'Neill, 2003: 87), Germaine, who 'sin ser bella, era atractiva; la serenidad del espíritu la envolvía en aureola' (Ibid., 89), and Ana Vázquez, whose story she presents as 'esta era la historia de Ana Vázquez, se la oí contar muchas veces' (Ibid., 181). In introducing these subjects, O'Neill also includes brief biographies of their lives, stating 'Ana Vázquez se llamaba' (Ibid., 178) and 'Maimona era' (Ibid., 87). These constitute biographical interjections, which render the text a form of poly-biography and as such emphasise the communal nature of incarceration. This is juxtaposed against the plural portrayals of the prisoners as 'éramos mujeres' 'no teníamos más' (Ibid.,

87). Such a combination of representations of subjectivity allows O'Neill to combine the visibility of collectivity with the specificity of individualism. This can be read with reference to the representative collectivity provided by the 'testimonio' subgenre. According to Beverley, the 'testimonio' is narrated by an individual who is representative 'of a larger social class or group' (1993: 74); Sommer adds that 'the singular represents the plural not because it replaces or subsumes the group but because the speaker is a distinguishable part of the whole' (1988: 108). By containing both explicitly collective and individual passages, the narratives within this corpus thus encompass this singular representative of the collective engendered by 'testimonio'. This constitutes a disruptive, radical textual form in terms of both discourses of genre and discourses of history. The construction of subjectivity thereby serves to contest these social discourses of normativity.

Situating the corpus within the transgressive literary form 'testimonio' allows us to read these narratives with reference to such resistance. Indeed, 'testimonio' engenders socio-political and literary significance due to its transgressive nature. By subverting the conventions of autobiography through mediation, collectivity, marginality, and orality, 'testimonio' is rendered 'an extraliterary or even antiliterary form of discourse' (Beverley, 1992: 104). Gugelberger also posits 'testimonio' as 'genre/anti-genre, [...] literature that does not want to be literature' (1996: 5). He further contends that it is positioned 'at the crossroads of all the discourse of institutional battles' (1996: 7), whose very

'battlefield is the border area between transgression and acceptance' (1996: 11). The debate over the 'literary' nature of the genre and its position within genre fields is illustrative of the radical genre embodied within the 'testimonio', which forces us to question 'the very idea of "literature"' (Gugelberger and Kearney, 1991: 11). Moreover, 'testimonio' is socially significant due to the fact that it serves to 'reconstruct [...] national histories in a way that would help to plot directions for change' (Sommer 1988: 112) and to 'rewrite Latin American history from the "people's" perspective' (Ibid.: 113). As Gugelberger and Kearney declare, 'testimonial literature is emerging as part of a global reordering of the social and economic contexts of power/difference within which "literature" is produced and consumed' (1991: 6). Gugelberger and Kearney further add that:

Official history too often has been the history of "great" individuals rather than the history of the people. By emphasizing individuality the voice of the people was silenced. Testimonial discourse is reversing this tendency and speaks for those who previously were not allowed to speak. (1991: 10)

The 'testimonio' is thus a narrative of resistance contesting both literary and socio-political discourses, particularly concerning subjectivity and visibility. Such transgressive literary practice has additionally been framed by the notions of 'resistance literature' (Harlow, 1987) and 'outlaw genres' (Kaplan, 1992). Using this terminology to explore narratives is a means of emphasising the transgressive nature of texts to destabilise social and literary discourses. Indeed, this form of radical writing serves to disrupt the dominant master narratives of gender and genre for questions of (self-)representation of minority subjects, in this case the

female political prisoner under Franco. By reading this narrative corpus as an example of 'testimonio' we can further emphasise how the texts contest social and literary discourses of subjectivity in their very constructions and explorations of the female prisoner. Examining the texts with reference to 'testimonio' further allows us to position the texts as narratives writing back from the margins. This makes for a radical construction of the narrating subject that contests discourses of both gender and genre within literature, history, and politics.

Social discourses are further contested and re-written through the roles of the protagonists depicted within the narratives. Although the texts do serve to replicate, to a certain extent, paradigmatic and normative images of femininity, they also construct female subjectivities that transgress these, socio-politically, historically, and narratively. This is especially evident in the portrayal of multifaceted politicised female subjectivities. Indeed, as a corpus centred upon the experiences of political prisoners, the texts' very existence serves to underline the political status of these women. The narratives affirm and reaffirm the political beliefs and activism of their protagonists in statements such as 'pertenecía al Sindicato de Oficios Varios y era del Partido Comunista' (Cuevas, 2005: 33) and 'sé que por el partido [Comunista] vivo y por el partido muero' (García, 1982: 222). Such phrases are common throughout the representations of subjectivities and serve to render the corpus a site for politicised female subjectivity. This is especially important within the context of Francoism due to the refusal of political status for female inmates during the dictatorship, (Domingo, 2007: 148; Osborne,

2011: 514). The continual reaffirmation of a politicised subjectivity constitutes an important construction of female political prisoner subjectivity. Their politics are inscribed within the texts and upon their representations of subjectivity. As a result, the texts serve to construct and represent new political presence and subjectivity for women within a misogynist context.

In addition, many of the representations of female politicisation are of further significance due to the combination of maternal and political subjectivities. The narratives state: 'cuando el Partido le mandaba algo, lo hacía pensando en el bienestar de sus hijos' (Cuevas, 2005: 71); 'defendía la humanidad' (Cuevas, 2005: 81); 'entonces ya estábamos organizados en el Partido comunista' (Cuevas, 2005: 61). These affirmations construct a model of politicised motherhood that served to contest popular opinion (amongst both Republicans and Francoist) denigrating political mothers. As a result, they provide a model of female subjectivity in which the political and the maternal are not mutually exclusive. They thus construct and reclaim new forms of female subjectivity, which is additionally mirrored through the radical narrative technique and genre practice. Moreover, the texts demonstrate and in so doing, condemn, the denigration of politicised maternity. They depict how mothers imprisoned for political activism were often eschewed by their families, had their children removed, and were socially shunned for not adhering to the state-defined image of motherhood. This social denigration is illustrated within the testimonies such as that of María Blazquez del Pozo:

La trasladaron castigada a Málaga y tuvo que dejar a su hijo con su hermana

– igual que tuvo que hacer con su hija – y al [sic] criársele así los hijos ha sido la causa de que ninguno sintiera cariño por su madre. [...]

Cuando salió, inmediatamente se puso en contacto con su hermana y sus hijos y no recibió, como corresponde, el cariño de una Hermana y unos hijos. Le recriminaban que había abandonado a sus hijos para hacer vida de Partido [...] ellos no la perdonaron y ésa fue su lucha, el Partido, [...] y la amargura de haber perdido a sus hijos (Cuevas, 2005: 71-72).

The narratives thus rewrite female subjectivities that allow for political and maternal roles. Focussing on politicised motherhood as a common theme throughout the texts promotes a model of femaleness that moves beyond and breaks down the prescribed parameters of the dichotomous paradigm of femininity enshrined within Spanish thought, and most especially, Francoist gender politics.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has examined the construction of female political prisoner subjectivities within the narrative corpus of this thesis with particular reference to Spanish and Francoist discourses of gender politics and deviance. By focussing on the ‘subject-ideology-interpellation’ of the female prisoner as ‘No / Body’ through their self-representations, I have considered the varied portrayals of subjectivities that encompass visibilities, invisibilities, and counter-visibilities. In containing such a diverse range of representations both across and within the narratives, the texts attend to the differing nuances of female political prisoner subjectivity

encapsulated within the notion of the 'No / Body'. Through their use of paradigmatic and non-paradigmatic models of femininity, the narratives engage with social discourses of ideal and deviant women under the regime and question the validity of these.

From a genre perspective, the texts demonstrate the struggles for self-representation that result from normative genre trends and gender politics. In the more traditional autobiographical texts by O'Neill and Doña, this is brought to the foreground through their introductions underscoring the personal struggle to publish amidst a climate of on-going silence and censorship. The narrators deal with this through the choices to publish in exile or using pseudonyms and using archetypal autobiographical narrative traits. By contrast, the more radical texts detailing the stories of Cuevas and Real are both mediated through introductions that serve to situate the narratives within a life writing tradition. In exploring this with relation to my discussion of the construction of carceral subjectivities, I have underlined how genre and textual form intersect with questions of (in)visibilities. Narrative choices thereby call into question the very concept of 'No / Body' subjectivities; through their transgressive and radical narrative acts, the texts that comprise this corpus invite a reconsideration of 'No / Body' visibility that serves to interrogate the self-representative strategies these women have, or do not have, at their disposal and the politics of this within dominant social discourses of genre, gender, and representation.

Mapping the constructions of female prisoner subjectivities through the

concepts of invisibility, visibility, and beyond visibility demonstrates how the texts do not merely serve to replicate or reject paradigms of female political prisoner representation and subjectivity. Rather, as the complex web of constructions demonstrates, such paradigms and discourses begin to be problematised and interrogated in and of themselves. Indeed, read as a narrative corpus, the texts serve to interrogate the discourses and factors that contribute to the (in)visibilities of the female political prisoner as 'No / Body'. Nevertheless, the disruption of normativities and social discourses interpellating a 'No / Body' subjectivity only goes so far: sexualities and more positive corporeal readings of the female prisoner are strikingly absent from the narratives. In the following chapter I discuss further this concept of female prisoner corporeality through an analysis of the abject Other as depicted within the texts. This focal point provides a different perspective on the question of constructions of subjectivity and objectivity, particularly within a context of such potent paradigms of femininity, the body, and the nation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Othering the Object / Abjectifying the Other**

The focus of this chapter is the representation of the prisoner as abject, object, and Other within the source texts. Using the Kristevan concept of abjection alongside the notion of the Other, integral within the construction of subjectivity, I explore the narrative portrayals of the prisoner object, with particular reference to the question of corporeality. These portrayals are centred in the disciplinary and punitive treatment of prisoners, including sexual and physical torture, emotional abuse, and the denigration of prisoner subgroups by both authorities and fellow inmates. Common to these behaviours is the overarching focus on the female body as the site and source of transgression. Such treatments thereby served to reproduce social discourses of belonging in which sexual purity, corporeal containment, and morality were all conflated with Nationalism and Francoism. Through torture and physical abuse, the female prisoner is reduced to an embodiment of grotesque anti-Francoism, as illustrated within the narratives' depictions of the female prisoner as abject, object, and Other. This chapter thus builds on the ideas already discussed in the previous chapters on context and subjectivity, which are considered here with reference to the specific corporeal

renderings of the female political prisoner under Franco. By exploring these images through the theoretical constructs of the Other and the abject, I emphasise the central position of corporeality for the female prisoner and attend to how this is addressed in differing ways within the narratives.

Twentieth-century theorists argue that the notion of the Other forms a constituent element in the construction of the subject. According to Lacan, it is only through alienation with and separation from the Other that the subject can secure their position in the symbolic (Homer, 2004: 72).<sup>83</sup> In the same vein, Butler uses Hegel's concept of the Other as a means for the subject to know themselves. She argues that, as Salih affirms, self and Other are 'not only intimately related to each other; in fact, they *are* each other, and it is through their mutual recognition that they bring each other into being' (Salih, 2003: 28). Additionally Levinas proposes the notion of 'outside the subject' (1994: 3) through which he declares that 'the event of the being [...] passes over to what is other than being' (1981: 3).

This question of the Other is particularly inherent in discursive constructions of subjectivity and identity. Referencing Levinas, Loureiro argues that autobiographical subjects are 'a response to the Other' (Loureiro, 2000: 4),

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<sup>83</sup> Lacan distinguishes between Other capitalised, and other in lower case: the lower-case other is 'whole, unified or coherent egos, and as reflections of ourselves they give us the sense of being complete whole beings' (Homer, 2004: 70), whilst the upper-case Other is 'that absolute otherness that we cannot assimilate to our subjectivity. The big Other is the symbolic order' (Homer, 2004: 70). 'It [unconscious desire] is the *discourse of the Other*' (Ibid.). This distinction seems to portray 'other' as that which is constructed as a coherent ego, whilst Other refers to the symbolic order, 'the discourse and desires of those around us' (Homer, 2004: 70). In this chapter, the term Other has been selected for use throughout; this refers to and combines both aspects of Lacan's distinction between his two conceptualisations of 'other'.

stating that the 'other is absolute exteriority, and the originary, constituting relationship of the self with the other takes place in the nonspace of this unbridgeable, radical separation' (Loureiro, 2000: 6). Similarly, González-Allende examines group identities as regards the Other; he contends that these are forged on the basis of opposition to the 'foreign' such that "nosotros" becomes "no-a-otros" (González-Allende, 2010: 194). These discursive examples of the construction of subjectivity through the Other form a central component within this chapter, which I analyse further through the notion of abjection.

Coined by Julia Kristeva, abjection refers to the process of expelling the Other as a means to constitute the self or subject. She recounts:

I experience a gagging sensation and, still farther down, spasms in the stomach, the belly. [...] *nausea* makes me balk at that milk cream, [...] "I" want none of that element, sign of their desire; "I" do not want to listen, "I" do not assimilate it, "I" expel it. (Kristeva, 1982: 2-3)

The abject is thus that which is expelled yet constantly present; neither subject nor object, it poses a constant threat to the borders of the self (Kristeva, 1982: 3). I use this concept to analyse the narratives' representations of the female prisoner as Other. This focus on constructions of Otherness serves to highlight the interplay of discourses of being and belonging under Francoism and how these inform and are implicated within the texts.

Throughout this chapter I consider the portrayals of prisoners as abject bodies and beings and the significance of these images to the narratives. I begin by exploring the place of physical abuse within female punishment, highlighting how

disciplinary mechanisms constitute a process of abjection whereby the prisoner is rendered inherently Other and abject. By considering narrative portrayals of violence and sexual abuse wrought on the prisoners, I highlight both the socio-political treatment of inmates and the narrative representations themselves as forms of abjection. I analyse these narrative representations, which replicate the process of Othering, as a response to trauma: narrative abjection provides a means to simultaneously make the invisible visible, whilst excluding it from the discursive construction of the subject. In this section I focus on the two issues of death and the corpse, and rape and sexual abuse, both of which invade and infect the narratives in differing manners. In the second half of the chapter, I consider the violence of the abjection of the prisoner by fellow inmates themselves. Here I explore the representation of prisoners as made abject in particular by their perceived sexual deviance. Examining the issues of prostitution, masturbation, and lesbianism through the notions of disgust, the Other, and abjection, allows me to highlight how the texts - to varying extents - use social ideologies of decrepitude associated with the 'puta roja' to depict fellow prisoners as abject. This replication of social attitudes provides the narrators with a means for constructing and protecting their own subjectivities. Additionally, by highlighting how the narratives frame the conservative preoccupation with moral sexuality within contexts of Communism and Republicanism, I problematise binaries and the condemnation of the Other. As I conclude, this examination of the representations of prisoners as Other through the notion of abjection emphasises how the constructions of female

carceral subjectivities are compounded by social discourses and ideologies of corporeality, which the texts replicate and interrogate in their responses to trauma and silence.

### ***Violence on the body***

The physical Othering of 'rojas' and non-National-Catholic women was intrinsic to the dictatorship's endeavour to rebuild the nation by annihilating pernicious social elements. This was achieved by social segregation in prisons and by the reduction of the female body to the physically grotesque through torture and violence. As a result, such treatment served to render marginal women inherently and explicitly deviant and abject in terms of their decrepit corporeality. Violent torture thereby constituted an essential aspect of the condemnation of these women, reducing them to corporeal disgust and making them a threat to the body politic of the nation. Experiences of torture were daily fare for inmates, as highlighted by the depictions punctuating the narratives stating

[l]a llevaban a la "siberia"; en aquella parte las torturas alcanzaban cotas alucinantes; allí se aplicaban las corrientes eléctricas y de esa habitación, desnuda, adornada nada más que con aparatos de tortura, habían sacado a muchos compañeros muertos. (Doña, 1978: 118)

La torturaron bárbaramente y entre las cosas que le hicieron fue meterla en un baño y aplicarle corrientes eléctricas en los pechos. (Cuevas, 2005: 69)

La desnudaron del todo. La hicieron subir encima de una columna como un pedestal y la hicieron quedar allí de pie, rígida. [...] Se pasaron toda la noche así. Ella se caía de la columna al suelo. Y ellos la hacían levantarse y la

subían otra vez. Después, por la mañana, la cogieron y la metieron en una pileta de ducha, dieron el agua y la tuvieron 24 horas desnuda debajo de la ducha de agua fría. (García, 1982: 96)

These passages use emphatic language to demonstrate the barbaric abuse of inmates through 'cotas alucinantes', rendering them dehumanised and grotesque in extremely physical ways.<sup>84</sup> Real's image of a figure 'encima de una columna [...] de pie, rígida' particularly highlights the simultaneous corporealisation and dehumanisation of the prisoner, who is reminiscent of a distorted and decrepit classical statue. In *The Body in Pain* (1985), Scarry examines this destruction of the self through torture; she argues that the physical annihilation of the body causes the eradication of the self (Scarry, 1985: 35-36). The tortured individual is thus separated from subjectivity and rendered inherently Other. Scarry additionally posits the objectification of pain, which results in the objectification - and subsequent de-subjectification - of the individual. Read with reference to these concepts, the narratives' representations of torture illustrate the Othering of female prisoners by the state. Indeed, the references to bodies that are 'desnuda, adornada nada más que con aparatos de tortura' and 'de pie, rígida' seem eradicated of humanity through the acts of torture.

Further treatments reinforce this dehumanising Othering of inmates. Real

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<sup>84</sup> González-Allende highlights how the depictions of the cruelty of the other side is a means of Othering the perpetrators (2010: 199-200). Such depictions can be read as condemnations of the Francoists - particularly given the de-personalised representations of the authorities. An analysis of this Othering falls beyond the scope of this thesis, however, it should be noted that such depictions constitute simultaneous representations of Othering that disrupt questions of border, subjectivity, and belonging.

highlights the bestialization of prisoners, describing the harrowing experience of one woman:

[a] esta mujer le habían colgado por los pies de un gancho de carnicero y la Guardia Civil la había desnudado como su madre la había parido, una mujer bajita y gordita. Y toda la grasa de los costados se la habían cortado de cada lado, no de un tajo, ¡eh!, no de un tajo, filete a filete. Quiero decir que no lo pasó de una vez. Con vida esa mujer y colgada por los pies como un cerdo, y filete a filete. Una mujer tremendamente gruesa, y la grasa de los costados filete a filete. (García, 1982: 150-151)

Such treatment renders the prisoner animalised, as a piece of meat; this is emphasised through the images of butchery that describe her 'colgado por los pies de un gancho de carnicero [...] desnudado [...] cortad[a] [...] filete a filete'. She is thus reduced to ravaged flesh and separated further from humanity. The act of slicing her flesh provides a visceral image of the penetration and dissolution of the subject's boundaries by the torturer's knife. This comprises a literal representation of the abjection wrought on the prisoner. Real additionally underscores the results of this violence: hanging from a meat hook, the prisoner constitutes a figure that is neither solely human nor animal. Instead she encompasses a liminality that reflects that of the abject, which according to Kristeva is neither subject nor object.

Doña's text also represents the results of violence through descriptions of the prisoners' tortured bodies. Doña makes such comments as 'estaba débil, agotada, enferma; [...] su pobre cuerpo herido y tumefacto' (Doña, 1978: 101). She thus highlights the destruction of the body and the self through violence, as is particularly emphasised by the separation of 'ella' and 'su pobre cuerpo'. In a later image, Doña further illustrates the dehumanisation of the tortured subject,

describing prisoners as ‘desnuda, adornada nada más que con aparatos de tortura’ (Doña, 1978: 118). Such grotesque depictions highlight the Othering of the prisoners through torture by employing a language of dehumanisation. This is further evidenced in references to the foreign and monstrous, as Real particularly illustrates in her description:

[e]staba hecha tal monstruo que a los nueve meses aún no me quería reconocer el médico. El médico de la cárcel me reconoció al año.... Echaba de mi cuerpo unos muñones de sangre coagulada, cuajarones, que pesaban un kilo y medio kilo. Cosas monstruosas echaba de mi cuerpo. [...] Y date cuenta que me venía el periodo cada quince días y cada quince echaba dos o tres muñones de esos. (García, 1982: 95)

In this passage, she highlights the grotesque results of torture by referring to herself as ‘hecha tal monstruo’. This emphasises how violence is a means of Othering the prisoner. Here Real’s comments portray her own body through a language of disgust that additionally imposes a problematic separation between body and self. She describes how ‘cosas monstruosas echaba de mi cuerpo’, which constitutes a literal and literary depiction of abjection: her body expels the grotesque which she then further excises through an impersonal description. The reference to ‘muñones de sangre coagulada, cuajarones’ constitutes a vile image of that which does not belong, particularly when read in conjunction with the phrase ‘echaba de mi cuerpo’. This comprises a representation of the abject’s threat to life and to the body continent. Such a depiction thus highlights the physical destruction of both the body’s functioning and its wholeness. In crossing the boundaries of corporeality, these ‘muñones’ are a threat to the notions of subjectivity and being,

as well as to the body's physicality. They not only indicate physical decrepitude, they infiltrate and destroy, both literally and figuratively, the very foundations of the subject as a coherent whole, which Real responds to through a language of separation and disgust. Moreover, references to the coagulated blood excised from her battered physique provide a depiction of the break down and rupturing of corporeal borders.

The texts additionally portray the prisoners as dehumanised and pathologised. They describe the 'profusión de sudores y cuerpos, día y noche' (O'Neill, 2003: 68) of the women who 'no sabíamos los nombres ni nos importaban' (O'Neill, 2003: 71). Real explicitly affirms the pathologisation of prisoners in her declaration 'es que en la cárcel, cuando ya llevas cuatro o cinco años, ya empiezas a tener características de enferma, ya eres una enferma' (García, 1982: 145). This provides a generalising statement that homogenises the prisoner group. The use of the second person is further significant as it serves to separate her from the inherently sick figure of the prisoner. Real's statement highlights a cause and effect process whereby the individual becomes explicitly ill through incarceration. She thus portrays imprisonment itself as a mechanism for rendering the prisoner Other. By using the verb 'ser' this is demonstrated as permanent. Moreover, she further imposes the state of Otherness by separating herself from the pathologised prisoner through the use of the verb in the second-person.

The abject horrors of torture are juxtaposed by the perceived normality of such acts. Doña describes, 'la funcionaria y el médico lo miraron con la mayor

naturalidad; estaban acostumbrados a ver cuerpos maltratados salvajemente' (Doña, 1978: 108). Through the gaze of the medics, Doña outlines the objectification and dehumanisation of the human body through torture. The reaction 'miraron con la mayor naturalidad' is especially emphatic due to the preceding description of 'las llagas abiertas de los muslos y una herida en la rodilla con gran hinchazón y los bordes purulentos [...] la espalda y los riñones a tiras amoratadas y violáceas' (Doña, 1978: 108). Indeed, the portrayal of the prison authorities as unperturbed by the image of a battered body can be read as exemplifying the authorities' objectification of pain and the body through torture. By highlighting this objectification and the perceived normality of such violence, Doña thus emphasises how torture constitutes a process through which the prisoner is rendered and treated as an object. This objectification of the subject and the quotidian nature of violence are mirrored within the narratives, which employ dehumanised depictions and a blunt, abrupt style. They refer to the inmates impersonally, referencing 'la' and 'una mujer'. In depicting such brutalities in this manner the texts enforce a rupture between experience and individual that expels these experiences of torture from their self-constructed subjectivities. This in itself is an example of abjection whereby the narrators expel trauma from their sense of self. By rendering the experiences Other, the narratives control their self-representations whilst simultaneously and problematically serving to Other the tortured prisoner. In this respect, the de-personalised portrayals of torture and abuse can be read as examples of abjection as a response to trauma that allows

both visibility and representation, separation and distancing.

### **Corpses and death**

For Kristeva, the corpse is the example par excellence of the abject; she affirms that it is 'death infecting life' (1982: 3). Amidst the quotidian threat of torture and execution, Franco's prisoners experienced death's infection of life on a daily basis as a result of violence, punishment, and the harsh conditions of their incarceration. This prevalence of the macabre is apparent throughout the narrative depictions of cadavers and lifeless bodies. In a particularly brutal passage, Doña describes

[e]n medio de la habitación, colgado por los pies y con la cabeza hacia abajo, pendía un hombre completamente desnudo. Por distintas partes de su cuerpo brotaba la sangre. La cara congestionada, violácea, los ojos completamente abiertos, parecían salirse de las órbitas. Le rodeaban tres o cuatro individuos en mangas de camisa. [...] Los labios de él no se movieron. Leonor creyó que nunca más podría moverlos. Empezaron a azotarle y aquel atormentado, en un supremo esfuerzo, les escupió a la cara. Entonces parecieron fieras. Le golpearon de tal forma que uno de ellos dijo. -Le vamos a matar y no le sacaremos nada. Descansad.

No dio tiempo a ella [Leonor]. Del pene del hombre brotó un chorro de sangre que salpicó a Leonor y de su garganta un estertor [...] Cuando le descolgaron ya no tenía vida. (Doña, 1978: 118)

Her vivid description illustrates the extent of the torture and violence enacted on the prisoners. In death, the lifeless hanging figure embodies the ultimate objectification of pain and the eradication of the self that Scarry argues are the

consequences of torture.<sup>85</sup> Even whilst still alive the man is presented as an anonymous, lifeless being; Doña refers to him simply as ‘un hombre completamente desnudo’ and thus strips him of his identity and individuality. As such, her narration replicates the guards’ Othering of the prisoner that is enforced through the physical and emotional destruction of him as a subject. This is further compounded by the dehumanisation of the man in hanging him from his feet like a carcass. The details of the passage can be further examined with reference to abjection. By emphasising the dripping blood and bulging eyes, Doña’s description constitutes an image of the dissolution of corporeal boundaries through torture and violence. As a leaky body from which ‘brotaba la sangre’, the man embodies the threat to corporeal borders and subject completeness caused by abjection; the man is rendered the abject. The brutal descriptions further engage with the abject’s blurring of subject/object boundaries by portraying him as neither dead nor alive. Indeed, the guards treat him as both animate subject and inanimate object: they regard him as both a subject to be punished and an object for such punishment. Moreover, his body, as a vessel for their rage and violence, is an object that provides a means of instilling fear in and further torturing Leonor. Her response to such an horrific sight is described in the following manner: ‘miraba horrorizada. Era tanto su miedo y estupor, que después del primer grito quedó callada, inmóvil, paralizada’ (Doña, 1978: 118). She is thereby rendered paralysed, immobile, at the

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<sup>85</sup> See Scarry (1985: chapter 1).

sight of the prisoner. Her reaction demonstrates how the corpse-like figure of the dying man permeates the living. In describing such horror, Doña's narrative provides a projection of Francoist brutality that transcends the silencing and censorship of the regime's treatment of those deemed abject. She thereby visualises the abjection of the prisoner, however, in doing so, she also replicates this process through the image of the man as inherently Other.

The other narratives contain further descriptions of brutally tortured bodies destroyed by incarceration. Cuevas describes the demise of one woman's decrepit body:

La bomba de cobalto se había ensañado con su pecho, lo tenía en carne viva y ya no olía nada bien. [...] Había perdido la vista, el olfato y era tal el olor que hacía al estar gangrenada que para entrar en la habitación nos teníamos que poner careta. (Cuevas, 2005: 71)

Like Doña's passage above, this depiction emphasises the eradication of corporeal borders, particularly through the gangrenous open wounds, which provide a representation of the penetration of life and the dissolution of boundaries and borders caused by the abject. Cuevas further draws attention to this through the statement that those entering the room needed a 'careta' as protection from the impregnating stench of death that literally traverses corporeal boundaries in entering the nasal cavity. O'Neill portrays the cadaverous body of a fellow hospitalised inmate in a similar way:

[...]a Gallega, tendida en el lecho, sahumada de cloroformo, acribillada por las agujas de los sueros, era más cadáver que muchos cadáveres; con su media lengua, más tartajosa, me dijo que sufría mucho. (O'Neill, 2003: 142)

By referring to her as ‘más cadáver’ she emphasises the brutal, abjectifying consequences of imprisonment. ‘Más cadáver que muchos cadáveres’, the Gallega is neither dead nor alive, neither fully subject nor object; rather she is rendered irreducibly abject. In depicting this, the texts provide a space for the abject that highlights the treatment of the prisoners; problematically, however, these representations also permeate and infect the narratives themselves. As a constant presence throughout the narrative corpus, such abjection is illustrative of Kristeva’s definition of it as that which cannot be assimilated nor expelled (1982: 3). The narratives are marked by the continued appearance of the grotesque and thus rendered abject in themselves.

Death’s penetration of life is further reflected in the constant presence and threat of capital punishment, which represented a daily reality for many political prisoners. Indeed, historians estimate that some 140,000 inmates died behind bars between 1939 and 1944, including upwards of 50,000 prisoners executed following court cases (Gómez Bravo, 2010: 6).<sup>86</sup> Consequently, inmates witnessed nightly ‘sacas’ and executions, as Doña explains:

de pronto... ¡Otra vez!, el “ta, ta, ta”, no quiso contar los tiros de gracia. Se tapó la cabeza con la manta para no oír los lamentos de las mujeres que no sabían si en esos momentos estaban cayendo sus hombres. [...] Nueve meses de fusilamientos diarios, ¿cuántos habían caído ya? (Doña, 1978: 107)

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<sup>86</sup> As Gómez Bravo states, numbers of legal and extralegal executions within Franco’s prisons are impossible to confirm. This is especially the case for female prisoners given the law’s refusal to grant women political status as inmates.

Like the corpse infects life, the daily executions also penetrate the experiences of incarceration, both for those given the death penalty and those serving finite sentences. The sounds of the executions infiltrate the prison and the lives of the prisoners, providing a constant reminder of death. Significantly, the term capital punishment is not used; the narratives instead prefer euphemisms, referring to 'saca[s]' (Cuevas, 2005: 90) and 'la Pepa' (Ibid., 164). As Cuevas confirms, 'a la pena de muerte la llamamos la "Pepa", e incluso se sacó un [sic] canción: "Es la Pepa una gachí..." (Ibid.). Such language provides the inmates with a means for distancing themselves from the harsh realities of Francoist incarceration. In so doing, however, these statements constitute a form of silencing the truth that replicates both the literal eradication of the prisoner through death and their figurative demise in censorship and historical amnesia. Doña's reference to Leonor covering her head with the blanket demonstrates a similar reluctance to confront the reality and inevitability of the pains of execution. This pain is not caused by death itself, but rather its penetration, or infection, of life, that lends their experience of the carceral a rather nebulous quality: through death's presence the inmates are forced to straddle the boundaries of life and death. This existence has severe consequences for the prisoner, as Cuevas illustrates:

[d]icen que estoy enferma del corazón... cuando estás condenada a muerte y ves que llegan y ¡fulana de tal! Y no sabes si detrás de las que nombran vas tú... Llegaban las seis de la tarde y ya no sabías si te dolía el corazón, si te dolía la cabeza, si te dolía el estómago. Ya no podías estar, ni hablar con nadie, porque las compañeras querían animarte y hablar contigo y pensabas: "si a lo mejor sólo me quedan unas horas de estar aquí..." ¡Madre mía! Era una locura y así un día y otro, una noche y otra y así durante seis

meses. Ése es el mayor tormento y sufrimiento que puede tener un ser humano por muy malo que haya sido, con estar veinticuatro horas condenado a muerte ha pagado todo el mal que haya hecho. Yo estuve seis meses, mi hermana un año así que no me extraña que estuviera como un bicho. (Cuevas, 2005: 66)

This passage demonstrates the effects of living alongside the daily threat of death through a language of illness. By listing bodily aches, the extract highlights the objectification and corporealisation of pain that renders the prisoner abject Other, as particularly emphasised through the statement 'ya no podías estar'. Using the verb 'estar' further emphasises the state of transience for the abject subject/object. Moreover, this depiction emphasises how the infection of life destroys the prisoner - making her 'un bicho'. Nevertheless, *Presas* also contains references to execution that portray death through a lexicon of vindication. Cuevas refers to examples of prisoners who 'salían con el puño en alto' (2005: 37) and who declared 'a mí me fusilan pero con el carnet del Partido en la mano' (Ibid.: 45). These actions of pride and resistance demonstrate how the prisoners used their bodies, even in death, for vindication and thus reclaim the abject through its very infection of their lives and narratives.

### **Rape and sexual abuse**

The conflation between sexual and political transgression resulting in the association militia-whore was widely accepted and resulted in the prisoners being

perceived as 'putas'<sup>87</sup> and, moreover, subjected to brutal sexual abuse. As Herrmann highlights, this abuse 'could be justified since the women were "whores" to begin with' (2012: 133). Such treatment formed an ideological circle of sexual deviance: the women are viewed as whores, and as a result, treated thus, thereby recreating and confirming the original perception of them as whores (Price, 2001).<sup>88</sup> This cycle of abuse constituted a part of the daily lives of the female prisoners, as Doña highlights by describing it as 'el pan nuestro de cada día [...] Era verdad, las violaciones eran el pan nuestro de cada día, [...] Se las violaba en las comisarías, en los centros de falange, en las cárceles de los pueblos, en la calle y hasta en sus mismas casas' (Doña, 1978: 158-159). Such statements affirm the quotidian nature of this abuse, which penetrates the everyday and extends beyond the prison walls. Rape is therefore portrayed as inevitable for the prisoners. This commonality is countered by Doña's depictions of brutality:

es que esto es alucinante, una de ellas es nada más que una anciana de setenta años, viuda desde hace más de treinta. Sus violadores la dijeron: "abuela, la vamos a deshollar, lo debe tener lleno de telarañas", y la forzaron entre cuatro, junto a ella viene una niña de dieciséis años que la han traído en una silla, a ésta la han violado entre ¡nueve! (1978: 158-159)

This description highlights the grotesque treatment of prisoners by the guards.

Doña further emphasises the significance of such sexual violence, stating,

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<sup>87</sup> The prisoners are referred to as 'putas' (García, 1982: 150), 'zorras' (Doña, Juana, 1978: 114), 'unas putas' (Doña, Juana, 1978: 116), and 'putas de Negrín' (Cuevas, 2005: 101).

<sup>88</sup> Price references this notion as originally coined by Smith (1990); see further Price (2001).

el abuso de poder de los hombres sobre las mujeres, en estas circunstancias adquiriría proporciones dramáticas, las llamadas “rojas” eran menos que nada para los machos fascistas. Las violaciones a las detenidas, nada tenían que ver con el deseo sexual, era simplemente un acto de poder y humillación, el sadismo de sentir debajo de ellos, unos cuerpos que se desgarran de horror en un acto que está hecho para el placer. Era la afirmación machista, ahí estaba si no esa anciana de setenta años para demostrarlo. (Ibid.)

According to O’Neill, ‘se las llevaban; las violaban en el campo; caían sobre ellas, uno después de otro, como perros. Unas morían en la brega; a otras las mataban’ (O’Neill, 2003: 68). Such depictions underline the dehumanisation of the prisoners through rape. Additionally they draw attention to the consequences of sexual violence, as Doña states: ‘cuando las mujeres eran detenidas el primer temor era el de la violación y lo que añadía mayor horror a las violaciones, eran las consecuencias’ (Doña, 1978: 158-159). This fear reiterates the reduction of women to the female body and its reproductive function. On account of rape, this reproductive function, deemed the essence of femininity, becomes a means for further punishing the prisoners.

Such references to the physical and emotional consequences of rape as an act of power can be read with reference to analyses of rape in war explored through the notion of abjection. War rape has been examined in the contexts of contemporary global conflicts<sup>89</sup> through theories of abjection and Othering.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> In such places as Yugoslavia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Iraq, as well as recent events in India and Afghanistan.

<sup>90</sup> See especially Diken and Bagge Laustsen (2005); Eisenstein (2007); Koo (2002); Price (2001); Victoor (2011); Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1996); and Zarkov (2007).

Indeed, critics have posited war rape as a means to negate the enemy (Price, 2001), destroy communities (Diken and Bagge Laustsen, 2005: 117), and shame and humiliate (Victoor, 2011). By forcibly penetrating the female body, rape constitutes a border crossing 'par excellence', (Diken and Bagge Laustsen, 2005: 121) that threatens the boundaries of selfhood. This penetration irreducibly marks the female body as a site of shame and victimhood, ensuring the social exclusion of the raped woman. Within the context of national and political borders, as Diken and Bagge Laustsen highlight, 'bodily margins cannot be understood in isolation from other margins' (Diken and Bagge Laustsen, 2005: 126). The female body therefore becomes a battlefield for contesting boundaries and identities; through rape the victor constructs himself as all-powerful and physically and figuratively neuters the vanquished (Price, 2001; Victoor, 2011). The quotations cited above can be considered with reference to these points in order to illustrate how sexual violence renders the prisoner abject. Indeed, the raped woman as abject is further reflected through the rhetoric of shame, humiliation, and Otherness as demonstrated by referring to the prisoners in the third person, using anonymity and dehumanization. De-personalization enacts a schism between individual and experience, which serves to re-enact the discourse of invisibility and lost subjectivity of raped women, making her abject and Other.

The dominant discourse of the shamed victim is further demonstrated through narrative silences. Indeed, only the texts by O'Neill and Doña contain explicit albeit limited references to sexual violence, whilst neither Real nor Cuevas

mention this, thereby rendering sexual violence conspicuous in its absence. Hermann argues that this constitutes a 'resounding silence' throughout the corpus of women's prison narratives (2012: 132) which, as texts, reflect the 'puritanical nature of communist memory' (Ibid.: 133). Such an erasure of what Doña considers 'el pan nuestro de cada día' replicates the discursive othering and eradication of raped women within society. The narrative silences constitute invisible markers that disfigure the texts in the same way as rape and its consequences affect the prisoner. These silences thus serve to replicate what Victoor refers to as the discursive Othering within rape narratives (Victoor, 2011: 41; 56; 101), whereby discourses of shame and humiliation are reproduced in the texts' silences. Nevertheless, this can also be framed more positively as a form of agency, as Hermann affirms 'this silence stands in the service of [...] the testimonial subject's determination to retain a dignified sense of agency even in the face of surveillance, deprivation, shame, humiliation, and sadistic mistreatment' (Herrmann, 2012: 133). Exploring these readings of silence in rape narratives, Victoor cites Koo (2002), who differentiates between being silenced by discourse and being silent in discourse (Victoor, 2011: 66). She argues that the former refers to the invisibility of the Other by and through discourse, whilst the latter constitutes a form of agency for the subject who chooses to remain silent within their narrative (Ibid.). From this perspective, textual silences represent narrative agency in the representation of female prisoner subjectivities. This constitutes a strategy for self-protection, self-preservation, and survival that allows the protagonists to deny the most cruel

and brutal experiences of sexual violence. By expelling these experiences from their narratives, they are rejecting the instances of sexual abuse and the status of sexual victimhood. This constitutes an autobiographical form of abjection, in which the inherently Other and abject is excluded from a life narrative. Much like abjection is a means of (re)affirming the penetrated boundaries of the subject, this autobiographical practice of abjection allows the narrators and protagonists to reconstitute female prisoner subjectivities in opposition to the Other and beyond the abject.

### **Degenerate Sexuality**

In portraying the prisoners as Other with reference to dominant social discourses of deviance, the texts demonstrate a concern with 'proper' sexuality, as informed by conservative and Catholic ideology. This construction of a sexual Other runs through the narratives and can also be explored through abjection. Indeed, this is especially apparent within the communist narratives. For the members of the Spanish Communist Party influenced by traditionalist gender politics, this translated into the portrayal and perception of women as 'inferior' even within the party, until the very final years of the dictatorship (Giaine, 2010: 161). Communist rhetoric additionally perceived militiawomen as sexually free (Lannon, 1991: 219). Female members were consequently faced with the need to observe a scrupulous

chastity' (Lannon, 1991: 227-228) and were held 'to more rigid standards of sexual conduct' (Kirschenbaum, 2012: 587). These attitudes were particularly engendered by famed Communist orator Dolores Ibárruri, known as La Pasionaria who constituted a 'powerful image of fierce Communist motherhood' predicated on a 'performance of defiance and self-sacrifice' (Kirschenbaum, 2012: 574-575). This embodied the well-known and idealised model of the grieving Spanish mother,<sup>91</sup> or Mater Dolorosa (Martín Moruna, 2010: 11), who projected 'asexual maternity' (Kirschenbaum, 2012: 575), as encompassed within the figure of the virgin mother. Vehemently denying 'the importance, even the existence, of a private self' (Ibid.: 568), Ibárruri evoked 'the longstanding communist practice of establishing and enforcing normative codes that defined ostensible private behaviors as politically meaningful' (Ibid.: 583). Consequently, the Spanish Communist Party endorsed a model of traditional maternity that served to define Communist femininity. As Osborne declares, 'la sexualidad era juzgada con parámetros de conveniencia política. Desde luego que, en ese contexto, *lo personal sí que era político*' (emphasis in original) (Osborne, 2010). "Proper" female sexuality thereby constituted an essential element for female subjectivity, which is reflected throughout the narratives within their concern for sexual behaviours perceived as 'degenerate', such as lesbianism, masturbation, and prostitution.

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<sup>91</sup> See more, Kirschenbaum (2012).

## Lesbianism

Due to prison's homosociality, lesbian relationships form 'a significant component of the subculture of women's prisons' (Forsyth et al., 2002: 67), even amidst authoritarian, conservative regimes.<sup>92</sup> Examining Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, Overy highlights the 'widespread existence of lesbian relationships between prisoners' (2005: chapter 14); similarly, in the case of Francoism, Osborne affirms that 'las relaciones lésbicas se hallaban presentes a diversos niveles en el universo carcelario' (2009a: 60) and cites 'relatively frequent lesbian episodes told by prisoners' (2011: 518). In such regimes and conservative societies, however, those engaging in lesbian relationships were not only punished by the state; they were also 'victims of [...] prejudices shared by many of the prisoners' (Overy, 2005: chapter 14). The lesbian prisoner was thus doubly marginalised due to her criminality and her sexuality by both authorities and inmates, as is apparent within the source texts.

In spite of Osborne's comment on the frequency of lesbian episodes, female homosexuality is an occasional theme within the narratives: absent entirely from *Presas*, O'Neill and Doña refer to lesbianism once or twice, whilst Real mentions it five or six times. This paucity of references reflects prevailing homophobia and

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<sup>92</sup> In contrast to statistics highlighting that 3.5% of the population self-identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Gates, 2011: 1), Forsythe highlights research stating that 25% of the female prison population confirmed involvement in lesbian relationships during the 1970s and 80s and 30-60% now (Forsyth et al., 2002: 67). Research on these issues, particularly prison sexuality, has prominently been carried out in North America; as a result, these statistics are for this area.

renders lesbianism invisible and non-existent. The texts' passages additionally serve to diminish the issue, stating 'se dieron contados casos de lesbianismo entre las miles y miles de mujeres por delitos políticos que pasaron por las cárceles' (Doña, 1978: 281) and 'nosotras sabíamos que este problema existía y que entre nosotras se dio en casos aislados' (García, 1982: 146). These depictions of 'contados casos' and 'casos aislados' present lesbianism as a rare occurrence and thus expel it from the narratives' representation of prison life. Moreover, the texts additionally associate lesbian relationships with common-law prisoners by confirming 'entre las miles y miles de mujeres por delitos políticos' and 'entre nosotras'. Such statements distance homosexuality from the political prisoners, expelling it as abject.

Real reiterates this abjection by referring to the existence of what she describes as 'un problema generalizado' (García, 1982: 147): she affirms 'donde más se dio fue en Málaga' (García, 1982: 147) and 'en Málaga [...] predominaba el factor [...] lesbiano' (García, 1982: 153). She thus counters her previous statements that diminish and invisibilise the "problem". This contradiction can be explained by her overt separation between common and political prisoners; she declares that lesbianism rarely occurred 'entre nosotras' and thereby limits the issue to common prisoners. Such a separation is particularly highlighted by Osborne, who affirms that 'las sexualidades no normativas, [eran] encarnadas en las presas comunes' (2010: 5). The separation of political and common-law prisoners thus allows her to simultaneously render lesbianism invisible and condemn it as a rife problem.

Abjection thereby provides a means for representation that affords Real the opportunity to both invisibilise and hypervisibilise lesbianism as deviant. This portrayal reflects the very notion of the 'No / Body' as (in)visible and additionally constitutes an important strategy for narrative self-construction whereby the prisoner eschews her 'No / Body' status by displacing it onto an-Other.

This treatment is further demonstrated by the reactions of other inmates towards lesbian relationships. Real depicts how lesbian women are shunned by the prison population, describing the case of one woman who 'vino un día a decirme de una que quería que yo supiese que estaba enamorada de mí [...] y yo le dije: Pues dile que se mantenga a distancia, que como me diga una palabra le salto las muelas' (García, 1982: 187). This behaviour constitutes an emphatic rejection of lesbianism that can also be explored through abjection; by physically and figuratively distancing herself from homosexuality, Real expels the lesbian and renders it abject. Such a response to female homosexuality is especially favoured by the Communist prisoners as a group. As Doña confirms, 'esos contados casos fueron lapidados e hicieron historia: la expulsión, el desprecio y el aislamiento les siguió por donde pasaban' (Doña, 1978: 281). The rejection of lesbianism thus forms a constituent element within the group identities of the political prisoners. Indeed, according to Real

sólo cuando camaradas caían en esto lo discutíamos con ellas, y claro, a esas compañeras se las separaba inmediatamente del partido. Teníamos todas esta postura. [...] la postura era siempre la misma, y la camarada que caía en esto sabía que ella misma se excluía del partido'. (García, 1982: 188)

Through this affirmation, Real demonstrates the group silencing and eradication of lesbianism. This social abjection provides the prisoners with the means for constructing their identities in opposition to the Other. By forcibly expelling the undesirable, in this case lesbianism, the political group both renders the lesbian abject, and serves to establish its own boundaries of collective subjectivity.

Lesbian inmates are further rejected by prison authorities who, according to Real, 'manipulan siempre este vicio' (García, 1982: 153). She argues,

[t]ener esta desviación sexual, o como la quieras llamar, implica estar trincado, agarrado y manipulado por la dirección. La dirección de las cárceles te lo tolera, pero te lo tolera a condición de que les prestes los servicios que ellos necesitan. Y uno de los principales servicios que ellos necesitan es el espionaje de la gente política, esta condición va pareja con el chivateo. (García, 1982: 153)

This illustrates how prison authorities also viewed lesbianism as deviant. By portraying lesbians as spies working against the political prisoners, Real both further degrades and separates these women from the political prisoners. Her language also designates degradation through the terms 'vicio' and 'desviación sexual'. As a result she likens her attitude to that of the Francoist authorities. Consequently she separates herself from her fellow degenerate prisoners and highlights the commonalities between herself and the 'proper' member of society. Such images of degradation and homophobic attitudes highlight Real's construction of a normative subjectivity that is achieved through the abjection of the degenerate.

Disgust is further apparent through references to physical filth and

decrepitude. Real states, 'yo he presenciado en la cárcel marranadas y cosas que no las acepto. Yo he entrado en Málaga en una sala y he encontrado a una tía encima de otra y me han dicho: Oye, si no te gusta te vas' (García, 1982: 146-147). The reference to filthiness and 'marranadas' implies the moral decay associated with female sexuality and incorporates this within the lesbian body. Degenerate physicalisation is developed throughout Real's further depictions, which are equally corporeal: she refers to 'las tortilleras, las que te preguntaban en plan de chungu: ¿Has visto a mi marido? Porque el lesbianismo se daba allí con la cara y el pelo' (García, 1982: 153). Attitude, act, and appearance are all marked by and subsumed within the physicalised lesbian identity of the prisoners. Homosexual physicality is additionally intrinsically linked to corporeal and emotional degradation, to which Real attests:

yo he comprobado, al menos en la cárcel, que esto inducía a la tuberculosis, a las anemias espantosas, a los trastornos mentales. Yo no sé si sería junto con la falta de alimentación, pero ha implicado una degeneración física a pasos agigantados, quiero decir que esta gente tenía un proceso degenerativo más rápido, que era una cosa que se veía, palpable. (1982: 147)

These statements serve to pathologise the lesbian Other as a physically degenerate and corrupt, grotesque body. By focussing on the material, she portrays lesbian decrepitude as tangibly present. This is inextricably linked to the moral and the emotional: 'hay que haber pasado por muchas cárceles para constatar que el homosexualismo en las cárceles va muy raramente ligado a una bondad personal' (García, 1982: 153). Real thus reduces lesbianism to moral and physical

degradation, which allows her to construct and establish her own subjectivity in opposition to these decrepit bodies. Indeed, for Osborne 'el tema de la degeneración es utilizado aquí [...] como una forma de mantener la distancia respecto del lesbianismo de las presas comunes y, de paso, para precaverse contra tales veleidades' (2009b: 112). Real demonstrates this by referring to 'cosas que no las acepto'; she thus avidly rejects female non-normative sexualities, even refusing to give recognition to such forbidden sexualities by refusing to name them. She reiterates this perspective further in the affirmation that 'personalmente la homosexualidad es algo que me produce náuseas, que no lo concibo' (García, 1982: 146). She thus displays a visceral and physical rejection of lesbianism, which can be analysed with reference to Kristeva's declaration that nausea that makes her 'balk at that milk cream' (1982: 2). For Kristeva, this expulsion constitutes the process of abjection, by which "'I" claim to establish *myself*' (1982: 2). Real's reaction of physical disgust is thus a means of constituting her own subjectivity.

Despite making such explicit derogatory comments, however, Real does reconigse her own homophobia, which she attributes to class, education, and cultural context. As she contests,

[e]n cuanto a lo sexual nuestra intransigencia provenía de los prejuicios propios de nuestra educación y de aquel tiempo.

Porque hoy día es una cosa que se justifica, que se defiende esto de la homosexualidad, pero nosotras entonces luchábamos de una forma feroz contra esto. (García, 1982: 146)

She thus exculpates herself by highlighting her cultural roots. Moreover, the texts additionally attribute the denigration of female sexuality to the influence of

Communist ideology. Doña reflects on this, stating ‘en veinte años de represión no habían tenido otras armas más que acorazarse en los “principios”, en la “firmeza” y en la disciplina del Partido’ (Doña, 1978: 280). Regurgitating political diatribe thereby provided the prisoners with a survival strategy predicated on political identity and belonging even amidst the brutal conditions of the Francoist prisons. Indeed, ‘la necesidad de supervivencia [...] generó unos mecanismos de disciplina y organización muy estrictos, que resultaron incompatibles con cualquier expresión de autoerotismo y homoerotismo femeninos’ (Osborne, 2010: 1). Consequently the prisoners enacted extreme sexual self-discipline, as Real and Doña affirm, respectively: ‘[q]uiero decir que hemos querido ser puros, puros, puros’ (García, 1982: 146) and ‘cada una escondía sus flaquezas y se trataba a porfía de ver quién se mantenía más “pura”’ (Doña, 1978: 280). Eschewing female (homo)sexuality thus constituted an act of abjection that afforded the prisoners the chance to construct an identity beyond that of the overtly sexualised and socially denigrated ‘puta roja’. In depicting this, however, the narratives also reflect on their behaviour, concluding that ‘hoy te deprime el pensar que lo más humano hubiera sido el no ser tan exacta’ (García, 1982: 146). Likewise, Doña confirms ‘aquel purismo de años llegó a deshumanizar los rasgos más sensibles de la naturaleza. Era algo monstruoso que en más de tres lustros nunca aflorase ni personal ni colectivamente los íntimos deseos de aquellos cuerpos’ (Doña, 1978: 280-281). Here, Doña uses a language of abjection to condemn the rejection of physical and sexual behaviour as something ‘monstruoso’. This not only illustrates the Othering

of lesbianism by the prisoners, but also their regret for such behaviours.

By contrast, O'Neill demonstrates a differing perspective when describing a lesbian relationship between two prisoners:

Eran dos muchachitas; no habían llegado a los veinte años. Entraron asustadas, temblaban en sus senos débiles [...] Se conocieron en la camioneta de los falangistas; a la hora de la noche; la hora de la redada. Sobre ellas pasaron. Después no las llevaron a la muerte. Las llevaron a la cárcel. Y entraron, las manos en las manos, acurrucándose juntas como hembras heridas. Comieron el rancho en la misma vasija -no había para tantas-, bebían en el mismo bote, se aislaban de todas para hablar en voz baja. Se consolaban, se besaban y limpiaban las lágrimas. Por la noche se iban a dormir al lavadero. Este amor levantó escarnios y pudores entre las honestas madres de familia. Y ellas, al sentirse perseguidas, acechadas, más se amaban. Las otras jóvenes las miraban con miradas reprobadoras y curiosas; quizá envidiosas. Pero para las enamoradas fue más leve el horror que para las otras. Cuando una supo que habían fusilado al padre y al hermano de la otra, sólo en los besos de su amada encontró alivio. Y se besaban con besos llenos de lágrimas; le huérfana recostaba la cabeza sobre el pecho de la amada. En la antigua Grecia, Safo les habría dedicado sus mejores versos. (O'Neill, 2003: 69-70)

This is the most detailed reference to a lesbian relationship within all of the source texts. Rather than replicating the dehumanisation and condemnation of Doña's and Real's narratives, O'Neill humanises the couple as 'muchachitas' and 'hembras heridas'. By presenting these prisoners as victims consoling one another, this passage counters the disgust portrayed by both Doña and Real, and by the 'honestas madres de familia' who received the young women with scorn and persecution. Through this juxtaposition, O'Neill uses the notion of the Other as a means to demarcate her position as distinct from that of her fellow prisoners. In referencing Sappho, she further reiterates her educational and class difference and thus highlights what Osborne refers to as her 'liberal bent, social background, and

career as a writer [, which] seemed to have contributed to her tolerance to sexuality' (Osborne, 2011: 510). Moreover, as Osborne affirms, O'Neill's perspective can be further explained by her lack of political affiliation (2011: 521). Through O'Neill's unique position towards female homosexuality, her text invites the consideration of the enforced implementation of sexuality normativity. By demonstrating empathy where others show scorn and disgust, she additionally questions the relation between tolerance, discourses of normativity, and political rhetoric – most particularly in her position as politically unaffiliated.

## **Masturbation**

Like lesbianism, masturbation<sup>93</sup> is a form of sexual practice that can be engaged in during incarceration, despite the isolation of prison. The autoerotic act, described by Hensley as a response to the deprivation of prison (Hensley et al., 2001: 494) is regarded as both common and stigmatised, within wider society and the prison community (McGaughey and Tewksbury, 2002). Indeed, under Francoism it was especially stigmatised by both Republicans and Nationalists due to the overwhelming influence of traditional Catholic ideologies, which deemed masturbation a degenerate and corrupt act. Consequently, masturbation is

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<sup>93</sup> This is a little-studied aspect of prison life, as is prison sex in general (Hensley, 2002; Hensley et al., 2001: 491, 492)

infrequently mentioned: of the source texts, only Doña and Real allude to this topic. By excluding masturbation from the narratives, they expel autoerotic practices from prison subjectivities as can be demonstrated by the following passage:

[s]i entonces me hubieran dicho, por ejemplo, que la mayoría se masturbaba me hubiera pegado con cualquiera. Hoy comprendo que debía ser así. Pero entonces no lo hubiera admitido. (García, 1982: 146)

In this statement, Real portrays masturbation as a common practice that is silenced by social attitudes. Her confirmation that she 'hubiera pegado' and 'no lo hubiera admitido' reveal her rejection of masturbation. She thus provides a means for expelling the abject, both in terms of the prisoners' daily lives, and of their textual representations. Nevertheless, she does show some development in her thinking by stating 'hoy comprendo que debía ser así' and later stating 'yo he sido posiblemente una de las más torturadas en este sentido por no permitirme el hacerlo' (García, 1982: 146). These statements emphasise her awareness of the functioning of derogatory social attitudes within the construction and (re)production of subjectivities. In commenting on this further, Real attributes her expulsion of "Other sexualities" to what she terms 'este eterno terror mío al cuerpo' (García, 1982: 146). Such a statement portrays a problematic separation between subjectivity and corporeality that Real links to her upbringing and cultural context. Her rejection of her own body and sexuality mirrors her rejection of that in others. Although she recognises the root of her condemnation of female sexuality and the personal and emotional problematics of this, she still emphatically condemns this sexuality in others throughout her narrative. As regards the concept of abjection,

this condemnation serves to expel the non-normative and constitutes a means for Real to construct her self and her surroundings.

Her traditionalist rejection of autoeroticism, which is particularly evident through her obstinacy, her blunt statements, and her threats of violence, is demonstrated further below:

[a] mí la persona que más asco me dio fue una compañera en Segovia, que hacía unas escenitas horribles masturbándose por las noches. Y te despertaba con sus espasmos, y sus cosas, y oías que la funcionaria gritaba: Acabe ya, guarra, más que guarra. Y tú te preguntabas muerta de vergüenza: ¿Sabrá, al menos, quién es? Porque se oía de una forma estentórea. (García, 1982: 147)

Real uses a language of disgust that exposes the view shared by both Communist prisoners and the Francoist prison authorities. The terminology used in referring to 'asco' and 'guarra' highlights the shared preoccupation with moral female sexuality and the denigration of masturbation as decrepit. This provides a stark demonstration of the ingrained nature of traditionalist attitudes towards female sexuality that also serves to liken Real to the authorities and separate her from the prisoner Other. She thus constructs her subjectivity in relation to dominant social norms and in opposition to those contravening these norms - in this case, the masturbating prisoner. The association with physical dirt is particularly illustrative of how solitary sexual acts are perceived as "dirty". Moreover, in engaging in such activity, the subject becomes tainted and filthy herself - as is made apparent through the guard calling her 'guarra'. In addition, the act is portrayed as abject in and of itself insofar as the masturbating subject becomes both sexual subject and

object and thus crosses the boundaries of self and Other. The dissolution of borders and the subsequent abjection of the individual are further demonstrable through the depiction of the prisoner as dehumanised as she spasms to orgasm. Real's description thus serves to inherently Other the prisoner and erect a boundary between herself and the masturbating prisoner. This separation is of particular concern for Real, who emphasises this distinction by questioning '¿[s]abrás [...] quién es?' and thereby demonstrating her need to be separate from, and seen as visibly distinct from this grotesque masturbating body. Indeed, masturbation is deemed so alien to her that she rejects the term, instead using the euphemism 'sus cosas'. In making this statement, Real not only demonstrates her disgust for autoerotic practices, she also silences female sexuality even through her very mention of it; she uses narrative discourse as a means of expelling and rejecting masturbation as abject.

In a similar manner, Doña's reference to masturbation is also veiled by euphemism. She intimates:

Todas se habían endurecido y las cubría una segunda piel recia que no dejaba entrar en su interior las flaquezas bienhechoras. [...] A veces Leonor pensaba que sólo les faltaba el cilicio. [...]

No se perdonaban los errores ni las debilidades, [...] Era algo monstruoso que en más de tres lustros nunca aflorase ni personal ni colectivamente los íntimos deseos de aquellos cuerpos [...]. Ninguna de entre ellas hablaba de sus ansias, de sus deseos, de sus frustraciones. Si alguna más osada, se le ocurría gritar su desventura, lo hacía en plan de chiste o chacota para provocar la risa, como un relámpago fugaz; sentir deseos o hablar de ellos era una "debilidad". A fuerza de esconderlo, se terminó por creer que no se sentía. (1978: 280-281)

Here, Doña makes veiled references to desire and intimacy, which are forbidden

within the prison environment. Nevertheless, unlike Real, she does not voice her disgust for such bodily desires; rather she condemns this prohibition of intimate behaviour, describing it as 'monstruoso'. As a result, she demonstrates an awareness of the intense problematics of such traditionalism. Indeed, by referring to 'el cilicio' she grounds this Communist condemnation of physical intimacy within religious doctrine. Her comments thus invite a consideration of the shortcomings of political rhetoric, which allows for new models of female sexuality.

## **Prostitution**

Post-Civil-War Spain witnessed an influx in prostitution with some 200,000<sup>94</sup> women forced into sex work to survive (Morcillo, 2010: 103; Osborne, 2009b). Irrespective of the regime's inherent Catholicism and its focus on the purity of the nation as encompassed by its female citizens (Richards, 1998: 55), brothels were legal in 1940s Spain.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, prostitution was designated a 'necessary evil' that served to protect the chaste housewives and mothers, with the prostitutes themselves serving as vessels for male virility (Morcillo, 2010: 92). Despite such tacit acceptance, women working as prostitutes were demonised (Platero, 2013),

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<sup>94</sup> Osborne approximates this number of women working in 1940 in brothels and on the streets (Osborne, 2009b: 106).

<sup>95</sup> Prostitution was regulated by the 1941 Patronato de Protección de la Mujer and later abolished in 1956 (Morcillo, 2010: 90-92).

pathologised as physically unfit and mentally-ill social deviants (Morcillo, 2010: 95) and deemed a symbol of 'moral debacle' (Ibid.: 97). 'Fallen women' were thus linked to fallen Spain (Morcillo, 2010: 97), with prostitution associated with the degeneration and decay that had razed the country to the ground. Consequently, prostitution was highly regulated<sup>96</sup> with those women forced to sell themselves facing 'total public humiliation' and 'penance' in Francoist jails and brothels (Morcillo, 2010: 103). Geographically, spatially, and conceptually, prostitution was thus enclosed within liminal spaces and socially separated.<sup>97</sup>

The narratives highlight the high numbers of women detained for prostitution housed alongside the political prisoners. According to Cuevas:

Allí nos mezclaron con las prostitutas, las de estraperlo, las ladronas, había de todo. A veces veíamos cada cuadro que nos daba angustia convivir con aquella gente, [...] aquello no se podía aguantar. Las mujeres de la vida eran un constante entrar y salir, porque pagaban la multa y ya está, las que no podían estaban allí durante ocho, diez o quince días. Eran muy cerdas, hablaban groseramente y se pasaban el día tumbadas en el suelo. (Cuevas, 2005: 147)

This depiction highlights the distinction between political prisoners and common prisoners. By using the verb 'mezclar', Cuevas intimates the mixing of two separate entities, as is further emphasised by terms such as 'convivir' and 'aquella gente'.

Similarly, Real emphasises the mixture of political and common-law

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<sup>96</sup> This was achieved through the social institutions of the Magdalene house, the brothel, and the prison, all of which served to determine and project morality (Morcillo, 2010: 95)

<sup>97</sup> Indeed, several post-Civil War texts reflect this position of prostitution during this period, including *La colmena* (1951) and *Tiempo de silencio* (1962), see Cela (1992) and Martín-Santos (2001).

prisoners, stating '[l]o que más había en estas celdas eran prostitutas y estraperlistas, a las que no despreciábamos, como tú crees, pero que tampoco nos atraían. No las comprendíamos' (García, 1982: 119). Although she attempts to dismiss the animosity between political and common-law inmates, Real constructs a barrier between these two demographics. By stating 'tampoco nos atraían' she emphasises an almost physical separation that keeps the two groups of women apart. This is further underlined through the declaration 'no las comprendíamos', which demonstrates an essential epistemological chasm separating these groups of prisoners. She later reiterates this comment, stating 'yo personalmente no lo asimilaba' (García, 1982: 119). The repetition of this sentiment serves to confirm this distance.

Rosa Estruch's testimony within *Presas* additionally highlights such stratification. After her stay in hospital alongside common-law prisoners, who she describes as 'chicas con un corazón de oro' (Cuevas, 2005: 109), she states '-[a]llí respiré- dice -porque era como si volviese a casa. Encontré de nuevo a mis compañeras, presas políticas como yo' (Cuevas, 2005: 109). This segregation thus presents an insurmountable gulf; Real further describes this within her narrative, stating '[p]orque ellas por un cigarro te vendían su pan. Y tú les decías: ¿Pero no crees que es mejor para ti, para tu cuerpo, que te comas tu barrita de pan?' (García, 1982: 119). She invokes the rhetoric of physical health and education as a marker of difference and thus infers the physical decay encompassed by the figure of the prostitute. By focussing on this physicality, Real links segregation to an inherent

mental and corporeal difference predicated on corruption and disgust.

Referring to the common-law prisoners, Cuevas displays a similar perspective. She emphasises that 'eran muy cerdas, hablaban groseramente y se pasaban el día tumbadas en el suelo' (Cuevas, 2005: 147). This description portrays them as dehumanised and lazy; they are rendered filthy, corrupt bodies. Real similarly likens the prostitutes to physical disgust, declaring: '¿[e]s que tan podridos estamos? ¿Es que tanto hay que tragar? [...] Todo esto a mí me olía mal. Y los hechos me dieron la razón. Porque esto era un síntoma de corrupción, esto no era correcto' (García, 1982: 86). She demonstrates a firm belief in moral correctness, indignantly rejecting prostitution and refusing to accept it; she even refuses to accompany a comrade and his girlfriend, who works as a prostitute, and thus physically and emotionally separates herself from the matter. Moreover, Real's use of language demonstrates a physical, visceral response denying prostitution. She questions 'hay que tragar?' and states 'me olía mal', using colloquial phrases to replicate her rejection of what she terms 'un síntoma de corrupción'. By physically, emotionally, and linguistically demonstrating her rejection of prostitution she refuses the corruption of the self it symbolises. Her references to 'podrido' and 'corrupción' render the prostitute a grotesque, decrepit body, which serve to inherently Other the sex worker as not belonging within the social body, particularly when considered with reference to Miller's notion of disgust as that which does not belong (1998: 4). In fact, prostitution has long been considered symbolic of 'dirt, decay, corruption' (O'Neill and Seal, 2012: 6) with the prostitute

irreducibly “Othered” (Ibid.: 64). Penttinen explores this question through abjection, arguing that by transgressing the boundaries of the heterosexual matrix, the prostitute inhabits a liminal space and is rendered inherently abject (2007: 56). O’Neill and Seal even define the prostitute ‘as body-object and as abject-body’ (2012: 6), arguing that she disrupts the boundaries of subject/object in being both bodily subject and corporeal object. They state:

we find in the cultural history of prostitution that the prostitute is a body-object symbolised by liminality, abjection, commodification and desire. Moreover, this sets up a bifurcation around the bad, fallen, lower-class/under-class, polluted, diseased body in contrast with the good, pure (O’Neill and Seal, 2012: 6-7)

In portraying prostitutes with reference to such disgust, the narratives thus restate the social Othering of the prostitute as a disruptive body. Moreover, in so doing, they replicate this ‘bifurcation’ and use this to construct their own subjectivities in opposition to the Other.

O’Neill also emphasises the stratification between prisoner groups, however from a different perspective. She describes how the prostitutes ‘[e]ntraban llorando, casi siempre, proclamando que “era una vergüenza para ellas y sus familias haber pisado una cárcel”, y nos llenaban de huidizas miradas’ (O’Neill, 2003: 78). By referring to their gaze, O’Neill highlights the fear the prostitutes harboured for the political prisoners. This focus on vision further intersects with the notion of the female political prisoner ‘No / Body’ as grotesquely hypervisible, whilst being invisible, or at the very least, separate. For the women detained for sex work, prison brought with it the necessary encounter with the ‘rojas’, as O’Neill

explains:

[e]n la calle se hablaba de las 'rojas', de las mujeres sin ley, de las mujeres condenadas y perdidas; y allí nos tenían con los ojos sin brillo, hundidos; [...] Frente a ellas, las 'rojas', las tremendas mujeres destinadas al castigo por sus pecados. (O'Neill, 2006: 78-79)

She additionally refers to the behaviour of one prisoner in particular as a means to exemplify the fear of and disgust for the political 'rojas', stating:

y allí estaba Maimona entre 'rojas', como clamaba ella espantada. Le habían hablado de hombres y mujeres con rabo, como bestias del Apocalipsis, capaces de envenenar con su aliento, que no creían en Dios. Maimona no quería que nuestra sombra, en el suelo, se rozara con la suya, y con las miradas de acecho nos buscaba el rabo y los cuernos. (Ibid.: 81-82)

With these two passages O'Neill emphasises the reception of the political prisoners by common-law inmates, as influenced by discourses of disgust perpetuated socially. The influence of such discourses causes the common-law prisoners to separate themselves from the political women. Osborne examines this, declaring:

en las cárceles de Franco se da entonces una curiosa paradoja: mientras que un tipo de presas políticas, en este caso las comunistas de clase obrera, utilizaban argumentos degenerativos, tan viejos como los de Lombroso, para marcar su distancia social respecto de las prostitutas, éstas, al ingresar a las prisiones, se mostraban horrorizadas al pensar que iban a compartir sus días con esas mujeres degeneradas, las presas políticas. (2009b: 113)

As Osborne reiterates here through the use of images of degeneration, the political prisoners regarded the prostitutes as Other, whilst the prostitutes feared the political prisoners as Other. In clinging to the socially perpetuated notion of the "roja", the prostitutes resort to a process of abjection through which they construct

their own subjectivities. Equally, the political prisoners engage in a similar process. In drawing attention to this mutual fear and Othering, O'Neill additionally highlights the very process of abjection and Othering. Her statement that 'en la calle se hablaba' serves to contextualise the notion of abjection within dominant societal discourses. O'Neill further portrays these social attitudes as not only unfounded, but as absurd, by referring to the fear of prisoners 'capaces de envenenar con su aliento'. Her almost farcical representation of Maimona as 'espantada' condemns the social discourses of Othering and problematises the uptake of these discourses. Through these references to the stratification amongst prisoners, O'Neill thus dispels the representation of inmates as deviant beasts.

In contrast to the notion of segregation, O'Neill also demonstrates how the groups of prisoners come together. She states,

[p]asaban los días, siempre había una mano que les brindaba amistad, una sonrisa de consuelo, una palabra de esperanza; y las que llegaban, sin saber, un día nos tenían piedad. [...] entonces ellas se convertían en 'rojas'. (O'Neill, 2006: 78-79)

She thus affirms that common-law and political prisoners did establish friendships whilst inside, as Osborne confirms, 'no se manifiesta en ningún momento la necesidad de mantener una distancia' (Osborne, 2009b: 114). O'Neill's depictions of such friendships separates her perspective from that typically demonstrated by her fellow political inmates. Moreover, her description constitutes an image of transgressive border-crossing between prisoner groups; the inmates contest segregation through a process of de-Othering whereby they are brought together.

O'Neill narrative thereby serves to interrogate the uptake of social discourses of belonging and the Other.

This is further developed through O'Neill's more sympathetic descriptions of prostitution under Francoism. She describes in great detail:

[e]n los prostíbulos, militares falangistas y falangistas civiles descargaban la lujuria en las torturas que infligían, en la sangre que derramaban, todo de brochazos violentos, con las prostitutas, que colocaban desnudas en filas y golpeaban con las fustas [...]. Las borracheras despertaban instintos infrahumanos; los señores que al día siguiente, durante horas y horas, presidían los consejos de guerra iban a buscar en los lenocinios no la lujuria que el hombre no se atreve, o no le interesa, solicitar de su esposa, sino algo más complicado y prohibido, pero que dejaba de serlo porque ninguna mujer se atrevía a protestar; la amenaza de ser considerada como 'roja' era demasiado terrible. Dueños y dueñas [...] les reían las gracias cuando se limitaban a romperles la vajilla, arrojar muebles por el balcón o torear en calzoncillos a las mujeres [...]

Tuvimos allí una que nos mostró un seno con cuatro cicatrices hundidas, como profundísimas viruelas, proveniente de que un juez, que cenaba con ella en su habitación, la hiciera desnudar y le clavara un tenedor en el pecho [...]

Sin pagar se iban siempre, nadie se atrevía a reclamar nada. Y las prostitutas los maldecían y renegaban de ellos (O'Neill, 2006: 79).

She thus highlights the brutalisation of prostitutes by the authorities.<sup>98</sup> For Osborne, these extracts provide vital sociological information in addition to condemning Francoism's attitude towards prostitution (2009b: 114-115). By providing a unique perspective, O'Neill's narrative serves to question the replication of discourses of disgust and Otherness as applied to the figures of the

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<sup>98</sup> The depiction in itself not only reiterates the social Othering of prostitutes, but also portrays Falangists themselves as bestialised Others. This introduces an interesting level of the processes of Othering and abjection that does not fit within this thesis.

prostitute and the “roja”. Despite this, however, she does engage in an intertextual process of Othering, whereby she constructs her subjectivity in opposition to that of the Other political prisoner.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter has examined the representation of inmates as object, abject, and Other within the source texts with particular reference to the Kristevan concept of abjection. This has allowed me to attend to the importance of tangible bodies, borders, and boundaries in the construction of the subject. As I have shown, sexual and non-sexual violence in the hands of prison authorities and fellow inmates alike provided a strategy for Othering, repressing, and eradicating the prisoner. Images of this violence are readily depicted within the narratives and impose ideologies on the subject through the body. They thus highlight the importance of physicality to the construction of subject and object, especially as regards Francoist social discourses. In representing grotesque corporeality, such images also engage with the notion of abjection, which further intersects with the issue of trauma as something that cannot be expelled. As a literary strategy, abjection provides the prisoners with a way to represent their trauma whilst excising it from their depictions of self.

In their common focus on the treatment of the prisoner’s body as a means

for controlling and (re)producing Francoist discourses of female deviance, the texts underscore the significance of corporeality as a political aspect within constructions and representations of carceral and transgressive subjectivities. Through these images, they foreground the position of the female body in national politics, gender politics, and discipline. Across the corpus this is achieved in different ways and with differing consequences. Indeed, although the focus of this chapter has been the corporeal renderings of prisoners as abject and Other, the body is noticeably absent from large parts of Cuevas' *Presas*. Bodily images are in fact limited to the asexual, wounded, ill, or dead. To some extent, then, it is the body that speaks when the individual cannot; in *Presas*, however, this body is made to speak with a prescribed and limited tongue. References to sexual violence and inmate sexualities are conspicuously missing, in a reproduction of the social silencing of female sexual corporeality that underwrites the text with its spectral presence. This also serves to enact a schism between mind and body that, even as a counter to the traditional reduction of women to their bodies, problematically engenders Cartesian dualism. Rather than critically addressing the phenomena of the 'No / Body', Cuevas' narrative thus merely depicts the 'no-body'.

In stark contrast to this, the remaining texts are explicit in their depictions of corporeality. These largely serve to condemn the behaviour of those brutalising the prisoners' bodies as a means to vindicate the prisoners and counter censorship and historical amnesia. In Real's narrative, however, the condemnation of bodies and behaviours extends beyond this to the vilification of the carceral sexualities of

her fellow inmates. As a narrative, this serves to reiterate the political rhetoric of the Spanish Communist Party; for the reader, moreover, the condemnations are juxtaposed against the Francoist disciplining of women in a striking parallel. By reproducing such discourses, *Las cárceles de Soledad Real*, thus constitutes a vocal silencing of female sexualities and corporealities. The bodily images portrayed within Doña's and O'Neill's texts form a very different representation. Although still problematic – Doña replicates the rejection of female intimacy and desire and O'Neill does not address sexual violence – they still provide more complete models of female corporeality.

When taken as a corpus, thus, the narratives offer interrogatory portrayals of the intersections between political rhetoric, gender politics, and the female body, and how these all impact on subjectivity. This is of particular significance for the female political prisoner under Franco, for whom corporeality was both all they had and all that they had lost as the 'No / Body'. In the following chapter I expand upon this question of intersecting discourses of corporeality and subjectivity in my analysis of carceral spatiality.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Space, place, and the 'No / Body' behind bars

This chapter examines the constructions of prison spatiality within the narrative corpus in order to analyse how space and place are constituent elements for female prisoner subjectivities under Francoism. This exploration allows me to consider how discourses of society, subjectivity, and space and place intersect. I thus develop the discussion of subjectivities and corporealities begun within the previous two chapters by situating my analysis within the spatial context of the prison and, more broadly, the Francoist penal state. I particularly engage with this by exploring spatiality as integral within the (re)production of the 'No / Body'. I extend this concept to argue that the Francoist prisons, the regime's carceral archipelago, and, indeed, the prison narratives themselves, all constitute a form of 'No / Place', which interrogate the nature of place in the context of discipline.

My analysis is informed by Hetherington's affirmation that 'space and place are not treated as sets of relations outside of society but implicated in the production of those social relations and are themselves, in turn, socially produced' (Hetherington, 1997: 20). I use 'spatiality' to refer to the overall concepts of space, place, and social meaning, and the study thereof, whilst I differentiate between

'space' to designate physical, geographical location, and 'place'<sup>99</sup> to reference the socio-political meanings and significance of a location, as well as the conceptual.<sup>100</sup> Occasionally, I also use the conjoined term '(s)p(l)ace' to highlight how a location is simultaneously perceived in accordance with both sides of this division. The differentiation between 'space' and 'place' that I employ throughout coincides with Cresswell's explanation that 'place, at a basic level, is space invested within meaning in the context of power' (Cresswell, 2013: location 1894). This theoretical perspective is of central importance to my examination of the intersection of social discourses in spatiality within the context of the regime's punitive society. In this analysis I draw extensively on the work of Foucault and his concept of heterotopia. As Foucault explains, these constitute

real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (1986: 24)

Within this notion of the heterotopia, he outlines the 'heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals,

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<sup>99</sup> Place as a concept has been examined widely by critic Edward Casey, see especially Casey (1997; 1993).

<sup>100</sup> Although such a distinction cannot constitute rigid boundaries, it is useful for highlighting differing conceptualisations of spatiality.

and of course prisons' (1986: 25). Foucault's exploration of heterotopias as spaces of deviance outside of all other spaces is particularly useful when analysing the narrative portrayals of prison spatiality as isolated, enclosed, and stigmatised. This marries well with Augé's notion of the non-place; he explains: '[i]f a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place' (1995: 77-78). He states that non-places are a 'measure of our time', they are 'never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten' (1995: 79). As a concept, the non-place is a phenomenon of modernity that serves to 'create solitary contractuality' (1995: 94) and establish 'the shared identity of passengers' (1995: 101). The non-place is therefore an evocative description of the site of writing and re-writing the subject through societal discourses that has particular poignancy when considered within the context of Francoist discipline. In extending this further, my notion of the 'No / Place' thus refers to a geographical and social location that is at once socially segregated yet irreducibly linked to the social; that is inherently physical yet problematically historically, historiographically, and socially invisible; and that is a site for the construction of the 'No / Body'. The use of the forward slash [/] additionally provides a visual illustration of the rupture and separation encompassed within this understanding of space and place and the implications of this for the subject. I use this concept as a driving element throughout this chapter on the narratives' representations of carceral spatiality.

In the first section, I examine how the narratives depict penal space through images of an architecture of carcerality. I analyse descriptions of the prison as physical with reference to themes of confinement, separation, borders, temporality, and transience and use these to consider the interrelation of the prison as physical space and social place. On a broader level, I additionally consider how the narrative depictions of Francoist carcerality emphasise the microcosmic nature of this for both representations of the regime and for the narrative corpus itself. The second section focuses on the importance of these conceptualisations of space for the prisoner. By exploring the sensual, the corporeal, and the inhabitable, I highlight the interrelation of space and subject, which I develop further by bringing together the questions of 'No / Body' and 'No / Place' to discuss the stigmatised public/private body of the prisoner.

### ***Physical Space / Social Place***

The physical corporeal control and social isolation of the individual both caused by the prison walls are central elements to modern punishment. Indeed, as Foucault affirms, the focus of modern penality is encompassed within this physical deprivation of liberty by way of the institution itself. Carceral spatiality is thereby predicated on discipline. Wilson emphasises:

[s]pace within a prison is no less complex than space in the outside world. It

must be understood in both metaphorical and physical terms, as wide a concept as the entire prison estate, as individual as a cell, as personal as the mental sphere, or as minute as the palm of a hand holding a scrap of paper. Traditionally, prison is spatially constructed as a total institution (Goffman 1961), controlled by physical and metaphorical demarcation (Cressey 1961), where hierarchies of power rule the establishment (Sykes 1970). [...] The removal of bodies from outside public space to inside incarcerative space is utilized by the prison as a primary means of effecting control. From a systems perspective, the institution is bounded by concrete realities of walls and fences, its inmates confined to specific areas, corridors, and cells. (2004: 72)

With this passage, Wilson underlines the significance of the materiality of the prison institution for penalty. Throughout, the narratives demonstrate an overarching concern with carceral spatiality in 'both metaphorical and physical terms'. From a very physical perspective, the narratives depict the prison edifices in great detail. Cuevas describes Ventas prison<sup>101</sup> as:

un edificio nuevo e incluso alegre. Ladrillos rojos, paredes encaladas. Seis galerías de veinticinco celdas individuales, ventanas grandes (con rejas, desde luego), y en cada galería un amplio departamento con lavabos, duchas y wáteres. Talleres, escuela, almacenes en el sótano, dos enfermerías y un gran salon de actos transformado inmediatamente en capilla. En cada celda hubo – según dicen –, una cama, un pequeño armario, una mesa y una silla. (2005: 84)

The precision of this passage constructs the prison as material and tangible within the narrative. From a sociological perspective, this extract provides important socio-historical information regarding Francoist penalty otherwise eradicated through censorship and historical amnesia. This level of detail is also present

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<sup>101</sup> The Madrid prison of Ventas was built in 1931 under the direction of prisons minister Victoria Kent and represented a series of great prison reforms of the period (Twomey, 2013: 74).

across the other works comprising the narrative corpus, which describe 'la terraza que atravesamos por la noche' (O'Neill, 2003: 55) and 'a los lados están las celdas y encima de las celdas las galerías' (García, 1982: 165). These representations serve to visibilise what narratives of history and historical legacy have rendered invisible.

From a further perspective, these descriptions also invoke an architecture of penalty, which includes the features and symbols of carceral space, as well as external and internal carceral structures. Cuevas' reference to the inevitable bars on the windows corresponds with the images of 'las rejas' (O'Neill, 2003: 58), the 'ventana enrejada' (Doña, 1978: 99), 'cerrajazos' (Doña, 1978: 100), and the 'esqueleto de hierro' (O'Neill, 2003: 55) that litter the textual corpus. These constitute images of the confinement, isolation, and separation from society enforced by incarceration within the prison space. The repetition of these objects serves as a leitmotiv underscoring the confinement and separation imposed through the very physicality of the prison with its iron features, barred windows, and locks. In the narratives, these features are portrayed as menacing, violent, and controlling. O'Neill describes, 'las paredes desnudas, de cal vieja y sucia; en lo alto, las rejas; sobre las colchonetas sucias, nosotras' (O'Neill, 2003: 54). The intimate physicality of the space itself is stark and desolate, further emphasising the confinement and isolation engendered by the prison as place.

On a wider level, the descriptions of the prison institution additionally underscore its very carceral, punitive purpose. Real highlights Segovia prison's

‘forma de cruz’, referring to ‘dos calles que se cruzan y a los lados están las celdas y encima de las celdas las galerías. Y en el cruce de las naves hay una cabina donde está siempre la jefa de servicios’ (García, 1982: 165). This depiction portrays the prison with reference to the notion of constant surveillance, which is inherent within punitive discipline, as encompassed by the prison’s very physicality. Equally, O’Neill’s description of the Victoria Grande prison emphasises these architectural and structural features. She declares:

[f]rente a nosotras, la terraza que atravesamos por la noche; era muy grande, al otro extremo había un pabellón mayor, con ventanas sin rejas, tapados los cristales solamente con visillos: la casa del director. A la izquierda distinguíamos las torretas del fortín, con los cañones emplazados contras el mar. [...] No había más que ver [...] Era difícil asearse; era una pequeña habitación, que tenía en el suelo un agujero, el retrete. (O’Neill, 2003: 55)

Here, O’Neil’s focus on the immediate prison surroundings emphasises how physical carceral positioning serves to enforce the principles of discipline. As she describes, the prison is overlooked by the director’s house, on the one side, and a bunker with towers and canons, on the other. The presence of these looming edifices creates a visual illustration of the oppressive, violent, and surveilling spatiality of the prison. These images can be read with reference to Foucault’s description of the panopticon as the paragon of consistent disciplinary observation.<sup>102</sup> By situating these observing structures beyond the prison walls,

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<sup>102</sup> An eighteenth-century concept designed by Jeremy Bentham, the panopticon is a comprised of a circular edifice with a central inspector’s house that gives the impression of constant surveillance

she extends regime discipline beyond the jail to encompass wider society under the dictatorship. This analysis can be explored further with reference to Foucauldian panopticism as an illustration of the wider disciplinary state under Francoism.

Descriptions of the physical prison place further focus on the individual locations that delimit the carceral interior, such as cells and wings, walkways and corridors, and communal spaces such as 'el patio' (García, 1982: 103), 'wáteres' (Cuevas, 2005: 84), 'escaleras' (García, 1982: 100), and 'talleres' (Cuevas, 2005: 84). These references to the individual spaces within the prison institution better construct the prisons' materiality, rendering the prison tangible and spatial. Additionally, they provide vital sociological and historical information about this period. Moreover, these depictions are especially relevant in that they portray the carceral space as explicitly regimented and segregated. As a result, depictions of penal spatiality thereby serve to illustrate the state of the prison within society as both a socially and a physically delimited (s)p(l)ace.

The narrative depictions of punitive spaces also physically extend beyond the prison walls to include the government cells where detainees were questioned and tortured. Disciplinary space thereby begins prior to entering the prison edifice itself. O'Neill especially depicts the details of these spaces, describing

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for those housed within the edifice (Foucault, 1991: Part III, Chapter 3). Examining this notion, Foucault posits that the panopticon extends beyond the prison to include disciplinary institutions and societies in general, see further Foucault (1991: Part III, Chapter 3).

una habitación grande y dividida por un arco en el centro; en la parte de afuera había una mesa, sillas, una librería; en la interior, sin puertas ni ventanas, un banco, un lavabo adosado a la pared y espejo encima. (O'Neill, 2003: 46)

As with her description of the tower and canon behind the prison boundaries, this image illustrates the extension of carceral spatiality. The details of this passage particularly emphasise punishment and confinement through the lack of features including doors and windows. Disciplinary space is additionally rendered violent by the reference to the 'luz agresiva, que se hace más agresiva cuando se convierte en luminaria, como una llama que se concentra en los ojos y la cabeza cansada. Esta luz fija, que abrasa' (O'Neill, 2003: 47). The terms 'agresiva' and 'abrasa' personify the room in a manner that reflects the behaviour of its inhabitants. Spatiality is thereby imbued with the violence and repression of the regime. This portrayal of the very physicality of carcerality serves to emphasise overarching all-consuming nature of discipline under Franco.

O'Neill engages with this further by describing the judicial space of the courtroom:

al abocar a una gran sala me llegaron el aliento y las miradas de mucha gente. Aquello era un consejo de guerra: un estrado con grandes sillones de altos respaldos, ocupados por figuras de hombres de uniforme. Sobre ellos, en la pared, el Cristo en cruz, los retratos de Franco y José Antonio y la bandera monárquica. [...] Ante ellos una mesa larga; a la derecha, frente a ellos, otra pequeña, allí estaba mi defensor; a la izquierda, otra mesita y otro hombre, el fiscal. Después, bancos y bancos llenos de gente y gente en pie obturando las puertas. (O'Neill, 2003: 164)

Here, she illustrates how the courtroom is dominated by the imposing presence of

figures rendered authoritative by their uniforms and high-backed chairs. The appearance of these military uniforms fills the space with a further implication of violence. Portraits of Franco and José Antonio, the Spanish flag, and Christ on the crucifix all serve to rule over the space as omnipotent symbols of power, control, and observation. Indeed, through these adornations, the room is made to physically engender the dominant founding ideologies of the regime, comprising Falangism, Nationalism, and Catholicism. These symbols of the dictatorship are complemented by the rows of figures watching and guarding the doors as enforcers of Francoism. Through O'Neill's illustration of the courtroom, space itself is represented as encompassing regime punishment that can be read with reference to Foucault's tripartite conceptualisation of discipline as containing hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and the examination (Foucault, 1991: 170-194). In featuring such imagery, *Una mujer en la guerra de España* serves to emphasise the discipline underlying the dictatorship that seeps beyond the prison walls to include the figures of justice and the public audience. Punishment is thereby portrayed as a public act and spectacle and the prison space itself rendered a microcosm for Nationalist Spain.

These explicitly disciplinary spaces are juxtaposed by the hospital space in which O'Neill additionally carries out her sentence. She describes this with references to the 'gradas de mármol', 'peldaños espaciosos', and 'la estatua enorme del Sagrado Corazón' (O'Neill, 2003: 125). These features differentiate the hospital space from that of the prison, as she further affirms,

aquello era mejor que la cárcel, y el aire entraba sin la impedimenta de las rejas; había dos ventanas grandes, libres, abiertas sobre un jardín, a la altura de un segundo piso, y entraba por las ventanas el verdor de las altas hojas. Encontraba por fin naturaleza. Todo era mejor que en la cárcel; [...] todo era blanco; todo era mejor. (O'Neill, 2003: 125-126)

The references to white, nature, and openness all counterpose her prior descriptions of the brutal prison spaces; this is made especially evident through the corresponding chapter titles designating the prison as 'La cárcel negra' and the hospital as 'La cárcel blanca'. However, as the reference to 'la cárcel' in both chapter titles denotes, the difference between them is minimal. Indeed, the hospital still constitutes a disciplinary space, as O'Neill learns from fellow patients who confirm that the door to their ward 'siempre tiene que permanecer abierta [...] ¡Siempre..., siempre! A toda hora, para que nos vigilen' (O'Neill, 2003: 126). This realisation demonstrates that all of the above merely represent a semblance of liberty; discipline remains ingrained – perhaps more insidiously so – within the hospital, and by extension wider society.

The representations of disciplinary spatiality beyond the prison building serve to portray an image of Francoist society as underscored by discipline. Indeed, O'Neill reflects this very point in her statement that 'toda España era una cárcel' (O'Neill, 2003: 225). The focus on punitive spatiality through images of prison space and place thereby lend further gravitas to this notion of Spain as a panopticon.<sup>103</sup> For Franco's prisoners, the jail was a microcosm for Spanish society

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<sup>103</sup> This notion has particularly been explored by González Ruibal (2014, 2011), Oliver (2007), and

during the regime as a 'carceral archipelago'. From an historiographical and sociological perspective, such a portrayal of discipline and disciplinary spatiality provides a metaphor for the past that constitutes a form of visibility previously eradicated by state doctrine. Moreover, in terms of the narrative corpus, these images of carceral [s]p[ace] construct a form of disciplinary spatiality through the very space and place of the texts themselves. The notion of narrative place corresponds with what Casey refers to as 'virtual place', which draws the viewer and consumer into another place (1997: xiv). Throughout the corpus, the texts provide this form of narrative place as a representative and interrogative device to explore Francoist carcerality. These narrative representations of punitive spatiality draw attention to the physical, figurative, and metaphorical constructions of discipline for the female political prisoner in a way that attends to the ongoing silences and significance of the relics of the regime rather than literally or conceptually tarmacking over the past.<sup>104</sup>

### **Prison borders**

Alongside the focus on physical carcerality the narratives also demonstrate a concern with carceral borders and boundaries, which are represented as both

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Mendiola (2011).

<sup>104</sup> It should be noted that this has been the fate of the most notorious Francoist prisons: Les Cortes and Ventas have both been demolished.

physical and conceptual. An essential element, the prison border constitutes a semi-permeable and controlled boundary that serves to separate, reinforce, and enclose carceral space by monitoring the elements traversing these walls. During the regime this was achieved through strict censorship that limited the passage of goods and information under the Ley de Prensa (1938).<sup>105</sup> Perriam describes this as a ‘zealous attention to detail in protecting the public from immoral influences’ (Perriam, 2000: 5). The extreme level of censorship controlling the public consumption of “undesireable” materials and masking the realities of the regime had severe consequences for the passage of information concerning punishment and justice. Abad Buil highlights,

de lo que ocurría en el interior de las cárceles a lo que se proyectaba al exterior era grande la distancia que corría. Mientras las presas tenían que vivir todo tipo de calamidades, sufrimientos y miedos cuando daban a luz en la cárcel o tenían junto a ellas a sus hijos, los funcionarios de prisiones trataban de ensalzar un aparente trato hacia dichas presas y sus hijos. Un buen ejemplo lo representa el periódico oficial de Instituciones Penitenciarias *Redención*. (Abad Buil, 2009: 77)

Official sources documented the justice system in a positive light. During the Civil War, journalism reported ‘Franco’s generous treatment of prisoners’ (1937)<sup>106</sup> and throughout the dictatorship prison inspectors received manipulated images of imprisonment. Doña emphasises, ‘se presentaba como prisión piloto: limpia, con niños de menos de dos años en perfecta formación y con madres que tenían que

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<sup>105</sup> This was later extended to cover theatre, music, and public lectures (2012).

<sup>106</sup> See particularly the *Catholic Herald* and the long-running regime paper, *Redención*. See further Memoria de la presó de dones de Les Corts (2006).

hacer reverencias. Detrás de ellos se escondía lo más sórdido e inhumano de las prisiones españolas' (Doña, 1978: 179). This statement depicts how prison authorities erected a 'border' to portray carcerality. Doña uses the phrase 'detrás de ellos se escondían' to particularly draw attention to the construction of an impermeable, rose-tinted lens that eradicated the brutality within. The prison border thus constituted a façade that served to obfuscate and veil the true conditions of Francoist incarceration from public perceptions. Consequently, the prison as space and place is rendered isolated, secret, and enclosed by these very borders.

The control of the prison walls extended beyond public portrayals of imprisonment: personal communication was also subjected to high levels of censorship. O'Neill demonstrates this as the request to write to her daughters is received with the following statement '¡oh! ¡Ah!...¡Aquello era mucho pedir!, ¡sin embargo, él se lo diría al director, y si lo autorizaba!...' (O'Neill, 2003: 56). She is later told, 'si sabe usted escribir, escriba diez líneas y se las daré al director para que las censure' (O'Neill, 2003: 61). Both length and content of information is thus subjected to censorship and constraint. Moreover, not only is the transmission of information overseen by authorities, the very behaviour of the prisoners is also controlled and confined as they must ask permission to write. Through this anecdote, O'Neill emphasises the regime's control and censorship of carcerality and constructs the prison space as socially and politically confined and delimited. The segregated spatiality of the prison is further demonstrable through her refused

request to write to her husband due to the fact that, 'de una prisión a otra está prohibida la comunicación' (O'Neill, 2003: 57). The prison as a space is thus depicted as unbridgeable and separate from society due to an insurmountable border. Doña also illustrates the impenetrability of the prison walls as items as well as information were policed by prison authorities and even prohibited entirely. She declares, 'no se permitía comida de la calle' (Doña, 1978: 193). Such a policy reiterated the separation and isolation of prisoners from the outside world.

The literal representations of the prison borders further demonstrate their significance. O'Neill describes 'gruesas piedras de mazmorra', 'puertas de hierro', and 'el rastrillo' (2003: 50). Similarly Doña makes reference to 'la verja de hierro [...] el ruido de la pesada puerta' and 'la estrecha calle de ásperas piedras, calle de cárceles, conventos y cuarteles, con tapias altas y grises y ventanas enrejadas' (1978: 293). These depictions provide powerful illustrations of the physical prison borders, which are rendered violent and dominating through the imagery of stones and ironworks. Such portrayals can be further explored through Foucault's notion of heterotopia, for which the border is of utmost significance. He explains:

[h]eterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures. (1986: 26)

The functioning of the prison border is thus integral to its conceptualisation as a heterotopia of deviance. In describing the prison walls with reference to the

portcullis, iron door, and 'llaves grandes, negras, de fortaleza' (O'Neill, 2003: 51), the narratives magnify the significance of the prison boundaries through imagery of confinement and isolation. The depiction of these walls thereby serves to render the disciplinary space heterotopic and 'not freely accessible'. Given the fact that these images constitute a microcosm for wider Spanish society, reading the portrayals of punitive spatiality with reference to Foucault represents Spain under the regime as not only a carceral archipelago but also enclosed and isolated, which has particular significance on account of the nation's onus on autarky and its international isolation.<sup>107</sup>

## **Temporality**

Beyond the physical and spatial experiences of carcerality, imprisonment also intersects with the notion of time. Indeed, prison is measured through temporal metaphors of 'sentences' and 'doing time'.<sup>108</sup> Wilson argues that time is inherent within a consideration of the prison scape (2004). During incarceration, prisoners' lives are constructed and constrained by time, both short-term in their daily routines, and long-term in serving their sentences. Moreover, they are separated

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<sup>107</sup> See particularly Richards (1998) for more on these concepts.

<sup>108</sup> This association has been noted by Chevigny (1999: Introduction) and Wahidin (2006). As an area of research, prison temporality has been explored within the field of carceral geography, see particularly Moran (2012a) and Wahidin (2006, 2005; 2004).

from 'outside time' and punished by time as a commodity all within the experience of carceral spatiality. The narratives demonstrate this interplay of the temporal and the spatial through such depictions as 'a las siete vibró el son de una campana, subieron ruidos de puertas de hierro' (O'Neill, 2003: 55). The sound of clocks chiming reverberates through the prison space, marking the passage of time and defining the inhabitation of this space. Temporality is thus used to delimit and structure carcerality, as Real highlights,

nos levantábamos a las siete de la mañana. Había una campana en el patio que se tocaba general, y además venía una monja, Sor Ausencia, que era la que estaba con nosotras, y venía tocando la campanilla. [...]

Bajábamos luego al patio con el plato del rancho, con la cuchara, con el jabón, con la labor en un capachito, y en el patio formábamos por salas, y cantábamos el "Cara al sol", brazo en alto, y se rezaba.' (García, 1982: 102-103)

This description demonstrates the constant control and monitoring of the prisoners' time. As such, prison space is experienced through enforced and delimited daily routines. Wahidin examines the importance of time for the prisoner, stating 'time in prison is mediated by the boundaries of the institution, imposed from above by a system of explicitly formal rules, practices and procedures' (2005: 76). The temporal thus serves to further expand the disciplining of the inmate within the prison space.

Furthermore, the passage of time is an additional and even constituent element in the punishment of prisoners. O'Neill makes many references to prison time described in terms of waiting, stating 'allí teníamos que seguir esperando' (O'Neill, 2003: 46) and 'parecíamos viajeras en una estación' (O'Neill, 2003: 45).

She particularly emphasises this notion of waiting through the metaphor of the waiting room. The monotonous nature of prison time is additionally declared through her statement that 'siguieron pasando horas y horas y nosotras contando sus minutos. [...] Las horas eran las mismas' (O'Neill, 2003: 57). This cyclical monotony is extended further; she states 'transcurrió un tiempo. ¿Cuánto?... En la prisión de este tipo, como en la muerte, el tiempo se detiene' (O'Neill, 2003: 47). Time is thus represented as suspended and stagnant, the prison is transformed into a purgatory that the inmates must endure (in)definitely. O'Neill's portrayal of prison temporality as a form of suspended time can be analysed further through the notion of the 'non-place' as 'a world thus surrendered to [...] the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral' (Augé, 1995: 78). By applying this concept to the narrative portrayals of carceral temporality, and spatiality, the texts come to comment on the experience of discipline as an experience of the 'non-place'.

For those sentenced to death, the finite yet indefinite nature of their waiting constitutes a further torture in and of itself. They endured the wait for their names to be called, which Cuevas describes in the following manner: 'un día y otro, una noche y otra y así durante seis meses' (2005: 66). Moreover, as Real demonstrates, even for those with a determined fixed sentence and release date, time also constitutes a punishment. She explains:

Creí primero que voy a salir en febrero, pero no salgo. Entonces hago los trámites para salir en abril, me conceden la libertad, pero no salgo. En el 55, principio del 56, dan un indulto que me alcanza. [...] Entonces llevaba yo trece años y pico y llega abril y mi libertad era cumplida y no me la dan. [...] Es decir, que las libertades nuestras, cuando se proponían, como pasaban

por Gobernación, la policía tenía opción a retenerlas [...] es una tortura. (1982: 191)

The wait for her imminent release is made arduous by what Wahidin refers to as the commodity of prison time (2006; 2005).

Like prison space is explicitly separated from the outside, prison time is also separate, experienced as different and apart. The testimonies throughout *Presas* emphatically state the dates of their arrests: ‘me detuvieron en Mérida el día 17 de abril de 1938’ (Cuevas, 2005: 111), ‘me detuvieron el día 30 de marzo de 1939’ (Ibid.: 75), and ‘fui detenida el 8 de mayo de 1939’ (Ibid.: 33). They thus highlight the beginning of a new period within their lives; the temporal markers underline and enclose this period. Dates and times become a means for parenthesising the carceral and in so doing, they portray prison as separate from the outside. The texts emphasise this further through statements reiterating the disparity between prison time as experienced by the inmates and time on the outside. Doña in particular declares ‘ese año cada día le había pesado como una losa’ (Doña, 1978: 290). These statements portray prison temporality as a form of suspended reality. Wahidin considers this the timelessness of prison time (2006). This is counterposed by the notion of external time, which continues despite incarceration. Doña emphasises this temporal disjoint, stating: ‘pasó otro año. En él se habían casado sus hermanos. Su hijo decía: “esperaré a que tú salgas para casarme...” [...] se le antojaban esos dos años y pico casi inalcanzables, tremendamente lejanos’ (Doña, 1978: 290). Through these references, Doña portrays the passage of time inside as different to that outside. Temporality

thereby emphasises and even constitutes an aspect of the social segregation that is enforced through incarceration.

Countering this temporal and spatial rupture, the narratives cling to and mark the passage of time. O'Neill declares 'sobre la madera del marco de la puerta descubrí muchas rayitas profundizadas en surcos; era el paso de los días sobre los presos. [...] Había noventa' (2003: 55). Here, she underlines how the inmates are forced to count time. By scoring the doorframe, temporality is portrayed as literally and tangibly invading and marking the prison space. Indeed, the prisoners write this carceral temporality onto the prison space and into their narratives: the texts are littered with references to specific periods, '13 años y pico' (García, 1982: 101), 'sesenta días de calabozo' (O'Neill, 2003: 100), 'doce años de prisión' (Ibid., 225), and 'volvía después de veinte años' (Ibid., 293). Moreover, Doña emphasises the importance of time by describing how Leonor clings to it, as she 'calculó la hora, debían de ser las seis o las siete [...] se encontraba en aquella prisión desde hacía cuatro o cinco horas' (Doña, 1978: 99). The measurements of time passing constitute a common trend throughout the texts that allows the narrators to convey the stagnant experience of carcerality and also provides a means for combatting what Wahidin refers to as the temporal and spatial deprivation and timelessness of prison (2006). By portraying this stagnation and timelessness in conjunction with the horror of prison sentences, the narrative depiction of carceral temporality forms a continuum with the concepts of 'No / Body' and 'No / Place'. As O'Neill highlights through her statement that 'como en la muerte, el tiempo se

detiene' (O'Neill, 2003: 47), time in prison is experienced as a form of 'No / Time': it is separated from the outside world and stagnant, yet an inherent aspect of incarceration.

### **Transience**

For many prisoners, the experience of carceral space was further constituted by the experience of transience and ephemerality, particularly on account of regular prisoner transfers. As Mangini explains, 'cellmates were often transferred to break up underground political networks' or due to excessive overcrowding (1991: 182).

Doña describes the experience of being moved as a prisoner:

[n]o había nada en la prisión que crease un revuelo semejante. Las expediciones creaban un estado de excitación que se traducía en un desprenderse de todo por parte de las que quedaban. Se daban recados para que se avisara a las familias por medio de las comunicaciones, éstas lo sabrían cuando ya estuviesen camino de los penales; la incertidumbre de no saber quienes [sic] entrarían en las "listas"; la pena de las separaciones..., todo hacía que las expediciones fueran temidas como una de las mayores calamidades. (Doña, 1978: 162)

Prison transfers are thus shown as entailing great upheaval, uncertainty, and separation. This was compounded by the fact that these often occurred with little warning, as Doña describes '[t]odas las nombradas dentro de una hora, deben estar preparadas' (1978: 162). Transfers between prisons happened at any moment and thereby aggravated the sensation of not belonging encapsulated within the concept

of both the 'No / Place' and the 'No / Body'. Prison spatiality was thus informed by precarious transience that served to disorient and further punish the inmate. Real describes one experience of being transferred by train from Ventas to Alcázar de San Juan, to Linares, to Córdoba, before finally arriving in Málaga; she explains, 'llegamos a Alcázar de San Juan y no sale la Guardia Civil a hacer el relevo, y al no salir nos meten en la prisión. [...] en Linares tenía que hacer relevo otra vez la Guardia Civil, y no salió. Y entonces nos bajaron del tren y nos llevaron a la prisión' (García, 1982: 149). The inmates are thus treated like goods or animals. Indeed, Cuevas declares 'nos encaminaron a un furgón donde meten a los cerdos y al subir oímos una voz que decía: "no se arrimen ahí, hemos tenido que hacer de vientre en ese rincón porque no teníamos donde"' (Cuevas, 2005: 77). This illustrates how space and movements between prison spaces are both used to bestialise the prisoners.

Transportation also allowed prisoners to be brought into public places and thus publically displayed. Real explains,

[a]l bajar del tren nos esposaron y la Guardia Civil nos dice: Si ustedes no quieren ir andando de aquí a la cárcel, pues para ir de la estación a la cárcel hay que cruzar toda la ciudad, si ustedes no quieren cruzar la ciudad hay que coger taxis, pero nosotros no lo vamos a pagar, [...] Total que vamos andando y la gente se quedaba parada. (García, 1982: 149)

In moving between jails the inmates are thus rendered public spectacles and hypervisibilised. Cuevas also highlights this, stating 'no fuimos objeto de espectáculo, como ocurría con otras expediciones de traslado' (Cuevas, 2005: 120). These parades formed a public display that not only served the political purpose of

displaying, and thus visualising and materialising the nation's enemy; they also served to extend the carceral space beyond the prison walls. The condemned handcuffed women flanked by Guardia Civil were the subjects of social ridicule as the embodiment of penalty. In this sense the public portrayal of prisoners through these parades is a literal representation of how discipline reaches beyond the prison edifice. Facing continuing denigration and discipline delimiting their behavior, appearance, and location, these women experienced the 'outside' world as equally disciplinary and punitive. This nationwide imposition can be considered as a form of carceral archipelago, which 'transported this technique from the penal institution to the entire social body' (Foucault, 1991: 298). Public prison transportation thereby illustrates the extension of the carceral beyond the prison walls. In the context of Francoism, the public display of prisoners serves as a material illustration of the transportation of this level of carcerality beyond the prison walls.

These questions of transience and the extension of carceral spatiality also raise the issue of the use of space as a way to construct and enforce penalty. As stated above, prisoners were handcuffed, accompanied by Civil Guard, and paraded through the streets of Spain's towns subjecting them to stares and torments from the Spanish public. This both literally served to transverse the physical prison space and metaphorically served to extend Francoist carcerality into the nation as a whole. The public presence of the handcuffed inmate is a demonstrative spectacle that illustrates Foucauldian discipline. Such a display of state penalty is indicative

of what Foucault considered the 'public spectacle' of pre-modern punishment, which disappeared during the nineteenth century with the advance of the prison cell and the resultant hidden nature of punishment (1991: 7-8). As Foucault explains, this transition from public spectacle to private enclosure served to hide those carrying out the punishing behind the guise of authority (Ibid.: 9-10). Within the context of Francoism, however this separation of pre- and modern discipline disintegrated. The narratives demonstrate this through their focus on the public spectacle of these prisoner parades and thereby emphasise the combining of spectacle, whilst maintaining private punishment of the prisoners in the cell under control of the faceless authorities. The merging of new rhetorical discourse with old punitive practices within Francoism has been explored critically by Mendiola (2011: 5-6) and Oliver (2007). Such considerations can be applied to the narrative portrayals of discipline within this corpus in order to underscore the complexities of regime carcerality. As a result, the texts can be seen as representations that dismantle the elements of penalty that comprise its functioning.

In regards the extension of carceral space, prisoner transfers additionally allowed for comparison between institutions. These juxtapositions give the narrators the chance to compare and contrast the various prisons. Declarations such as 'el problema de la cárcel de Segovia, nuestra tortura, era el frío' (García, 1982: 165) highlight the distinctions between different prison institutions. However, in comparing the experiences throughout Spain's Francoist prisons, the narratives overwhelmingly illustrate the similarities. They state 'se repite lo de

Ventas, lo de Málaga, lo de Barcelona' (García, 1982: 165), 'Saturráran, Amorebieta y otros, verdaderos centros de tortura' (Cuevas, 2005: 121), and 'en las otras cárceles que conocí, la situación de hambre y frío era igual y nada se hizo' (Cuevas, 2005: 96). Thus throughout the transient experience of transportation between a myriad prison spaces, the women endure an overarching oppression. These depictions portray the prison space as a 'carceral continuum' (Foucault, 1991: 297) of violence, oppression, and discipline running throughout Spain's many prisons. The additional descriptions of the transport spaces as examples of further carceral spatiality also serve to construct a carcerality that extended across the nation. The depictions of prisoners subjected to additional abuse and oppression whilst moving through towns and locations outside of the prison walls reiterate this to portray the entirety of Spain as a carceral nation.

From a further perspective, the representations of prison spatiality through the notion of transience also invite an analysis with reference to the notion of 'non-place'. The unquantifiable nature of carcerality, both in terms of the temporal and the spatial, inherently make the carceral a 'non-place'. When read within the context of the Franco regime's simultaneous silencing and hypervisibilising of discipline and punishment, this concept of the non-place further constitutes a 'No / Place'. These portrayals of carcerality as simultaneously minute yet overarching call into question the spatiality of the dictatorship as a form of 'No / Place'. If for Agué, the 'non-place' constitutes a 'palimpsest on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten' (1995: 79), for the Francoist 'No / Place',

these are not just rewritten, they cannot be written on account of the very paradoxical nature of this (in)visible carceral spatiality. The narrative constructions of prison space thereby address the spatial materialisation of regime discourses, particularly of being and belonging within the Nation, which have direct implications for the subject, as is explored below.

### ***Sensing, perceiving, inhabiting the prison***

Through the narrative focus on prison spatiality, the texts portray and emphasise the intersection of space, place, and subject. Depictions of inhabiting the prison focus on the questions of lack and deprivation. The texts explore the extreme lack of space available, as Cuevas emphasises ‘el espacio de esa sala podría haber sido para diez mujeres, tal vez para doce con petate, pero éramos unas sesenta’ (Cuevas, 2005: 29). The brutalities of spatial deprivation are further highlighted through the following passage:

[e]n 1939 había once o doce mujeres en cada celda absolutamente desnuda, a lo sumo los colchones o los jergones de cada una y nada más. Todo vestigio de la primitiva dedicación de las salas había desaparecido, se había transformado en un gigantesco almacén: almacén de mujeres. (Cuevas, 2005: 84)<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Commenting on this overcrowding, Shirley Mangini states that Ventas Prison was ‘built to house some five hundred women, [...] after the war, though, Ventas became a house of horrors; it has been

By referring to the prison as ‘un gigantesco almacén: almacén de mujeres’ Cuevas highlights the objectification and dehumanisation of the inmates through the very use of the prison space itself. Similarly, Real underscores the situation in Barcelona: ‘las [sic] Corts había sido anteriormente un colegio para unas trescientas niñas, como mucho, y llegaron a estar cinco mil mujeres [...] se dormía en los patios, se dormía en las escaleras, se dormía en los wáteres’ (García, 1982: 100). In this passage she emphasises both the construction of carceral space and the distortion of these spaces such that the women, forced to sleep in the toilets, are dehumanised and bestialised.

The lack of space was compounded by the almost complete deprivation of facilities, including food and water, health care, shelter, and hygiene. The narratives are punctuated with references condemning ‘la escasez de agua’ (Cuevas, 2005: 59), the ‘falta de higiene’ (Cuevas, 2005: 34), and the fact that ‘no había agua, ni retretes, ni comida’ (Doña, 1978: 139). As Cuevas exclaims ‘había un retrete para 500 personas’ (Cuevas, 2005: 34). Such brutal conditions facilitated the spread of disease: Real describes how ‘durante la noche los piojos y las chinches te corrían por la cara, sobre todo las chinches, que estaban carcomidas las colañas de madera y yo recuerdo que mientras dormíamos nos caían a manadas’ (García, 1982: 101), and Doña states that ‘todas las mujeres padecían de sarna ulcerada y se rascaban la piel hasta desollarla; la avitaminosis abrías llagas purulentas en las piernas y en las

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said that ten to fourteen thousand were incarcerated there at the same time’ (Mangini, 1991: 182).

manos; los piojos se las comían' (Doña, 1978: 139). These brutal depictions provide images of disgust that portray the prison space as a form of abject 'No / Place'. Such widespread disease served to make the experience of the prison place horrific and abject with direct consequences for the inmate. Indeed, these depictions demonstrate how the prison space renders the prisoner corrupt and decrepit: the prisoners' bodies are shown as destroyed and decaying on account of the carceral space itself. Through the brutal and violent disciplinary space, the inmate is made into the 'No / Body', at once invisible and excluded, and visible and vilified. This functioning of carceral [s]p[ace] is politically significant within Francoist society: by making the prison a space of filth, disease, and corruption, it is distanced from Franco's notion of New Spain, built on physical and moral cleanliness and purity. The prison thereby comes to represent a liminal 'No / Place' that consumes what society has expelled and in so doing, renders this more grotesque. As space and place, the prison as the epitomising site of Francoist discipline is integral in the production of the 'No / Body'.

The notion of filth and dis-ease is particularly emphasised through sensory depictions of decrepitude and putrefaction. Portrayals of Francoist prisons refer to 'salas apestosas' (García, 1982: 117) and the 'olor de tugurio, de asfixia y muerte lenta' (O'Neill, 2003: 72). Such descriptions of the penetrating stench of the prisons highlight how the horrific conditions of incarceration are experienced and perceived through the body. This is especially emphatic given smell's association with memory, emotion, and most significantly disgust (Russell, 2013: 97). Indeed,

smell is particularly contaminating in its literal penetration of the body through molecules entering the nasal canal (Miller, 1998: 92).<sup>110</sup> For Russell, this constitutes a form of physical violence wrought on the subject (2013: 97). She states 'smell creates a further sense of the abjection of the space' (Russell, 2013: 97). Through references to the vile stench of prison, the narratives thus emphasise the decrepitude and abject nature of carceral spatiality. The metaphor of penetration through senses is further indicative of how space is both constituted and experienced by and through the body. As well as emphasising the physical and corporeal nature of space as inherently embodied, such sensory depictions also reiterate the deprivation of cleanliness, hygiene, and medical facilities.

The texts additionally highlight further missing facilities through references to senses. They use smell to describe the awful and limited prison nutrition, declaring that 'su olor nos revolvió el estómago' (O'Neill, 2003: 57) and 'daban náuseas comerlas [lentejas], llenas de palos, bichos y piedras' (Cuevas, 2005: 59). Rather than providing the necessary nutrition required for survival, the prison food nauseates the women and is portrayed as inedible. Water is similarly presented as putrid; Cuevas states 'no procedía de una fuente, la traían desde el río en tanques de gasolina, sabía a rayos' (Cuevas, 2005: 59-60). In being transported to the prison, water is thus contaminated. As such, it serves to demonstrate the corrupt nature of prison spatiality, which affects and infects the inmate. Indeed, the

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<sup>110</sup> For more on the notion of disgust in correlation with bodily penetration and corporeal orifices, see Miller (1998: chapter 5).

lack of nutrition serves to destroy the inmate. Cuevas describes mothers unable to nurse their children, depicting them as 'aquellas mujeres agotadas, sin leche para criarlos, sin comida que darles, sin agua, sobre míseros petates, sin ropa, sin nada' (Cuevas, 2005: 83-84). The prisoners are stripped of everything by incarceration: possessions, health, and even their capacity to mother. Prison space itself thus constitutes a means of neutering the threat of the 'roja'. Moreover, as a subject she is rendered null and void: the traditional model of maternal femininity is violently seized from the female prisoners, as Cuevas emphasises, on account of the 'dureza de la prisión' (2005: 83). The prison space is responsible for this eradication of the individual who is left with nothing, not even her biological reproductive function. Similarly, Real describes how all the prisoners 'parecían viejas y tenían la cara gris, llena de manchas, de sombras grises, como enmohecida' (García, 1982: 102). Through the experience of life in prison, the prisoners are thus transformed into subhuman beasts. Riddled of their identities, their health, and their youth, the women are de-formed into monstrous beings. The prison space thus destroys the individual inhabiting this place.

Equally, the narratives emphasise the lack of shelter and protection from the elements by focussing on the feel and experience of weather conditions. They describe 'un frío atroz' (Cuevas, 2005: 34), declaring 'siempre me he acordado de aquel frío' (Doña, 1978: 136), on the one hand, and 'un sol que cegaba' and 'quemaba' (Cuevas, 2005: 102) and 'el aire se nos hizo fuego; se quedaba en la garganta, sin pasar hacia delante, y el corazón se ponía a golpear como vecino

impaciente' (O'Neill, 2003: 56), on the other. The prison is shown to provide no protection from the elements; instead, the place magnifies these conditions, creating a torturous location for the inmates. These references thus use sensory depictions to demonstrate how space intersects with both its wider environment thereout and the subject therein and cannot be separated from either of these aspects.

The notion of deprivation is made additionally apparent through the use of senses to conceive of the prison space. In solitary confinement and in darkness, Doña is able to perceive the prison around her:

De pronto, [...] oyó retumbar en toda la prisión el ruido del claxon: era diana.

Inmediatamente, como si la vida que allí se encerraba estuviese conteniendo el aliento, esperando esta señal, un ruido enorme lo llenó todo: puertas que se abrían, palmas, pisadas fuertes. (Doña, 1978: 100).

Similarly, O'Neill describes, 'a las siete vibró el son de una campana, subieron ruidos de puertas de hierro, grandes puertas tenían que ser a juzgar por la pereza que ponían' (O'Neill, 2003: 55). Through the auditory, the prisoners are thus able to construct their carceral location. By describing the prison in this manner, the texts highlight the deprivation of one sense and thus illustrate how the prison space itself disorients the inmate, forcing them to rely on other senses to conceive of their spatiality. In a particularly visual medium such as literature, which relies on imagery and descriptions setting scenes and contexts, the focus on the aural at specific narrative moments is similarly disorienting for the reader. Such sensory depictions thus portray carceral space as a spatiality of deprivation. The references

to the sounds of doors, keys, and bolts particularly emphasise key components of this spatiality of discipline, control, and confinement, additionally rendering sound central to the prison-scape and highlighting the subject's interaction with this carceral spatiality.

The significance of noise is further demonstrated through the references to the sounds of executions invading the prison space. Doña describes 'algo insólito la despertó de nuevo: un "tata-ta, tata-ta" y, pasado un momento espaciado, otra vez sintió "ta, ta, ta"' (Doña, 1978: 105). The noise of the executions provides a nightly reminder of their incumbent mortality and their enclosure within disciplinary space. The gunshots that penetrate the prison reiterate the violence and destruction inherent within the punitive spatiality the women inhabit. As such, these references confirm not only the intersection of space and subject, but moreover, the de-construction of the subject through this carceral spatiality. The deprivation of prison spatiality is further apparent through the presence of 'silencio de tumba' which 'invadía toda la prisión' (Doña, 1978: 99). Cuevas highlights that 'se fue extendiendo, era un silencio espeso, duro, único, un silencio audible lleno de odio, miedo, impotencia' (Cuevas, 2005: 90). Silence is thus as powerful as sound in punishing those imprisoned. In fact, in silencing the women with daily curfews, they are rendered obsolete subjects. The sensory control of inmates coincides with their spatial confinement to further separate, invisibilise, and destroy the prisoners as 'No / Bodies'.

## **Impermeable walls of stigma**

Separate from society as a space housing 'individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean' (Foucault, 1986: 25), the prison constitutes a site of corruption, deviancy, and stigma. Indeed, as a segregated social space, 'penal confinement performs a break, a severing, within the social body. Confinement extends the stigma of conviction by incorporating within the person of the inmate the offence for which he [sic] has been sentenced to deprivation of liberty' (Combessie, 2009: 2). The narratives focus on this notion of prison stigma through such declarative statements as '¡ir a parar a una cárcel! [...] ¡Si lo supieran en mi pueblo!..., ¡si lo supieran mis hermanos!... ¡A una cárcel!... ¡En una cárcel!' (O'Neill, 2003: 50) and 'era una vergüenza para ellas y sus familias haber pisado una cárcel' (O'Neill, 2003: 78). As the first quotation demonstrates, this shame extends beyond the temporality and spatiality of the prison sentence, irrevocably marking the condemned individual. Moreover, shame is wrought on the inmates through the mere act of inhabiting the prison. The act of traversing the prison border is thus portrayed as constitutive of the deviant subject. O'Neill emphasises: 'el que haya pasado el rastrillo conoce que el preso se convierte en preso integral así que se siente preso: las rejas lo dotan de un nuevo sentido' (O'Neill, 2003: 66). Entering the prison is a transformative act that inherently alters the individual, rendering her delinquent. By focussing on the combination of 'rejas' and 'sentido' this

description presents the prison as both a physical and figurative punitive space. The phrase 'pasar el rastrillo' further emphasises the force of this barrier. A portcullis is typically associated with medieval castles and has indications of violence, due to its use as a means of holding the enemy back, by also trapping the inmates. The image of the portcullis thus portrays the prison as an impenetrable, *and* inescapable fort. Entering this space becomes a constitutive performative act whereby the detainee is inextricably marked as delinquent. Foucault examines this concept in *Discipline and Punish*, in which he argues that the prison 'cannot fail to produce delinquents' (Foucault, 1991: 266); he attests to the fact that the carceral system both defines and reinforces delinquency. In the context of Francoism, this production of delinquency served to visibilise and condemn the vanquished, whilst reinforcing the power of the victors, and thus provided a means for institutionalising Francoism (Graham, 2004: 320).

In entering the prison space and being rendered delinquent, the inmate undergoes a permanent transformation. O'Neill confirms 'el que pasaba aquellas puertas tenía que perder "toda esperanza"' (O'Neill, 2003: 154). Prison spatiality is thus complicit in the eradication of the subject who must lose 'all hope'. The reference to Dante's 'Canto III' (2010) portrays this as an epic transformation for the individual. These changes continue to mark the inmate throughout their sentences and after release, as Doña emphasises,

Paquita y Leo hablaban también de sus respectivas familias, [...] Pero sin quererlo empezaban a hablar de la familia<sup>111</sup> y de pronto se encontraban relatando un hecho ocurrido en esta o en aquella cárcel en una u otra época. Y es que 19 años de cárcel era su realidad. La realidad de ellas, era ese mundo que palpitaba con sus mismos latidos. (Doña, 1978: 282)

Through this passage, she highlights how prison is inescapable for the women, it is their reality. Drawing on the question of prison as a 'No / Place', Doña's statement above demonstrates how the inmates' existence is reduced to and enclosed within the 'No / Place' of the prison. This develops the notion of the prison border as transformative, confining, and segregating. Their inability to figuratively transcend the border through conversation illustrates the physical and figurative power of the prison walls as a force that contains, reduces, and ultimately, eradicates the individual, rendering them 'No / Body'. The narratives further reveal the significance of the prison walls at the moment of their release. Doña describes Leonor's liberty in the following passage:

Leonor dejó en el suelo la maleta que llevaba en la mano y miró la verja de hierro de la entrada de la prisión, por última vez había sentido el ruido de la pesada puerta al cerrarse, esta vez se abrió para que saliera y cuando se cerró ella estaba al "otro lado". [...] Estaba parada con su maleta mirando la cárcel desde "fuera". (1978: 293)

Here, the prison borders are depicted as physically tangible through references to noise, sight, weight, and material, all of which magnify their significance. Having been irrevocably changed by incarceration, the experience of leaving prison forces

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<sup>111</sup> Here 'la familia' refers to their fellow inmates and comrades.

Leonor into a liminal space “[a]fuera”, where, as a ‘No / Body’, she no longer belongs. As a result, she is paralysed by her release, describing ‘una especie de mareo [que] la envolvía’ (Doña, 1978: 293) and ‘una emoción que la ahogaba’ (Ibid.: 294). The changes enforced by prison are thus further made manifest by release; stepping into the outside world highlights the true extent to which the prisoner can no longer belong and is instead made a permanent ‘No / Body’. O’Neill particularly demonstrates this as she states ‘hasta me parecía que había nacido allí dentro’ (2003: 241). O’Neill examines liminality through the theme of loss: ‘no quería volver la cabeza al mañana, sólo el ayer me atraía’ (O’Neill, 2003: 244). As she sets sail from Melilla, she looks for the cemetery where Virgilio’s body lies, which she cannot see in the dark. This symbolically demonstrates how she is leaving behind both everything, but also nothing tangible. She remarks ‘ya no suelo llorar’, which demonstrates how much she changed. The book ends with her declaration: ‘[I]a ciudad ya no era nada. En derredor, mar y mar, ni una luz. Y todo se fue, como en los sueños’ (O’Neill, 2003: 245). These final phrases finish the text with great poignance. They emphasise the overwhelming loss O’Neill has experienced and her current transience. The narrative ends on board a ship, which particularly constitutes a symbol of not belonging. Indeed, the ship is used as the symbol for both Foucault’s concept of heterotopia and Augé’s question of the non-place. In the case of O’Neill’s narrative, this ends the text with an overarching sense of loss and intangibility. For Real, the experience of liminality is further exacerbated as she is prohibited from returning to her native Barcelona. The ‘No /

Place' of the prison thus extends beyond the prison walls due to the inherent separation from and condemnation by society for the ex-inmates.

The emotional difficulty of leaving prison is further compounded through the extreme stigma attached to the status of ex-prisoner. Real highlights 'parece muy simple: has cumplido una condena y vas a salir. Pero no es tan simple [...] los problemas que vas a tener que afrontar. Porque los problemas de adaptación al salir son tremendos' (García, 1982: 192). She explains this further, adding, 'tenías que arreglar[te] para moverte en una sociedad oprimida, chabacana y mezquina, y que te despreciaba además' (Ibid.: 193). The problems caused by such social stigma are reiterated in the text's introduction that states 'Soledad me había contado cómo los niños, cuando la veían en el patio, decían en voz baja, de modo que casi sólo la marcaban con los labios, la palabra puta. O con la cara pegada a los cristales de su ventana la repetían una y otra vez: Pu-ta, pu-ta' (García, 1982: 9). Even long after her release and the death of Franco, Real is still condemned for her incarceration. This stigma is both gendered and overtly sexualised, serving to condemn the women as 'putas rojas'. Real further details her experiences of post-carceral living. This is particularly exacerbated by her father-in-law who declares: 'tú que eres escoria y suciedad, tú que no has sido mujer decente en tu vida' (García, 1982: 201). Due to this, Real states, 'aquí en el barrio además, mi cuñado y mi suegro me había creado un ambiente de viuda puta' (1982: 200). Prejudice makes life unbearable, as her ex-prisoner husband, Paco, declares 'siempre estamos en condiciones de inferioridad porque hemos estado en la cárcel, y todo el

mundo tiene derecho a meterse con nosotros' (García, 1982: 203). Having been imprisoned thus serves to categorically mark the ex-inmate, even after release. This is especially revealed by the attitudes of strangers on the streets. Real emphasises, 'a mí en la calle me habían creado un ambiente tan espantoso, tan espantoso' (García, 1982: 203). She details some examples of this treatment:

Esta misma señora un día paso yo por su lado y se bajó de la acera y me escupió a los pies. [...] Una señora dice: Oigan, yo vengo a comprar aquí porque pienso que es un sitio respetable y de gente honrosa, pero mientras esté esta señora aquí no pienso comprar y creo que la debe expulsar usted. [...] Porque es una comunista y una presidiaria. (García, 1982: 203)

These occurrences serve to exemplify the denigration of the female prisoner within society after her release due to stigma. Spitting and evicting her from the local shop constitute an emphatic rejection of the ex-prisoner from society. Such acts of abjection illustrate both the continuing stigma facing prisoners upon release and the extension of carceral space beyond the prison walls. The focus on her political status highlights the social concern with political belonging under the dictatorship.

The extension of prison spatiality beyond the prison walls additionally introduces the paradoxical status of the carceral as simultaneously public and private. This paradox is demonstrated in the reactions towards the ex-prisoners as described by Real; they eject the women from their 'decent' society and yet they are explicitly concerned with denigrating these women. Rather than crossing the street or simply leaving the shop, the members of the public make a point of publically and visibly drawing attention to the ex-prisoners and abusing them. This treatment can be analysed as a form of abjection whereby society endeavours to

expel the abject prisoner and yet can never really be rid of them. Consequently the prisoner becomes an obsession for the public, constantly trying – and failing – to expel them. The prisoner, and by extension the prison, is thus rendered both inherent within society and on the very margins of it, as the epitome of the ‘No / Place’.

The very prison space is informed by this paradoxical state. Indeed, the prison is categorically based on the notions of confinement and separation. As a physical building it encloses the inmate with a space distanced from society; the prisoner is forced to comply with strict routine and behavioural delimitations that reaffirm this social segregation; communication with the outside world is constantly policed and provides a further means of enforcing societal separation; the years of confinement institutionalise and alter the inmate physically and emotionally, thus inhibiting her from ‘belonging’ within society in the future; and finally, political stigma marks the prisoner forever. All of these matters serve to inextricably link the prison to the notions of confinement and social segregation. However, this status of private separation is engendered by the very public nature of imprisonment itself. The prison exists by providing a visible place of punishment and a visible model of delinquent prisoner. It is through the public concern for carceral discipline that the prison serves to separate the prisoner and render them inherently marked by stigma. Without the public nature of this, the prisoner would not face abusive prejudice after release. This combination of public and private particularly served Francoism as it provided a means of publically displaying state

enemies, thereby enforcing the self-policing of the population; whilst simultaneously removing these enemies, or pernicious elements, from society.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has examined the narrative representations of carceral spatiality with reference to the physical, figurative, and social. As such, this analysis has served to develop my exploration of female imprisonment by considering carceral locations and their significance. Using the notions of heterotopia and non-place has allowed me to examine this with a particular focus on social discourses and spatiality. By developing these concepts further within the idea of the 'No / Place', I have not only drawn attention to the specificities of Francoist discipline as both invisible and hypervisible; I have also emphasised further the function of regime discourses within punishment and thus more firmly rooted this analysis within the focus on the 'No / Body' concept that runs throughout this thesis. By addressing these questions of 'No / Body' and 'No / Place', this chapter has underscored how the narratives all serve to construct carceral spatiality and comment on its significance for the subject histor(iograph)ically, politically, and socially.

In Cuevas' text this primarily emerges as an illustration of the misuse of space to directly and physically punish the inmate. In her focus on the very physical consequences of inhabiting the prison space she addresses prisoner corporeality,

which is otherwise missing as a topic of consideration within her narrative. For *Presas*, thus, the emphasis on physical space and its consequences provides a stark and constant reminder of the brutalities of the regime, which serves to complement the text's vindication of the female prisoner protagonists. Although the other narratives certainly condemn the Francoist prisons as sites of horror and torture, their depictions of spatiality have different implications. O'Neill's many depictions of space beyond the prison walls serve as a comment on the extension of discipline beyond the punitive institution of the jail. In *Real*, this focus on carceral spatiality outside of the prison emphasises the ingrained stigma of imprisonment, even for the ex-prisoner. By drawing attention to these aspects, both texts underscore the insidious uptake of regime discourses and the relics of Francoism within wider society. Read as a corpus, the narrative focus on space and place, particularly when considered through the notion of the 'No / Place' and the regime, serves to interrogate the nature of spatiality in the context of discipline. In Chapter 6 I further develop this exploration of carcerality in my examination of prison collectivity and the behaviours this inculcates amongst the inmate population, which I consider through Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Carceral Habitus and the 'No / Body'

This chapter focuses on the prison as a space that is inherently collective due to the constant observation, overcrowding, and deprivation of privacy enforced by incarceration.<sup>112</sup> Here, I use collectivity in a very general sense to refer to the coexistence of two or more individuals. As such this includes both the negative connotations, including overcrowding, lack of privacy, and constant observation, and the positive connotations of support, solidarity, and community. Collectivity thus constitutes an overarching term to designate physical and emotional shared coexistence. For this chapter, I use the term in both its social and physical sense, both which can be described through Shilling's comment that collectivities develop 'through the bodies of their members being *marked by* insignia, customs and

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<sup>112</sup> These social and collective elements of prison have been especially highlighted by Sykes, who confirms that the prison is a society within a society (1958: xiii) and thus a social system (Ibid. xiv). Similarly, further critics cite the social as an inherent aspect of incarceration, from the work of Clemmer and Sykes, (Clemmer, 1958; Sykes, 1958) to that of Giallombardo (Giallombardo, 1974), to that of Moran (Moran, 2012b; Moran et al., 2013) and Oleinik (cited in Moran et al., 2013). Work on prison community spans the past half a century, highlighting the myriad issues the social nature of imprisonment engenders, such as the prisonisation and homogenisation of the inmate (Goffman, 1961), the question of privacy in penal space (Moran et al., 2013; Schwartz, 1972), and the behaviours and relationships of prisoners inhabiting the social space of the prison (Caputo-Levine, 2013; Crewe et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2005; Sykes, 1958).

techniques that facilitate the possibility of normative patterns of recognition, action and interaction' (Shilling and Mellor, 2011: 17). In exploring this, I focus on how collectivity inculcates specifically delimited behaviours amongst the prison population, which I analyse through Bourdieu's notion of habitus as 'a system of dispositions' (2005: 43). I situate this concept within the context of prison as has been achieved previously through the term 'carceral habitus' utilised within the field of carceral geography. This allows me to examine how discipline, and indeed the carceral, is written on the subject as a collective body through the enactment of delimited dispositions and behaviours. I argue that the development of these specific dispositions within the carceral serves to render the prison populus a 'collective No / Body'. This both extends my previous analysis of prison subjectivities under Francoism and allows me to highlight the disciplinary collectivity of carceral corporeality, which the texts begin to interrogate and surpass.

The chapter has two main strands, which I explore separately. I firstly consider how the collectivity of prison intersects with its punitive and rehabilitative aims and how these disciplinary endeavours are embodied by the prison population. In this section I use the work of Bourdieu and, to a lesser extent, Foucault, to emphasise how prison collectivity inculcates dispositions and how these can be considered disciplinary. In the second strand, I move to discuss the solidarity and resistance of prison collectivity, as evidence of a wider and more positive reading of carceral habitus. Here, I examine the strategies for survival as

witnessed within the prisoners' behaviours and actions that are particularly afforded through their collectivity. I finish by extending my analysis of habitus to the textual corpus itself by examining the presence of a narrative habitus of carcerality that runs throughout the works.

In terms of theory, I use the concept of habitus as defined by Bourdieu.<sup>113</sup> This denotes 'an acquired system of generative schemes' (1990: 55) consisting of 'individual and collective practices [...] in accordance with the schemes generated by history' (1990: 54). Bourdieu further describes habitus as

a set of acquired characteristics which are the product of social conditions (such as individuals occupying petty bourgeois positions in different societies or at different epochs). There is another difference which follows from the fact that the habitus is not something natural, inborn: being a product of history, that is of social experience and education, it may be changed by history, that is of social experience and education or training (which implies that aspects of what remains unconscious in habitus be made at least partially conscious and explicit). (2005: 45)

This explanation of habitus thereby provides me with a framework for examining the specific behaviour generated by imprisonment as examples of the influence of contexts of discipline. In applying this to my reading of female carcerality, I additionally find Mauss' description of habitus as regards 'techniques of the body' particularly useful given its focus on demographic and corporeal specifics that are 'assembled by and for social authority' (1992: 473). This allows me to explore

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<sup>113</sup> Both the concept 'habitus' and 'habit' have been relatively widely examined and employed within philosophical discourse. Crossley (2013) provides a particularly useful overview of the differences within critique. Additionally, see Hillier and Rooksby for a recent volume on habitus as 'an embodied, as well as cognitive, sense of place' (2005: 21).

female prison behaviours in terms of the corporeal and the disciplinary. Moreover, I also utilise the term ‘carceral habitus’ from the field of carceral geography. This has been used with reference to altered prisoner behaviours ‘such as the adoption of a specific language and changes in the relationship to the world and understanding of one’s body’<sup>114</sup> (Caputo-Levine, 2013: 168).<sup>115</sup> Habitus thus constitutes a tool for exploring carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity, which allows me to consider the normativities underpinning female prison subjectivities and how these intersect with issues of discipline, dominant discourses, and identities.

### ***Collective discipline***

As Goffman highlights, incarceration is predicated on the notion of group confinement, which he describes as ‘a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, [who] together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life’ (Goffman, 1961: 11). The experience

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<sup>114</sup> It should additionally be noted that these altered dispositions are ‘carr[ied] over into life outside the prison’ (Caputo-Levine, 2013: 172). Jewkes (2005) explores a similar issue in her article on masculinity.

<sup>115</sup> The term ‘carceral habitus’ has also been used within carceral geography research to refer to behaviours of society in demanding and resorting to carcerality. Schept states, ‘carcerality [...] operates at the level of habitus. That is, the hegemony of mass incarceration inscribes into individual and organisational bodies a set of dispositions and practices that operate at the level of common sense, such that critics of incarceration still turn to forms of carcerality (the justice campus) to address problems of carcerality (overcrowding)’ (Schept, 2012: 45). He describes this further as an ‘embodiment of penal logics [....] our internalization of neoliberal responsabilization, racialized constructs of criminality, and cultural embraces of punishment’ (Moran, 2013b). Indeed, carceral habitus refers to what he considers ‘mass incarceration’s pervasive presence’ (Schept, 2013: 71).

of incarceration is thus explicitly collective, as the narratives highlight by describing the incarceration of 'mujeres, mujeres y mujeres' (O'Neill, 2003: 68) and 'aquel rectángulo de cuerpos apretados, apiñados sin un solo resquicio' (Doña, 1978: 132). These statements reiterate their initial shock at the prison overcrowding. Real and Cuevas additionally link this to the prison space, 'tan abarrotada de gente' (García, 1982: 100); they affirm 'no teníamos humanamente sitio donde poder estar' (Cuevas, 2005: 147). Such passages provide visual depictions of prison collectivity in its extreme. O'Neill and Real further illustrate the significance of this collectivity by drawing on the problems it causes. O'Neill describes how 'reventaban antipatías, rencores, humillaciones acumuladas en una convivencia obligada, a la manera que revienta el pus cuando se aprieta un grano' (O'Neill, 2003: 155). The problems of cohesion within the prison community are depicted using grotesque images of contamination and disease. She explains further,

en la cárcel son peligrosas las peleas, no puede haberlas; el odio tiene que estar contenido, su rebrote se manifiesta en la ironía solapada; la palabra que se lanza al vuelo y es pillada por los demás, que la amplían con insidias cortantes, y la hacen subir y bajar en juego de malabarismo que el señalado ha de aguantar por la fuerza. (O'Neill, 2003: 156)

Here, she highlights how the confinement and enclosure of the prison space magnify the problems of collectivity. Real similarly describes the issues caused by enforced cohabitation:

la cárcel es un mundo muy pequeño y las pequeñas cosas toman en seguida carácter de tragedia, y no hay una relación entre el volumen de la tragedia

personal de uno, y el volumen de la cosa que la ha motivado, y que no es suficiente objetivamente ni para desequilibrar el sistema nervioso ni para que enfermes. Hay que tener en cuenta que tú vives día y noche y año tras año, en la misma celda con la compañera con la que tienes una discusión o una desavenencia de tipo político, o de principios, o personal, y entonces tú no tienes la escapatoria normal de irte a otra parte, de no verla, de salir [...] sino que estás, día y noche, al lado y enfrente de esta compañera, y el problema te recome y está siempre ahí presente, y no podéis dejar de hablar de él, y cada vez te recome más, y cada vez aumenta más de volumen, y está siempre ahí. (García, 1982: 145)

With this passage, Real emphasises the difficulties of collectivity and cohabitation, which she attributes in particular to the lack of privacy. Her description portrays the prison as a compressed, micro-environment that serves to exacerbate and magnify the problems of cohabitation. She thus highlights what Sykes refers to as the 'pains of imprisonment', which he argues are based on a categorical experience of deprivation (1958: 63-83).

The problems of group incarceration are further compounded by constant observation, from both peers and authority figures, brought about by the deprivation of privacy. Indeed, observation is a constituent component within discipline, as Foucault affirms (1991: 170-194). The narratives portray this constant surveillance through references to doors kept open 'a toda hora [...] para que nos vigilen' (O'Neill, 2003: 126), and looming buildings. These constitute structural depictions of the inevitable and constant surveillance to which the prisoners were subjected. O'Neill additionally references the continual presence of the guards, stating 'Don Eleuterio cumplió sus veinticuatro horas de guardia y quedó otro vigilante. Las horas eran las mismas; sus carceleros, otros; pero siempre había uno allí' (O'Neill, 2003: 57). Through this description, O'Neill portrays the

guards as a constant, faceless presence. Real also highlights this in her depiction of 'una funcionaria que la llamabamos la "Meaquedito", porque parecía un fantasma, nunca la oías' (García, 1982: 129). Prison authorities thus constitute a spectral presence that 'haunts' the prison and reinforce the observation and lack of privacy of incarceration.

Constant observation extends beyond the hierarchical to encompass peer-observation. Real reiterates the continual presence of fellow inmates, describing 'nos duchábamos por la noche, [...] muy deprisa, una duchándose y otra desnudándose, y otra en la cola, pero nos duchábamos' (García, 1982: 125). Such a depiction demonstrates the extent of the communal experience of carcerality: the women cannot even carry out their most intimate acts in solitude. This particularly emphasised through Real's description of a masturbating inmate 'que hacía unas escenitas horribles' (García, 1982: 147), as previously discussed.<sup>116</sup> She thus demonstrates the complete deprivation of privacy for the inmates, observed by one another and the authorities alike.<sup>117</sup> For Dominique Moran, this level of consistent observation constitutes a disciplinary mechanism whereby group detention foments peer-led surveillance (Moran et al., 2013: 142). Based on this examination of group imprisonment, Foucauldian panopticism is thus equally applicable to a collective situation. Indeed, for González-Ruibal, the use of common, collective

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<sup>116</sup> See Chapter 4 in this thesis.

<sup>117</sup> It should be noted that such constant observation also lends the inmates a certain degree of power in displaying themselves, as demonstrated by Real's reference to the prisoner who masturbates in a crowded cell. For the more conservative prisoners, this also constitutes a form of challenging their attitudes and beliefs.

prison spaces represented 'a return to *Ancien Regime* practices' as outlined within Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (2011: 63) that served to dehumanise and render the inmates an 'amorphous mass' (2011: 63). The constant observation and deprivation of privacy inherent within penal collectivity thereby provide an additional means for disciplining the incarcerated subject, rendering them invisibilised and dehumanised as a 'collective No / Body'.

This lack of privacy and constant observation and possibility of spying have severe repercussions for group cohesion. Informants posed a very real threat for those living during the dictatorship, particularly given the 'Causa General Informativa de los hechos delictivos y otros aspectos de la vida en la zona roja desde el 18 julio de 1936 hasta la liberación'.<sup>118</sup> The state established centres for denouncing anti-Francoist behaviour,<sup>119</sup> and the act of informing was deemed a 'cosa de los "buenos patriotas"' (Casanova, 2004: 29) that served to both 'estrechar el cerco sobre los sospechosos' (Fontana, 2003: 9) and guarantee inclusion within the 'Nuevo Estado' (Casanova, 2004: 31; Cenarro, 2002: 86). Even behind bars, prison authorities required the inmates to act as informants to monitor the behaviour of political prisoners. Real particularly highlights how prisoners involved in lesbian relationships were coerced into informing on their inmates, stating '[l]a dirección de las cárceles te lo tolera, pero te lo tolera a condición que

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<sup>118</sup> For information on this see Cenarro (2002) and Casanova (2004).

<sup>119</sup> According to Cenarro, this served to implement a 'sistema organizado de denuncias' that both played on and exacerbated the divisions of the Civil War and constituted a means for imposing discipline "desde arriba" (2002: 81).

les prestes los servicios que ellos necesitan. Y uno de los principales servicios que ellos necesitan es el espionaje de la gente política' (García, 1982: 153). Spying was thus enforced amongst prisoners and consequently, inmates regarded one another with suspicion; O'Neill describes the rumors about her after her return to prison from hospital that 'la mujer del capitán Leret está vendida a la Falange. Por eso la tuvieron tanto tiempo en el hospital. Y ahora la vuelven a la cárcel para que espíe las conversaciones de las presas. Se ha vendido a la Falange' (2003: 155). Such rumours highlight the very real fears of many citizens and inmates alike during the panoptic dictatorship. Real relates a similar fear in her reference to a fellow prisoner whom they suspect 'la habían puesto para espiar' (García, 1982: 124). She explains, 'nos limitábamos a decir: Hola, ¿cómo estás?, ¿y tu familia?, y cosas así' (García, 1982: 124). The threat of informants amongst the prison population thus altered the behaviour of the inmates, generating widespread suspicion and self-censorship. On a wider level, such suspicions additionally illustrate how the fear of the Other is especially exacerbated and magnified within contexts of intimate and enforced collectivity.

Irrespective of the threat of spying, constant observation further inculcates specific altered behaviours and a carceral habitus amongst the prison populus who feel forced to regulate their actions and self-presentation. Goffman outlines this concept of altered self-presentation through his notions of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' (1959). As Moran et al explain, front stage is 'the public aspect of identity presented in social engagement with others', whilst backstage refers to 'the

restoration of the interior sense of self' (2013: 140). As a sociological model, Giddens, considers the concept of frontstage with regard to bodily presence, leading him to read institutions such as the prison and the asylum as front stage places (1984: 123-124). Moran et al confirm:

“frontstage” and “backstage” are very familiar concepts within criminology, with scholars widely observing that inmates adopt façades while inside, that this ‘front’ is impossible to sustain indefinitely, and that the facility to ‘be oneself’ at some point is essential for prisoner wellbeing. (2013: 140)

Liebling reiterates this in her description of the prisoners’ need for ‘masks’ (Liebling and Arnold, 2005: 306) felt by inmates enduring the ‘compressed’ experience of imprisonment (Liebling and Arnold, 2005: 353). Similarly, Jewkes echoes these comments in her affirmation that

all prison researchers will be familiar with the sentiment that inmates feel it necessary to adopt a façade while inside. But equally, they have probably been told that the presentation of a heavily managed “front” is impossible to sustain for prolonged periods inside prison. (2005: 53)

The constant presence of others and the subsequent need for adopting a continual ‘frontstage’ persona can result in a ‘blurring of the boundaries between front stage and backstage’ (Jewkes, 2005: 54). The behaviours altered as a result of collective incarceration thereby represent a form of ‘frontstage’ act for the inmates, which is tantamount to the eradication of the individual amidst the prison community. In fact, Goffman’s notion of ‘prisonization’, which he describes as ‘civil death’ and a symbolic and literal ‘mortification’ of the self (1961: 24-25) thus references the eradication of the prisoner amongst the prison group. Applying this understanding

of prison as a 'mortification' of the self to the collective carceral habitus inculcated within Franco's jails highlights how the disciplinary setting serves to destroy the individual through its very collectivity. The narratives particularly demonstrate the eradication of the individual amidst the collective within the descriptions of the prison 'aborrada de gente' (García, 1982: 100) and the inmates as 'miles de mujeres. No sabíamos los nombres ni nos importaban' (O'Neill, 2003: 71). These comments reveal the internationalisation of the homogeneity of the 'collective No / Body' amongst the prisoner community. Public portrayals of female inmates also focussed on depicting a model of prisoner, which categorised all imprisoned women in the same manner, irrespective of their 'crimes'. Real demonstrates this in the reception of the political prisoners as 'serán putas' (García, 1982: 150). This depicts the blurring of boundaries between categories of 'sexual' and 'political' prisoners, condemned together in one homogenised prisoner group. Imprisonment thus wrought a form of communal invisibility on the inmates, rendering them a 'collective No / Body': acting together as one body, eradicated within the group, and marginalised within the prison setting. Given Giddens' comment that 'the underlying principle of the prison system is that of 'improving' the individual to play a fit and proper part in society' (1993: 138), the behavioural changes wrought on the inmate through collective imprisonment should be considered as an essential part of prison's rehabilitative aims. Based on this, then, collectivity can be seen as a vital aspect of carcerality through which the endeavours of penality can be better carried out.

## **Corporeal habitus**

Referring to the Francoist prison populus that is depicted within these narratives as a 'collective No / Body' emphasises the corporeal focus of incarceration in targeting the body to control the individual, as outlined by Foucault (1991: 8). This physical focus results in physically altered behaviours and dispositions shared by the inmates and circumscribed by their collectivity. Doña highlights:

[q]uince días habían pasado desde que Leonor empezara a hacer vida en común con las compañeras de la celda nueve. En este corto espacio de tiempo se había unificado a ellas, asimilando su lenguaje carcelario, sus costumbres y hasta un poco sus manías. [... Adela] le enseñó la prisión y la orientó sobre la mejor forma de vivir en ella. (Doña, 1978: 140)

She outlines how quickly and unwittingly the inmates develop altered behavioural dispositions and traits as a result of their communal inhabitation of the prison. By presenting these dispositions as 'la mejor forma de vivir en [la prisión]', she portrays them as a means for survival amidst the carceral. The use of the verbs 'unificar' and 'asimilar' demonstrate how adopting such delimited dispositions allows the inmate to become part of the prisoner group. The changes this passage describe can be examined with reference to the notion of habitus as a shared system of dispositions which affords 'a sense of one's (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005: 21). The texts explore these dispositions and illustrate how they are physically enacted by the

inmates through the assimilation of a collective carceral daily routine. Indeed, the descriptions can be read as ‘the embodied... sociospatially contextualised, nature of practice’ (Holt, 2008: 228). They thus reiterate the physicality of both the carceral and the corporeal.

In referencing these actions, Real uses the plural ‘we’ to describe ‘nosotras nos vestíamos, recogíamos el petate’ (García, 1982: 103). Similarly, Cuevas and O’Neill both adopt the same verbal construction in their statements ‘bajamos al patio’ (Cuevas, 2005: 46) and ‘nos pusimos en fila’ (O’Neill, 2003: 77). Using the first person plural subject allows the narratives to emphasise how the inmates function as a collective, acting together to embody carceral routines. Doña additionally portrays the corporeality of the collective, stating ‘aún era de noche cuando tocaron diana. Casi todas se incorporaron al tiempo’ (Doña, 1978: 132). The inmates are portrayed as moving together, their bodies having incorporated the routine of the prison. Indeed, they even react to the prison space as a collective body and thus demonstrate the embodiment of disciplinary regimes through their carceral habitus.

The narratives further illustrate the collective and corporeal enactment of the quotidian behaviours that are altered during incarceration by depicting the prison population functioning as a single body. Doña describes the prisoners moving together to accommodate new arrivals in an already overcrowded room:

-¡Venga, chicas!, que hay ingresos y tenemos que hacer sitio para siete compañeras.

La fila empezó a gruñir y comenzaron a comprimirse como si fueran

de goma hasta dejar huecos de un ladrillo o ladrillo y medio y, donde se lograba, llamaban “aquí una”, “otra aquí” y otra y otra..., hasta que las siete se fundieron en aquella masa que parecía un monstruo de cien cabezas. Cuando se movía una era como una convulsión general, no cabían movimientos individuales. (Doña, 1978: 132)

This depiction presents the prisoners as a collective with no room for the individual; rather, each prisoner and her movements constitute actions comprising the whole. By using the singular noun ‘la fila’, Doña reiterates the collectivised image of the inmates. This is reiterated by the image of the seven newcomers disappearing into the ‘masa’; such an image is indicative of the ‘prisonization’ of the inmate as a form of eradicating the individual through discipline and prison collectivity. Similarly, Real also describes how the prisoners develop alternative ‘techniques of the body’ for the quotidian action of sleeping within the prison context. She highlights:

[n]os tocaban para dormir, pues, en aquellos tiempos, dos losetas y media, es decir, cincuenta centímetros, y estábamos tan apelmazadas que a veces decía alguien en medio de la noche: Por favor chicas, volvámonos, que no puedo más, que tengo muchos dolores. Y tú oías a alguien que dirigía la orquesta y decía: a la uuna, a las doooooos, a las trees, y bum, dábamos la vuelta todas. (García, 1982: 100)

As above, this description also portrays the inmates as functioning together. Real uses the metaphor of the ‘orquesta’ to emphasise this. In response to the lack of space, the prisoners thus develop new bodily manners for undertaking daily activities. Drawing from Crossley’s comment that habitus constitutes ‘learned techniques’, ‘which afford the actor an understanding of some aspect of their world, manifest in their mastery over it’ (Crossley, 2013: 139), Real’s description

thereby demonstrates how the inmates develop specific behaviours in order to better function within the prison space. Mauss' explanation of bodily techniques as 'by and for social authority' is equally applicable (1992). These depictions of the specific corporeal behaviours inculcated within prison demonstrate both mastery on the part of the prisoner and control on the part of the authorities and serve to highlight a paradoxical reading of carceral habitus that can be examined through Bourdieu's affirmation that habitus does not describe free will, or the imposition of social structures; rather, it is informed by a mixture of the two (Bourdieu, 1984: 170). Consequently, using a Bourdieuan framework for analysing these behaviours affords a reading that responds to the complexities of adjusting to life within a collective disciplinary environment.

Beyond their daily routines, the inmates' carceral habitus also consisted of activities that were similarly embodied by the prisoner collective. These predominantly included labour undertaken by the inmates, which provided vital economic resources, as well as some degree of escape from their surroundings. The descriptions of this labour underscore its importance for the inmates, as Real demonstrates

date cuenta de una cosa, que una persona presa, ¿qué hace?, ¿qué maneja allí? Enlazas recuerdos. Y horas y horas sin hacer nada. Porque no tienes una labor. [...] el estar sin labor no había quien lo soportara. Es que era condenarnos al hastío. [...] casi siempre tu refugio era el trabajo. Y ya casi sentías la necesidad. Yo, hoy mismo, siento la necesidad de obligaciones, porque he cogido un ritmo de vida. (García, 1982: 130)

Working constituted an important refuge and thus provided the women with a

much-needed escape from their carceral surroundings. By engaging in labour, the inmate experiences relief, as Real emphasises, due to the assimilation of a ‘ritmo de vida’. Labour therefore lends their daily lives a sense of perceived normality, particularly through the replication of social working patterns. This establishment of work ethos and a working habitus means that the women’s carceral dispositions come to mirror those of outside society. From a disciplinary perspective this mirroring additionally forms a central component within justice and punishment. Indeed, as highlighted above, a dominant aim of the prison lies in the ‘re-programming’ (Giddens, 1993) of the deviant individual in order that they adhere to and function better within the norms of wider society. Consequently, enforcing a labour habitus is a means of rehabilitating the imprisoned individual for the purpose of social cohesion and production.

The adoption of work routines is presented as especially embodied within the social body of the prison populus. Doña writes

[d]etrás de las cancelas, en las galerías todo era silencio; las presas metidas en sus celdas hacían trabajos de “crochet” [...] sentadas en los petates enrollándose los pies con las mantas permanecían en la celda de Leonor en absoluto silencio. Cada una tenía los ojos fijos en su labor. (Doña, 1978: 180)

Engaging in these crafts for work is depicted as an all-consuming, embodied activity. Through this depiction of the inmates working, the text emphasises how prisoners use their bodies for relief and to escape.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> This focus on surroundings serves to situate the narrative corpus within a wider literary

The prisoners also gained relief through additional activities. Doña describes women singing to alleviate their hunger pains, stating ‘todas las tardes se reunía un grupo numeroso de presas para cantar. Esta era también una forma de ahuyentar el hambre [...] para no llorar de hambre como Mary, cantaban y cantaban’ (Doña, 1978: 173). In this case, the prisoners participate in physical and emotional behaviours to detract from the pains of imprisonment. Faced with gnawing hunger, they instead use their bodies in a way that can bring relief from the consequences of Francoist incarceration. This daily singing is thus illustrative of a further example of carceral habitus.

From a different perspective, Real also describes the activities of the children imprisoned alongside their mothers as a form of carceral habitus:

[u]no de los juegos de los niños en el patio, que nos hacía gracia aunque no tenía nada de gracioso, era que colocaban dos sillas, poniendo la parte de los barrotes de una contra la otra, y entonces “comunicaba”. Uno hacía que llegaba de visita y otra era la presa, y comunicaban. (García, 1982: 158)

This passage provides a poignant example of the children replicating their surroundings within their games and is further indicative of the habitus of the prisoners’ infants. Analysing the social community of a women’s prison, critic Giallombardo states that the inmate social system is a ‘response to deprivations of imprisonment’ (Giallombardo, 1974: 5) and concludes that inmates behaviours are

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tradition. Other narratives of imprisonment also engage with these questions of prison work and prison space, such as holocaust testimony. See Ross (2010: particularly 23-40) for a discussion on the question of embodiment within ‘containment’.

inherently informed by cultural expectations and values (Giallombardo, 1966: 185-187). This analysis encapsulates the carceral habitus developed by those forced to inhabit Francoist prisons and therefore is a means of emphasising the cultural components and norms that are reinforced by way of prison routines and behaviours.

### **Docile bodies and state habitus**

Within the context of the Franco regime, the dispositions and techniques of the body developed by prisoners can additionally be analysed with reference to Foucault's notions of docility and biopower.<sup>121</sup> The intersection of Bourdieu's notion of habitus with Foucauldian docile bodies represents a correlation that according to Schlosser (2013) emphasises the interrelation of dominant social structures, corporeality, and discipline in habitus. In the case of imprisonment during the dictatorship, these interlinked aspects constituted a means for delimiting corporeal actions, consequently imposing and reproducing state ideology on and through the body such that the prisoner was reduced to a vessel that embodied National-Catholic rhetoric. The narratives depict these enforced behaviours that encompass nationalist discourses:

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<sup>121</sup> These are outlined in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* respectively, see Foucault (1991, 1978).

[r]ecibimos una inspección semanal de un delegado especial de prisiones adiestrado en Alemania. Entraba con revólver y porra, nos hacía formar y gritar: ¡Franco! ¡Franco! ¡Franco! Ante él habíamos de leer los partes de Guerra del “glorioso Ejército Nacional”. Un día me tocó. No sabía qué hacer para que no me temblaran las manos. Con empeño infantil quería demostrar que todo aquello no me importaba. [...] abrí la boca y empecé a leer palabras que decían que el Ejército Rojo, cobarde, huía siempre; [...] mis labios iban dando forma a todo aquello; sentí algo así como si hubiera tenido en mis manos un látigo y lo levantara una y otra vez contra mis compañeras, contra mí misma. (O’Neill, 2003: 210)

This description demonstrates how the prisoners are made to reproduce and embody state doctrine. In reading ‘las victorias del glorioso Ejército Nacional’, the prisoners are literally forced to corporeally reproduce regime rhetoric. Real portrays a similar daily occurrence as the inmates are forced to sing the Francoist hymn ‘Cara al sol’. She explains:

[e]n el patio formábamos por salas, y cantábamos el “Cara al sol”, brazo en alto, y se rezaba. Esto del himno lo tuvimos que discutir políticamente, porque de diez salas de políticas sólo cantaban una o dos. Y nos castigaban y tenías que acabar cantándolo y la humillación era doble. Y lo tuvimos que discutir porque había muchas que decían: Bueno, ¿y qué ganáis con esto? Porque parecía muy revolucionario y al final no lo era. O sea, que al principio de la cárcel como protesta valió y no se cantaba, pero, pasando el tiempo, dejó de ser válido. (García, 1982: 103)

Like O’Neill, Real also highlights how the female body is made to literally incorporate state dogma by singing, praying, and giving the fascist salute. This passage confirms the perceived futility of resistance; instead, the women decide to acquiesce and participate in the façade of singing ‘Cara al sol’. These behaviours are thus adopted and accepted as a strategy for the (easier) survival of the inmate. As a result, the female body is used as a mechanism to discipline the prisoner and

render her appropriately docile for life within Francoist society. However, for the women participating in these rituals, this is reflective of a carceral habitus that allows them to continue to function, and perhaps more importantly, survive, within the prison environment. Considered within their dictatorial context, these actions illustrate the embodied imposition of National-Catholic rhetoric. Reading these dispositions with reference to Foucauldian docility and biopower also allow us to frame the behaviours of the carceral habitus within a wider context of discipline and docility deriving from state dogma.

As well as enforcing explicitly Nationalist and Catholic acts, the prison system also inculcated more subtle conservative behaviours. These are particularly evident in the imposition of strict daily routines. The narratives describe their structured daily lives, highlighting that 'nos levantábamos a las siete de la mañana' (García, 1982: 102), 'bajamos al patio' (Cuevas, 2005: 46), and 'nos pusimos en fila' (O'Neill, 2003: 77). Additionally, the prisoners faced a nightly curfew, as O'Neill reveals: 'dábamos la vuelta mientras a la espalda se cerraba el portón del patio. A los diez minutos había que estar enchiquerado en la colchoneta porque nos dejaban sin luz' (2003: 223). This curfew not only brings darkness, but also 'el silencio doloroso' (Ibid.: 59). Such routines served to confine the daily behaviours and movements of the prisoners within punitive carceral spatiality and temporality. O'Neill's description of the darkness and the painful silence particularly emphasise the disciplinary nature of the daily delimitation of their actions. Moreover, read within the context of Francoism and the very specific

model of ideal femininity it promoted, these daily routines gain further social significance. By forcing the women to adhere to a quotidian schedule that consisted of rising early, working during the day, and sleeping at night, the women are made to enact the routines of appropriate womanhood circumscribed within regime law that prohibited certain forms of female employment.<sup>122</sup> Legal reforms outlawing nighttime labour<sup>123</sup> and prostitution<sup>124</sup> were thus encompassed within the prison routine itself and the subsequent establishment of a carceral habitus. This was further enforced by the prohibition of work on Sundays, as Real explains: ‘en la cárcel de Barcelona había sido una verdadera persecución en cuanto a no dejarnos trabajar en domingo, y en la cárcel de Ventas seguían con las mismas’ (García, 1982: 130). National-Catholic rhetoric, such as observing the Sabbath, was thereby inscribed on the prisoners’ carceral habitus through strict routines and the delimitation of the prison space and the prisoner body.

From a further religious perspective, prison authorities also introduced a decree offering the ‘redención de penas por el trabajo’ (Gómez Bravo, 2008). Consequently, prisoners were sent to work; O’Neill declares

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<sup>122</sup> Women were prohibited from work such as lawyer, diplomat, stockbroker, or customs official, as well as “dangerous” roles and “morally” jeopardizing work’ (Davidson, 2011: 405). For more on legal reforms concerning women under Franco see especially Scanlon (1986).

<sup>123</sup> The Fuera del Trabajo, 9th March 1938 declared that ‘prohibirá el trabajo nocturnal de las mujeres, regulará el trabajo a domicilio y libertará a la mujer casada del taller y de la fábrica’ (Scanlon, 1986: 320).

<sup>124</sup> Although tacitly accepted by the regime until its prohibition in the Decreto-Ley of 3rd March 1956 (Scanlon, 1986: 322; Morcillo, 2010: 90), prostitution was regulated by the state and limited to brothels through such decrees as the Patronato de protección a la mujer’. For more on this, see especially Morcillo (2008; 2010: 91-94).

de Madrid llegaban órdenes y más órdenes para regular la vida de los presos, que en aquellas fechas subían a millones. [...] (N)o mandaban ropas ni alimentos, pero sí órdenes; con ellas la “Redención de Penas por el Trabajo”. Habíamos de redimirnos por la laboriosidad. (O’Neill, 2003: 225)

As this passage emphasises, the ‘redención de penas’ surfaced as a means to regulate the overwhelming prison population through labour. This constituted and enforced the very Catholic notion of redemption, predicated on the concepts of sin, atonement, and forgiveness (González-Ruibal, 2011: 57). By inscribing this within the Francoist penitentiary, the state served to reinstate the role of the Church within justice (Gómez Bravo, 2008: 15) and reinforce Christianity (Casanova, 2004: 25). For the prisoners, such work provided an important outlet: ‘tu refugio era el trabajo. Y ya casi sentías la necesidad. Yo, hoy mismo, siento la necesidad de obligaciones, porque he cogido un ritmo de vida’ (García, 1982: 130). Prison work thereby constituted a refuge for the inmates that simultaneously served to inscribe the Catholic notions of redemption and atonement of sin within the very dispositions of the prisoners’ carceral habitus.

Additionally, the actions that comprised the daily routines of prisoners were similarly delimited by state rhetoric. These were particularly based on domestic tasks and maintaining cleanliness. This was enforced by the prison authorities, who use the prisoners themselves as workers to clean. Real describes, ‘sacan a uno a barrer y a limpiar por allí’ (García, 1982: 98). The prisoners are thus used as tools to manage the prison space. As a result, they enact the behaviour sanctioned by the dictatorship – that of cleanliness – and are inducted into Franco’s New Spain through rehabilitative behaviours. These dispositions soon come to constitute part

of the daily habitus of the inmates; Real describes 'recogíamos el petate' (García, 1982: 103) and other domestic actions as central to their daily routines. This served to bring the women into state rhetoric of femininity through the habitus inculcated by imprisonment. Similarly, upon arrival, O'Neill is informed of the importance of cleanliness within the prison by fellow prisoner, Doctor Solís, who states: '¡Cuando se haga de día no olviden hacer la limpieza! [...] Sí, [...] en la cárcel hay que tener más aseo que en ninguna parte. ¡Anímense y barran, frieguen y procuren tenerlo todo en condiciones higiénicas!' (O'Neill, 2003: 53). These words served to instill domestic behaviours in the prisoners. Although this is framed within the context of the poor conditions of the prison, enacting such domesticity remains a gendered behaviour, particularly within the wider context of a dictatorship that espoused the ideal of domestic femininity. However, reading this as an example of habitus allows for an analysis of such domestic behaviour as a means of vindicating the space and making it inhabitable.

Although these examples highlight the docility inherent within the carceral habitus of the prisoners, the women also developed strategies of resistance. O'Neill particularly emphasises these, describing the behaviour of those forced to give the fascist salute:

levantábamos los brazos, bien estirados, como desde allá lo dispusieran Hitler y Mussolini; alguna, más traviesa, cuando los ojillos del vigilante se le desviaban de encima, curvaba el codo y, con gesto gracioso, se llevaba la mano a la cabeza para rascársela; y había que morderse el labio para no soltar la carcajada. Después, el grito "de ritual": ¡FRANCO! ¡FRANCO! ¡FRANCO!'. (O'Neill, 2003: 222)

The women thus find ways of encompassing transgression within the routine acts comprising their carceral habitus. She reiterates this rejection of doctrine through bodily behaviours when discussing forced labour below,

habíamos de redimirnos por la laboriosidad. Rpartieron trabajo. Me tocó el de leer para mis compañeras mientras ellas hacían sus labores de aguja. Había de permanecer horas apegada a las palabras de José Antonio para estudiar y conocer falangismo, porque no lo conocíamos bastante. Los oídos de mis oyentes se cerraban al rumor de mis palabras en escape ligero, y yo acabé por leer y leer sin enterarme de lo que decía. (O'Neill, 2003: 225)

The women develop new corporeal strategies for evading the behaviours and actions they are forced to enact. These strategies constitute a female political prisoner carceral habitus that allows the women to survive amidst the harsh climate of prison through a mixture of acquiescence and transgression.

### ***Solidarity and Resistance***

In contrast, the collectivity of prison renders it an ideal environment for the establishment of solidarity between inmates.<sup>125</sup> This constitutes a particular necessity for those imprisoned for political reasons under oppressive authoritarian dictatorships, given the affirmation that solidarity leads to 'decreased suffering'

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<sup>125</sup> As an area of research, this has received significant attention from critics such as Giallombardo (1974; 1966); Larson and Nelson (1984); Schalkwyk (1994); Sykes (1958). See also Bondeson's theory and methodology chapter for an overview of some key research (1989).

(Bondeson, 1989: 20). Throughout, the narratives emphasise the importance of relationships shared between inmates, confirming the prevalence of 'amistad' (Cuevas, 2005: 35), 'solidaridad completa' (Ibid.: 123), and 'una verdadera cadena de solidaridad' (Ibid.: 46). In fact, the texts highlight the importance of prioritising establishing friendships, as Real declares 'el primer día en una cárcel [...] no te sientas en ningún sitio, no quieres más que conocer compañeras' (García, 1982: 124). According to this statement, connecting with comrades is a vital step for the newly arrived inmate as it provides a means for overcoming the sensation of the prison as a 'ningún sitio' and thereby constitutes an act of survival. Doña's protagonist Leonor demonstrates a similar need to reconnect with comrades and friends upon her integration within the prison community following months of solitary confinement. Having asked after her friend Paquita Ortiz, whom she knew to be in the same prison, she is introduced to Paquita's cellmates, who welcome her, stating: 'nosotras somos de la "comuna" de Paquita. Conocemos tu caso y cada día hemos esperado tu regreso con verdadera ansiedad. No tienes qué decir cómo te han tratado [...] quéda[te] con nosotras' (Doña, 1978: 134-135). Connecting with others thus allows her to establish physical and emotional support networks to overcome the faceless collectivity and horrors of prison. The importance of contact with others is especially emphasised by Real's comments on the horrors of solitude: referring to the isolation of solitary confinement, she affirms 'lo que se trata es de que te mortifiques, de que lo pases mal' (García, 1982: 129).

In addition to lessening the trauma of imprisonment, for O'Neill,

establishing a friendship with fellow inmate Germaine provides essential support for her emotional survival and wellbeing. She confirms,

el paso de Germaine por la prisión fue bueno para mí. Era la conquista de una hermana. Un hallazgo así siempre es interesante en el mundo; cuando se logra en una terrible cárcel es un premio. Y volví a hablar de cosas casi olvidadas: música, libros, paisajes, pueblos, almas amigas, vida nueva. [...] Y sentí temor de perder a la amiga, deseo de que la condenaran, para que no se me fuera. Tenía miedo de caer en la soledad. (O'Neill, 2003: 89)

Her relationship with Germaine gives her the chance to return to her almost forgotten hobbies and interests and thus to reconstruct her life. As she affirms, this provides her with a 'vida nueva', allowing her to survive her incarceration. Friendship offers a tool for surpassing the pains, deprivations, and dehumanization of incarceration.

Additionally, solidarity between inmates provides more than a survival technique for the initial moments of incarceration; it constitutes a way of life behind bars. This is especially emphasised through the narratives' references to the demand for collectivity ahead of individualism; Doña explains 'la vida de cada una era la vida todas' (1978: 282). Collectivity and community thus define imprisonment. She reiterates this, confirming, 'en las condiciones en que se vivía nadie podía permitirse el lujo del personalismo. La colectividad tenía [sic] que estar por encima de cualquier otro interés, había que frenar los egoísmos y las mezquindades' (1978: 142). In this statement, collectivity is portrayed as a prerequisite for the survival of the entire group. As a community, the prisoners are required to develop collective behaviours – habitus – in order to secure their

wellbeing and survival. Consequently, collective living constitutes the foundations for the carceral habitus of Franco's political prisoners' survivals. In *Una mujer en la guerra de España*, O'Neill highlights a similar concern for the collective functioning of the inmates in order to secure their survival. On her first night in jail, she is advised of the importance of working and cleaning together, however, as she emphasises:

[e]l significado de sus palabras era algo más que el acto material de limpiar una celda, un retrete. Era el desligamiento de la preocupación personal en beneficio de la colectividad; la actitud, alerta siempre, en el cumplimiento del deber. Y también el encajarse en la armonía cósmica, aun en los momentos que parece que ha quedado quebradada. (O'Neill, 2003: 53)

This excerpt emphasises the importance of the collective for the functioning of the entire prison system. Cleaning constitutes a group act shared amongst the inmates, which both serves to protect them from the brutalities and decrepitude of the prison space and bring the inmates together as a collective, united by their shared carceral habitus. Real highlights the same need for hygiene, stating 'lo único posible era mucha limpieza, mucha ducha. Y como no nos daban jabón, lo que hacíamos era revender el chusco de pan para comprarnos jabón' (García, 1982: 101). Cleaning is thus presented as a means for self-protection from the prison space itself and constitutes a shared response to the carceral space of the prison that unites the inmates. Real reaffirms the significance of this prisoner unity by emphasising the need for a shared working habitus at the level of the individual cell members. She declares 'todas teníamos que contribuir y trabajar, [...] que todo el mundo tenía que contribuir con algo' (García, 1982: 107). She thus underlines the importance of

shared community for the wellbeing of all the prisoners functioning within the collective prison space.

In living together in shared cells, the women establish networks that they refer to as 'familias'. O'Neill affirms, 'encontré una nueva familia en torno mío: mis compañeras' to which she adds '¡pero qué bien se está en la casa!' (2003: 219). The prison is thus depicted as an explicitly collective place. In fact, these groups were essential for the survival of the prisoners. The prison 'familias' shared resources, provided emotional support, and looked after one another. O'Neill confirms 'las que, como Librada y yo, no poseíamos a nadie en la calle que mendigara o se prostituyera, teníamos que apretarnos el cinturón, aunque siempre alguien nos ofrecía un poco de comida' (2003: 101). Prison solidarity and collectivity provided the necessary resources for the survival of the inmates. Doña demonstrates the same behaviour amongst the prisoners describing 'se repartía todo con la equidad más rigurosa. Se contaban hasta las aceitunas, lo que no se podía contar se medía con suma precisión: [...] cuatro aceitunas, una cuarta parte de boniato o media patata...' (1978: 147). This description highlights how the prisoners functioned as a collective in which each person was included. Pooling resources became the only means to supplement the paucity of provisions. This behaviour, shared by the women, constituted a carceral habitus of the prison community, which allowed them to survive and to use the collective for this. As a result of these shared dispositions, the inmates come to function collectively and utilise this for their survival. Equally the women act as a collective, caring for one another after

experiences of torture and prison brutality. Real describes 'la familia siempre alrededor de la cama' (García, 1982: 150) tending to the needs of their fellow inmate. This description portrays the solidarity and support amongst prisoners; the narratives are frequented by similar examples that emphasise the support the prisoners provide each other upon arrival and after experiencing solitary confinement and the myriad physical abuses to which the inmates were subjected. Friendships thus provide a means of further overcoming the brutalities and dehumanisations of imprisonment.

The support gained from the solidarity of group imprisonment is shown as particularly important for those enduring extreme brutalities, such as especially violent torture and solitary confinement. For Doña's Leonor, the contact from fellow prisoners whilst she is in confinement proves invaluable, she describes:

un ruido enorme lo llenó todo: puertas que se abrían, palmas, pisadas fuertes...Desde el silencio de la celda a Leonor le reconfortó el ruido: ¡Estaba entre ellas! El silencio de sesenta días de calabozo había desaparecido. (Doña, 1978: 100)

The sounds of prison life that penetrate her cell emphasise the collectivity of the prison environment surrounding her and provide audible illustrations of life within the prison. After sixty days in solitary confinement, the noises of fellow inmates offer great emotional support to Leonor. The prisoners also communicate with her through the cell walls:

Desde esa distancia llamaron:  
- Compañera, ¿cómo te llamas?  
Leonor se había levantado de un brinco. El corazón le latía fuertemente. La

voz del otro lado de la cancela, haciendo bocina con las manos, volvió a insistir: “¿Cómo te llamas, compañera?”

[...]

- Ánimo, compañera. Ya sabes que estamos contigo. ¡Hasta la vista!  
Este fue el primer contacto que Leonor tuvo con sus compañeros de prisión. Su voz, cálida y solidaria, la reconfortó. (Doña, 1978: 101)

In this extract, Doña emphasises the significance of contact with other inmates whose presence and words provide both physical and figurative comfort for Leonor. This is presented as surpassing physical boundaries, such as, in this case, the cell walls that separate Leonor from the rest of the prison. After the prolonged period of solitary confinement that began her incarceration, this communication with other inmates puts an end to Leonor’s solitude. By connecting with other prisoners, Leonor is thus able to move beyond the deprivations and pains of confinement.

### **The personal is political**

As well as providing much-needed emotional and physical support, the collectivity of group imprisonment also provided a means to unite political inmates, particularly on account of overcrowding, and the authorities’ desire to segregate political prisoners and common-law detainees. Shared anti-Francoism and experiences of political oppression served to bring together these women, as Cuevas affirms ‘si una era presa política era antifranquista y por tanto era una compañera’ (2005: 75). The personal and political nature of this bond is further

evident within the use of specified terminology to refer to fellow inmates as ‘compañeras’ and ‘camaradas’ (García, 1982: 144). Employing this language creates a politicised semantic field of solidarity that further comprises the carceral habitus of these women. This semantic field is evident in the use of the term ‘comuna’ to refer to the groups of women who shared a cell together.<sup>126</sup> This use of language is demonstrative of the collectivity between prisoners that is rendered through the very communal nature of prison. Linguistic denomination thus highlights the political union between prisoners and as a result, serves to (re)inforce the political status of prisoners, which was legally negated by the state. The appearance of such terminology throughout the narratives by Cuevas, Real, and Doña demonstrates a linguistic and political continuum that evidences a politicised carceral habitus.

In addition, collectivity also provides a positive aspect for the prisoners. Real highlights, ‘nuestra gran fuerza moral ha sido la gran cantidad de gente que éramos’ (García, 1982: 132). She thus underscores the significance of group imprisonment for the moral of the political prisoners. Doña emphasises this more clearly in the following exchange with Leonor in her solitary cell:

‘- A la hora de la comida te traerán una escoba. Y – bajando la voz -, mírala, ¿me oyes?  
Sí, te oigo. [...]  
En el moño de la escoba, clavado con un alfiler, estaba una nota y una cuartilla en blanco. Muy metido entre las palmas, un lapis [sic]. Leyó: “compañera, sabemos que te han maltratado bárbaramente. En nombre de todas, te saludamos. Mientras estés incomunicada, la misma compañera que te ha pasado este saludo seguirá en relación contigo. Dinos si necesitas

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<sup>126</sup> See especially García (1982: 108) and Doña (1978: 134).

sacar algún recado a la calle. Haremos lo que esté a nuestro alcance por ayudarte. Toda la prisión está llena. Resiste, aquí también luchamos.”  
Sí, también luchaban. (Doña, 1978: 103-104)

For the prisoners, this form of contact with others becomes a political act that reinforces their moral and encourages resistance. Moreover, relationships with those outside the prison constituted a further level of solidarity for the inmates. Indeed, Real emphasises this, declaring ‘¡Que el tener paquete, el tener visita, llena mucho una cárcel!’ (García, 1982: 162). Maintaining such a connection with the outside world offers the inmates the chance to supersede the physical and emotional confines of the prison. In addition, through these visits and packages, friends and family members succeeded in smuggling messages into the prison. Real describes:

[t]enías una comunicación a la semana y la familia clandestinamente te pasaba información. Ya en un bocadillo, ya en un tuvo [sic] de pasta de dientes o en una cazuela de doble fondo. O desde fuera se te pedía informe de la situación en el interior de la cárcel, comportamiento y conducta. Todo esto se hacía a través del contacto con los familiares. Esta información se hacía entre tres o cuatro, paseando cogidas del brazo. (García, 1982: 104)

This complicit smuggling of information provided inmates with a means to maintain solidarity and connections with the external world and thereby surpass the prison boundaries. As well as offering emotional support through the contact with loved ones, this information functioned as a political lifeline for those behind bars. Amidst the continuing fight against fascism within Europe, prisoners believe that the success of first the Republicans, and then the Allies, would end both their imprisonment and the dictatorship. O’Neill highlights, ‘todas tenían sobre sus

espaldas veinte y treinta [años], pero esperaban el final de la Guerra para salir. -- Cuando ganen los nuestros, tú saldrás' (2003: 171). This is reiterated later through the declaration, 'pero todas saldremos cuando ganen los nuestros' (Ibid.: 75). The use of the future tense portrays this as a certainty; furthermore, the repeated reference to 'los nuestros' presents the feelings of community, belonging, and support between those fighting fascism, whether behind bars, on the homefront, or engaged in active warfare. Real repeats this affirming that 'se sigue creyendo que el fin de la Guerra Mundial ha de traer para nosotros ventajas que han de redundar en nuestra libertad' (García, 1982: 132). The belief in an incumbent Allied victory gave the women hope. Cuevas confirms 'el contacto con el exterior' brought 'la conciencia de que, a despecho de todo, el descontento seguía movilizándolo a gente en la calle' and 'mantenía un tono de lucha' (2005: 85). Clinging to the outside world thus constituted a means of survival for those imprisoned. By transcending the prison walls, the women emotionally and politically escape their confinement.<sup>127</sup>

In terms of political affiliations, the 'familias' the inmates lived in tended to be limited to political parties. As well as emphasising the importance of solidarity between all inmates, the narratives also serve to portray the factions and disparities between 'familias' and those inmates with differing political affiliations.

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<sup>127</sup> A few prisoners were even able to surpass these boundaries to the greatest level through escape. *Presas* contains two testimonies referencing the escape of prisoners, see (2005: pages 137-146 and 2005: 163-170). However, although these examples may constitute the ultimate destruction of the prison walls, the nature of escape is such that it demands a high level of inside and outside support. As Real affirms, 'porque las fugas tenían que estar preparadas desde la calle para que salieran bien. Porque lo importante no era fugarte, sino saber a dónde ibas después. Porque en aquel tiempo de controles incesantes de la Guardia Civil por todas partes, si no tenías dónde esconderte estabas perdido' (García, 1982: 133).

These disparities are made especially evident within Real's *Las cárceles de Soledad*

*Real*, which affirms

en la cárcel de Barcelona había muchas anarquistas y también de Esquerra y de Estat Catalá [sic] y teníamos discusiones políticas, pero entre nosotras, [...] la característica de nuestras discusiones era casi siempre [sic] de enfrentamiento. [...] A lo que más se recurría era al insulto personal. (García, 1982: 106)

She also describes disagreements between attitudes differentiating the political parties, as she explains:

[n]osotras las comunistas, nada más llegar, nos impusimos un trabajo de cara a la reclusión: hacer obras de teatro para distraer a la gente, ocuparnos de la sala de enfermos, de la de ancianos, ocuparnos de los niños. Las anarquistas nos llamaban por eso colaboracionistas. (García, 1982: 105)

She thus highlights how political ideology not only separated prisoners, it also informed their daily living habits. As Real emphasises, the differences in political ideals served to separate inmates into 'comunas' of shared beliefs which 'se hacían entre gente del partido' (García, 1982: 108). She states 'por lo demás cada una hacía la vida con su grupo' (García, 1982: 106). Within these groups, the women went about their daily lives in accordance with their beliefs. Real outlines the importance of a fair division of labour, declaring 'todas teníamos que contribuir y trabajar' (García, 1982: 107). Moreover, as she describes, 'cada comuna tenía una a la que le llamábamos la madre, y que cambiaba cada semana' (García, 1982: 108). Being in charge is thus also shared equally amongst the inmates. Each group additionally functioned with reference to the prison collective as a whole. Real

explains, 'cada galería tenía una responsable' (García, 1982: 125). Similarly, Doña highlights that 'se creo un comité en cada departamento para organizar la ayuda' (Doña, 1978: 142-143). Even within such extreme disciplinary conditions, the prisoners fought to maintain fair representation and democratic leadership. This constituted a means for countering the authoritarian nature of the regime. The inmates thus utilised their collectivity to engage in political activism. The focus on these behaviours is particularly highlighted within Real's narrative; this emphasises the political ideologies underscoring her text. The emphasis on communism is also evident within the carceral habitus of her inmates. She states:

realizábamos un trabajo de cara a los demás y es que nosotros, de cara a nosotros mismos, lo necesitábamos. Quiero decir [...] esta especie de vigilancia, esta militancia, esto de decir: Tú eres la responsable de la sección de ayuda, y tú te has de ocupar de saber dónde hay más necesidades [sic]. (García, 1982: 131)

These examples demonstrate clearly how the prisoners incorporate politicised ideologies into their daily lives within such a disciplinary space. Life within prison collectivity is informed by this ideology, and can hence be considered with reference to the notion 'the personal is political'. The collective uptake of such politicised quotidian behaviours constitutes a political carceral habitus in which the inmates resisted the oppressive discipline of carceral space and instead rendered the prison inhabitable.

Real additionally describes the daily routines of the inmates with reference to political beliefs and affiliations. She reiterates the development of dispositions and behaviours in the following passage:

[n]osotras, las comunistas, nos habíamos planteado como disciplina el ducharnos a diario, y por la noche, aunque estuviéramos a veinte grados bajo cero, nosotras dormíamos con la ventana abierta, porque nos habíamos planteado defender nuestra salud en aquello que pudiéramos. Entonces, claro, se reían de nosotras y hacían mucha guasa diciendo que éramos unas machas. Y yo recuerdo que nos duchábamos y, cuando nos íbamos a secar, el agua que se había quedado entre los dedos de los pies estaba helada. (García, 1982: 167)

By highlighting the communist affiliation of these inmates, this passage portrays personal hygiene and cleanliness as a political matter. Here washing is deemed necessary, even in freezing conditions; this can be read with reference to the esteemed purity of self and subject that communist ideology demanded. In Real's own words, 'hemos querido ser puros, puros, puros' (García, 1982: 146), as was achieved through abnegation and strict routines. In the context of political incarceration within Franco's prisons, the need to wash as demonstrated by the communist prisoners constituted a response to the physical and figurative prison in which they found themselves. Cleanliness provided the inmates with a means for (attempting) to protect themselves and ensure their survival amidst the harsh disease-ridden climate of the prison, whilst simultaneously allowing them to respond to the eradication of political identity and the social condemnation of red women as impure and decrepit. As a group act, the nightly hygiene ritual represents the visibilisation and establishment of a politicised carceral habitus. It is significant, however, that in order to combat their own erasure and condemnation, the inmates subscribe to the very routines based on moral purity of body and soul that were also enacted by the idealised Christian femininity of the regime. Through these behavioural dispositions the inmates thus embody specific,

collective acts that concurrently respond to, reject, and replicate Francoist models of feminine behaviour in the name of their politics.

In addition to behavioural routines, the prisoners also engaged in more specific actions and organised events influenced by their political ideology; these included literacy classes, theatre performances, and group readings, as are emphatically portrayed throughout Real's narrative. She explains 'nos impusimos un trabajo de cara a la reclusión: hacer obras de teatro para distraer a la gente' (García, 1982: 105). Real feels compelled to participate in these activities as a political act. She highlights, 'decíamos que era una necesidad hacer obras de teatro para la gente, para que hiciese algo' (Ibid.: 105). As such, these actions afforded emotional and moral survival in prison. She describes further, 'se proponía, por ejemplo, hacer una obra de teatro. Se hacían ensayos, se hacían los escenarios, los trajes, y así se ayudaba a conservar el nivel moral' (Ibid.: 132). The prisoners also shared books; 'una de las cosas que más hemos hecho ha sido la lectura colectiva de libros' (Ibid.: 141). This also afforded a level of escapism for the prisoners. Together they worked to ensure the provision of books, as she explains 'se organizó una especie de biblioteca ambulante [...] estaba a disposición de todas, pero en un momento dado, por si hubiera un cacheo, cada libro de éstos tenía una propietaria' (García, 1982: 189). They contrive to work around the imposed prison conditions in order to maintain their actions. The scheduled ownership of shared resources is indicative of the prison habitus developed by the inmates, which allow them to engage in their activities within the carceral disciplinary space. Real frames this

within a politicised context by emphasising the political ideologies of those involved. She declares '[n]osotras las comunistas' and 'nos impusimos' (García, 1982: 105). By using the first person plural, Real reiterates the collectivised group subjectivity shared by the communist women. This is reinforced by her description of how ideological differences engender segregation amongst the prison community, as she explains, 'las anarquistas nos llamaban por eso colaboracionistas. Decían que les solucionábamos problemas a la dirección' (García, 1982: 105). In describing this, she confirms the presence and influence of political ideology within quotidian activities, which renders the personal, and in this case, the collective, inherently political. By referring to these examples in such detail, Real uses images of collectivity to emphasise her political status. Collective participation in activities not only affords emotional and moral survival strategies, it also allows the prisoners the opportunity to reinforce their political ideologies and subjectivities. These actions thus constitute a political carceral habitus that provides a means for resisting the oppressions of Franco's prisons.

As well as leisure activities, the prisoners also used their time for more practical purposes, such as studying literacy and developing skills. Real states how 'se ponían a leer o a dar clases a las analfabetas' (García, 1982: 104).<sup>128</sup> Illiteracy was rife amongst Spanish women during this period, with one third of women unable to read or write (Carbayo-Abengózar, 2000: chapter 7). These classes

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<sup>128</sup> However, she also describes how these classes were stopped by the authorities, 'habíamos organizado clases en los patios para enseñar a leer y escribir, pero llegó un momento en que nos lo prohibieron, porque decían que no eran clases, sino cursos de política' (García, 1982: 158).

therefore allowed the women to gain vital life skills and meant they could write to their loved ones. They also spent their time working on both formal labour in prison workshops, and personal projects they could do in their cells or in the communal areas. Such work helped the women pass the time and also provided them with a means for financial income for the prisoners and their families. Real explains:

la vida de patio era vida de trabajo de labores. Se han hecho mucho en las cárceles, mucho tapete de punto de media, se han bordado mantillas, se ha hecho ganchillo. Esta labor la entregábamos a los familiares, o a los amigos, cuando teníamos comunicación, y ellos la vendían y te compraban en la calle lo que necesitabas. O se quedaban el dinero, o parte del dinero. (García, 1982: 103)

The examples of knitting, crochet, and lace making all constituted archetypal feminine crafts typically undertaken within the home. As a result, these chores highlight the delimitation of women within the domestic sphere. In this context of prison, however, the inmates additionally used these crafts as labour in order to gain vital financial support for themselves and their families. Working in this manner meant that the women complied with the demands of prison authorities to adhere to traditional feminine docility, whilst simultaneously utilising these activities as a form of active and financial resistance against the brutalities of Francoist imprisonment. Indeed, as emphasised above, working provided the women with a much-needed escapism: Real confirms, 'tu refugio era el trabajo' (García, 1982: 130). By engaging in such work, the women formed a collective body of resistance against the horrors of the prison. As such, they use the skills

demanded by the state-prescribed model of femininity as a strategy for survival.

In addition to these activities, which provided emotional relief, the prisoners also carried out more direct political action. This was particularly facilitated by both the sheer numbers of political prisoners incarcerated together and by the fact that women of the same political ideology tended to form 'comunas' and 'familias'. Within these groups, the women organised political meetings, prepared prison newspapers, and even took part in direct acts of resistance. Real explains:

para hacer las reuniones teníamos determinadas celdas y había determinadas compañeras que vigilaban. En las celdas que teníamos para hacer las reuniones echábamos a las camaradas que vivían allí y entraba el comité responsable de la galería, o el comité responsable del periódico, o el comité que se tuviera que reunir. Y en una celda de al lado de la cancela había siempre una camarada vigilando y había una consigna para cuando llegase la funcionaria. Entonces salíamos rápidas a los lavabos. (García, 1982: 140-141)

The inmates thus used the space and people available to them to engage in these illicit acts of political engagement. Within these meetings they prepared materials or newspapers, such as the '*Mundo Obrero*, que se hacía a mano' (García, 1982: 140).<sup>129</sup> They also organised events, Real describes:

llegaba el 7 de noviembre, una fecha en la que coincidía la fiesta de la Resistencia de Madrid con una fiesta soviética, y en las reuniones de partido se proponía que se hiciera algo. Y yo, por ejemplo, dije: Yo voy a escribir algo para representar. El tema era nuestra liberación. (García, 1982: 142)

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<sup>129</sup> For more information about period periodicals, see Sierra Blas (2005).

They thus maintained political and cultural collective acts within prison. Political involvement whilst in prison extended into acts of resistance that utilised the facilities and provisions that had available. For instance, inmates involved in labour in prison workshops used the scraps of fabric left over from dressmaking to make overalls for the party. Real explains,

con la tela que sobraba, hacíamos a diario tres partes. Estas partes que nos correspondían las dejábamos en las máquinas de las otras camaradas, o sea, que si a una maquinista le teníamos que poner tres monos para que los cosiera, le poníamos cinco, y ella ya sabía que dos eran para el partido y se ocupaba de esconderlos y sacarlos de la cárcel. (García, 1982)

The women thus used the forced labour as an act of resistance. Moreover, they also participated in acts of resistance that predominantly protested against the brutal conditions of the prison. In her testimony within *Presas*, Pilar Pascual describes a hunger strike:

estuvimos en huelga de hambre y a los tres días suben con la caldera de comida y dicen: “¡La comida!”. Ya habíamos quedado todas de no levantarnos de los petates, no nos levantamos y chitón. La vez seguía llamando: “¡La comida!”, y nadie se movía. Eso fue por el caldo de la mañana. Subió el director que había [...] y dijo: “No quieren ustedes coger comida, pues no hay otra cosa, ¿eh? Y les voy a decir una cosa, yo pongo aquí una ametralladora ahora mismo y no queda ni una, y con una firma en el papel lo tengo arreglado.” Al otro día había comida en la prisión, fue poco pero por lo menos repollo y cuatro pedacitos de patata. (Cuevas, 2005: 78)

Natividad Morcillo also remembers participating in a hunger strike; she states

yo creo que fue la primera huelga de hambre que se había hecho en los penales, a principio de los cuarenta, una huelga de hambre que duró tres días porque el rancho era agua caliente.

Luego hicimos otra, tú ya estabas allí, habías venido de Santander.

Nosotras estábamos medio muertas de hambre. Aquel tío nos cambió el rancho de agua por otro mejor condimentado, pero el cazo no era de reglamento y te quedabas con un hambre horrible, entonces decidimos hacer otra huelga de hambre para que el cazo fuera reglamentario. (Cuevas, 2005: 115)

Similarly, Real describes the 'plante carcelario [...] ante una comida escasísima' (García, 1982: 115). These depictions highlight the acts of resistance that the prisoners undertook in spite of their incarceration. They used the only thing available to them to fight: their bodies. Thus these acts of resistance become embodied responses to the prison experience; they constitute a political carceral habitus engendered by the prisoners. Cuevas outlines similar strategies amongst the prisoners who protested the paucity of water. She declares

reclamábamos el agua de una manera especial, cantábamos aquello que dice:

Una mañana temprano salí de mi casa y me fui a pasear; tuve que pasar la ría de Villagarcía, que es puerto de mar. Yo te daré, te daré niña hermosa, te daré una cosa. Una cosa que yo solo sé: ¡Agua!

En vez de decir "querer" decíamos "agua" a voz en grito. Como éramos muchas y jóvenes lo sabíamos hacer muy bien para que a muchos metros a la redonda de la cárcel lo pudiera oír la gente de la calle. Ello llegó a causarles bastantes trastornos a los oficiales. (Cuevas, 2005: 60)

This demonstrates a similar act of resistance whereby the prisoners make use of their voices to protest. As well as protesting the scarcity of provisions, the women also manifested against the treatment of fellow inmates. Real describes a prison-wide hunger strike against the punishment of an inmate who truthfully answered the questions about prison conditions from a visiting reporter. Real explains:

la periodista preguntó: ¿Puede hablar o no puede hablar? Y el director dijo:

Que sí, que sí. Y entonces Merche dijo todas nuestras quejas. Y claro, nada más irse la periodista, nos cierran en las celdas. Y poco después, mientras comíamos, sube la voceadora y empieza a gritar: Merche Otero que baje al despacho, Merche Otero que baje al despacho.

Baja al despacho e inmediatamente la llevan incomunicada a celda de castigo. [...] Entonces nosotras empezamos a llamar al timbre que había en la cancela de cada galería para que subieran las funcionarias. [...]

Queremos hacer constar a la dirección que lo que ha dicho Merche lo hemos dicho todas, que ella no ha hablado personalmente y que todas las presas políticas estamos de acuerdo.

De todas las galerías seguían sonando los timbres en señal de protesta. Y las funcionarias estaban ya tan cagás que nos amenazaron con emplazar en las cancelas una ametralladora [sic] [...] Total, que nos metieron en celda a toda la gente y se quedó todo cerrado. (García, 1982: 169)

The prisoners make use of their collectivity in order to protest the treatment of Merche. They extend this to a hunger strike, as Real demonstrates: 'llega la cena y no la cogemos, y decimos que no la cogemos hasta que nos saquen a todas estas compañeras de los sótanos' (García, 1982: 169). She continues, 'seguíamos el tercer día así, y sin comer' (García, 1982: 171). The women thus use their collectivity as a tool to protest their living conditions through a form of politicised carceral habitus.

### **Narrative habitus**

As well as being a theme running throughout the texts, collectivity and solidarity additionally function as a narrative technique used by the corpus. Indeed, these concepts are inscribed within the form, background, and content of the narratives. The introductions to each text underscore how the group experience of

incarceration forms a constituent component therein. Doña affirms that within *Desde la noche y la niebla*, 'estos nombres simbolizarán a miles de mujeres, aquellas valerosas mujeres de todos nuestros pueblos que también fueron héroes' (1978: 17). The collectivity of the experience of Francoist incarceration is thus symbolically apparent throughout the texts, which are framed as representative of a much wider group. As a strategy, introducing the narratives with reference to such collectivity serves to present them as historical and sociological sources that give voice and recognition to a silenced demographic. Indeed, García emphasises this with the statement 'había querido revivir una historia que había sido la mía o la de mi generación y la de nuestros padres y que nos había sido silenciada' (García, 1978: 9), which presents the narrative as a vindication for a silenced collective. Although much less explicitly, O'Neill also references the importance of the prisoner collective, who declare 'tienes que vivir [...] para todos nosotros, porque tienes el deber de escribir' (O'Neill, 2003: 213), leading O'Neill to affirm 'por eso escribo este libro' (2003: 241). For the texts, collectivity is therefore presented as a contributing factor influencing the production of the narrative.

Within *Presas*, Cuevas takes this one step further in her polyvocal text that forms a compendium of voices testifying to their group incarceration. Collectivity is inherent within the very form of the text as a collection of testimonies, each of which Cuevas remarks upon and introduces. Consequently the volume itself serves to catalogue the experiences of Franco's prisoners and as a whole constitutes an illustration of the communality of incarceration. As Cuevas states within her own

testimony, 'son a ellas, y a otras ex presas que han aportado sus testimonios vivos y han hecho posible esta publicación con la trágica experiencia de las cárceles franquistas, a quienes quiero agradecer de corazón su valiosa aportación' (2005: 32). She too frames her text around the voices of others; however, in the case of *Presas* this is much more explicit owing to the polyvocal form of the text. In this statement, Cuevas also emphasises the polyvocality of her transgressive form through intratextuality. By referencing 'sus testimonios', she highlights the collectivity within her narrative form. Cuevas additionally underscores this within her introductions to the individual testimonies by stating 'os recuerdan estos testimonios que hablan también por vosotras' (2005: 155). Narrative collectivity thus constitutes an important aspect of *Presas* that extends throughout the volume. Moreover, intratextuality is also employed within several of the testimonies that comprise *Presas*. The narrators comment on the presence of other voices and testimonies. Paquita Molina states 'no voy a repetir todo el calvario de la cárcel, ya que es más o menos el de otras camaradas que han hecho su relato' (Cuevas, 2005: 57); Blasa and María Rojo say 'ya lo explicarás tú' (Cuevas, 2005: 63) and 'tampoco vamos a referirnos a ello, tú conoces el caso mayor que yo' (Cuevas, 2005: 65); Pilar Pascual declares 'no lo voy a contar yo todo, quiero dejar algo para las otras' (Cuevas, 2005: 78); and Adelaida Abarca finishes her testimony confirming 'el resto de nuestra fuga ya lo contó Angelita en su testimonio' (Cuevas, 2005: 170). These statements render the individual testimonies fragmented parts of a wider spectrum of Francoist imprisonment. Throughout *Presas* many of the narratives

display their awareness of their carceral collectivity through these intratextual references. Such examples not only emphasise the extent of the experience of women's imprisonment under Franco, they also serve as textual strategies that rupture with the genre norms of life writing. Textual collectivity thus constitutes a narrative habitus that is shared by all the texts within this corpus, to varying degrees. As a narrative technique, the use of intratextuality and a narrative continuum of collective carcerality serve to both underscore the inability of narrative form to deal with such tragedy and outline the collectivity of imprisonment that is engendered within narratives. Through these techniques employed, the women thus highlight the collectivity of prison and their experiences, emphasise the fallibility of language and genre, establish a further narrative level of solidarity that is instigated at the moment of textual production, and demonstrate the ongoing nature of carceral habitus. As a narrative strategy, the use of solidarity and collectivity within the texts serves to render them objects of collective experience. Read with reference to the concept of carceral habitus that has formed the backbone to this chapter, the texts thus serve as products of this female political carcerality: they both demonstrate and litera(ture)lly enact the dispositions of the carceral habitus of these women.

The narrative focus on collectivity also demonstrates a corpus intratextuality in which the narrators reveal their awareness of the presence of the others' testimonies and the collectivity of their experiences. This constitutes a meta-textual device that draws attention to the notions of narrativity,

representation, and genre-normativity. Corpus intratextuality is especially evident within Cuevas' *Presas* and is illustrated through both the chorality of the texts and the intratextual references they contain. In addition, this narrative carceral habitus is further evidenced through the texts' continuum of Francoist carcerality. The narratives by Cuevas, Doña, and Real serve to depict the same prisons, events, inmates, and guards, and construct a representation of collectivity engendered by and through the narratives themselves.<sup>130</sup> Doña and Cuevas, for instance, both describe the infamous prison guards 'la Veneno' (Cuevas, 2005: 151; Doña, 1978: 171) and 'la Topete' (Cuevas, 2005: 70; Doña, 1978: 179); Real and Cuevas reference the first hunger strike action in Francoist prisons (Cuevas, 2005: 115; García, Consuelo, 1982: 115), and each describe the prisoner Manolita del Arco (Cuevas, 2005: 169; García, Consuelo, 1982: 160); finally, all three narratives highlight the infamous case of the 'Trece Rosas' (Cuevas, 2005: 86; Doña, 1978: 164; García, Consuelo, 1982: 122)<sup>131</sup>. These shared references create a narrative continuum of Francoist carcerality that spans the three texts; this not only serves to highlight the shared, collective experience of incarceration, it also historiographically and socially links the narratives and as such, underlines their socio-historical relevance and importance as sources. Moreover, this continuum of references establishes an additional level of solidarity between the prisoners that

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<sup>130</sup> O'Neill was imprisoned in Melilla, as a result there is no direct crossover with the other narratives, which are based solely in mainland Spain.

<sup>131</sup> The 13 Rosas refers to the infamous case of 13 young women imprisoned and executed at the end of the Civil War for more see Ferrero (2003); Fonseca (2004); Martínez Lázaro (2007).

is both forged and demonstrated by the communal focus of these testimonies.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has explored the collective nature of carcerality and the subsequent behaviours inculcated amongst the prison populous. By exploring these carceral consequences through the concept of habitus, I have shown how imprisonment is written on the collective body. The use of Bourdieu has additionally allowed me to emphasise how these corporeal and collective carceral remnants intersect with discourses and disciplines of gender and state under Francoist Spain. Moreover, 'carceral habitus' as a notion has provided a framework with which to analyse these responses as products of a wider continuum of prison experience.

As explored within this chapter and its predecessor, the texts within this narrative corpus all foreground the extreme and often very brutal experience of prison space through severe overcrowding. The consequences of this overcrowding are drawn out in differing manners. Whilst all the texts underscore the significant camaraderie and solidarity amongst inmates, O'Neill and Real additionally emphasise the often intense difficulties of mass cohabitation within the prison space. As a result, these texts further emphasise the hardships of prison, most especially through the ingrained conflicts between inmates, frequently on account of political differences of opinion. Similarly, although the texts all address the

physical significance of such overcrowding, it is *Las cárceles de Soledad Real* that serves to depict these most emphatically, whereas *Presas* largely overlooks the concept of corporeal habitus. Through Real's graphic descriptions, we are left with an emphatic portrayal of the results of imprisonment that is particularly rooted within the notion of the docile body. Exploring such corporeal habitus thus allows me to frame Francoist carcerality within the socio-political discipline and biopower of the regime.

By contrast, the texts also focus on the more positive aspects of group imprisonment. These are especially evident through Cuevas' *Presas*, which foregrounds collectivity in both form and content. In addition, Real situates prison camaraderie within the context of party politics and activism. The texts are thus underwritten by a narrative of solidarity that is inscribed within their very form in constituting a polyphonic narrative corpus. This level of habitus is further demonstrated through the narrative continuum of Francoist carcerality that the texts encompass. The narratives not only underscore the collective and shared experiences of imprisonment, they depict this through polyvocal, dialogic form and intratextual references and comments. As a corpus, then, this group of texts engenders the communality of regime incarceration. This provides a significant narrative strategy that deconstructs dominant discourses of Spanish and Francoist history(iography) and of life writing and thereby repositions the texts as radical political acts.

The corporeal focus on carceral habitus within this chapter provides a

springboard to move to discuss the embodied and incorporated enduring aspects of carcerality for the female political prisoner under Franco. In the following and final chapter, I provide a Lacanian reading of the prisoner as a '(re)inscribed' body, altered and marked by the experience of carcerality; I examine this concept and how it is portrayed and explored within the prison narratives, through which the protagonists ultimately come to face themselves.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **The 'No / Body' in the Mirror**

This chapter focuses on portrayals of carceral inscription with reference to the notion of the mirror. I use this as a lens through which I explore the questions of representation, false images, and dominant social discourses, within the context of the female political prisoner under Franco. My examination considers how the body of the prisoner and the body of the narratives are inscribed by and embody discourses of carcerality. By approaching these bodies and their surfaces through the notion of the mirror, I analyse how dominant discourses of female carcerality are contained, reflected, and interrogated. The mirror as both a literal and a figurative concept plays on notions of surfaces, representations, and visibility for the corporealities and subjectivities of the female prisoner. Consequently, the chapter unites many of the common strands running throughout this thesis, which are solidified within the concept of the 'No / Body'. In this final chapter, I not only consider to what extent the narratives engage with and disrupt this notion, but also the significance of this.

My analysis is rooted in the Lacanian notion of the mirror stage as 'the formation of the ego through the identification with an image of the self' (Homer,

2004: 18). As a psychological construct, this refers to the moment during infant development in which the child begins to recognise their image in the mirror as themselves (Homer, 2004: 24; Lacan, 1977: 1). For Lacan, this consists of '*an identification*' (emphasis in original) with the mirror's image (1977: 2), which he describes further as 'a drama [...] which manufactures for the subject [...] the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality' (Lacan, 1977: 4). This notion provides me with a framework for exploring how dominant social narratives, particularly those concerning (minority) subjectivities and representation, are interrogated and questioned through their reflected images. Using the notion of the mirror's reflection, I examine how corporeal and corpus surfaces are inscribed by discourse. This allows me to consider to what extent the texts move beyond and disrupt readings of dominant social discourses for the female political prisoner.

My analysis has three interrelated strands, united by the common focal point of the mirror's image. I firstly explore the prisoners' body as a reflective surface within the texts' depictions. Using work from the field of carceral geography, I consider how carcerality is inscribed on the body. This is explored further through the application of the mirror metaphor, to consider how the texts use the body's surface to examine discourses of subjectivity. I extend this analysis within the second section, in which I examine the literal manifestation of mirror stages through the experience of incarceration. Using the Lacanian concept of mirror stage, I explore these projections and constitutions of female prisoner

subjectivities with reference to the concepts of fragmentation and recognition. This focus also allows me to consider how the narrators and protagonists begin to come to terms with the inscriptions of carcerality that inherently alter their subjectivities. Finally, I discuss the narrative corpus itself as mirror in order to examine how the texts (re)consider the questions of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity. The narratives themselves come to represent the mirror stage in the formation of the female political prisoner subject within this context of Francoism and its legacy. This focus on the mirror throughout this chapter repositions the texts as sites portraying and interrogating these subjectivities as socially embedded but also inherently alienating and fragmented. This methodological framework allows me to consider how and to what extent the narratives provide new readings of dominant social discourses. Ultimately, I question not only to what extent the texts move beyond discourses of invisibility, silence, and 'No / Body-ness', but also the very politics of doing so.

### ***Inscribed carcerality and bodily mirrors***

For the Francoist prisoner, whose very deviance was rendered material by state doctrine, corporeality was of utmost importance. As I have already examined, authoritarian discipline and rhetoric reduced female inmates to a grotesque, disgusting, marginalised body - a 'No / Body'. In this context, the presence of the

mirror and its reflection constitutes a device for exploring the intersections of this grotesque corporeality and the punitive space housing it, thereby rendering carcerality explicitly and inherently embodied and incorporated on and through the deviant subject. This concept of carcerality as a corporeal and embodied experience has been explored by critic Dominique Moran (2013b) who argues that 'the body, always in the process of becoming through the experiences of embodiment, is corporeally inscribed by imprisonment' (2013b: 2). Stemming from the notions that places and bodies shape one another (Longhurst, 2005: 247) and that the body functions as a site of 'textual inscription' (Johnson, 2008: 563), Moran explores the implications of carcerality for the body, affirming that 'bodies, discourses, forces and spaces jointly shape subjectivity' (2013b: 4). Imprisonment thus (re)forms the interlinked notions of corporeality and subjectivity.

The narratives confirm the physicality of discipline by highlighting how the inmates are rendered deviant on account of the fact that their bodies have been irrefutably changed by incarceration. Doña declares: 'quince largos años de prisión que marcaron sus vidas y su carne con marca indeleble' (1978: 280). Thus through incarceration, the prisoner is permanently marked. Even behind bars the desolate bodies of inmates constitute a shocking image of the destruction of the individual through punishment. Real describes the arrival of new prisoners from Tarragona,

mujeres mayores y chiquitas de diecinueve, de veintiún años, y tú no les distinguías la edad porque todas andaban arrastrándose, todas igual de encorvaditas, todas parecían viejas y tenían la cara gris, llena de manchas, de sombras grises, como enmohecida. (García, 1982: 102)

Through this image, the effects of carcerality are portrayed as embodied in the degeneration of the prisoners. These haggard figures appear more shocking due to the young age of the prisoners. As a collective image, this description further constitutes a representation of the homogenised mass of the prisoners caused by discipline. Moreover, the references to their decrepit bodies additionally underlines the physical, moral, and emotional degeneration wrought on the individual through prison. Similarly, Doña references corporeal and moral desolation in her statement that 'había perdido el brillo de sus ojos a los que circundaban pequeñas arrugas' (1978: 225). The physical inscriptions of carcerality thus mirror the emotional. As decrepit corporeal subjects, furthermore, the inmates are also made to embody the vanquished Republicans and thereby provide an illustration of the imposition of the Francoist rhetoric of victory through the physical and psychological disciplining of the subject. Such narrative depictions, moreover, render the corporeal subject an inscribed image of the disciplinary carcerality it inhabits. Analysing these bodies as mirrors renders the narratives a portrayal of Francoist oppression and highlights the importance of providing such (re)presentations.

These inscriptions of carcerality, however, extend beyond the prison walls to constitute permanent changes. The narratives confirm this through their focus on the long-lasting consequences of imprisonment through such examples as 'me quitaba la vista' (Cuevas, 2005: 152), 'manos llenas de ampollas' (Doña, 1978: 277), and 'todas salíamos enfermas, todas con taras físicas' (García, 1982: 192). Such statements reflect the corporeal inscription of imprisonment for the inmate. The

physical changes mentioned are further presented with reference to degeneration and decrepitude: the women lose their sight and their health as a direct result of their incarceration. Prison does not just serve to mark the body of the inmate, rather, it destroys it. In *Presas*, these grotesque physical changes caused by incarceration are made especially apparent within the declaration 'a mí me han operado cuatro veces como consecuencia de que la vida que hemos llevado no era vida' (Cuevas, 2005: 38). Here Cuevas emphatically highlights how the physical consequences of incarceration are an inevitability due to the horrors of prison. She recounts the previously-discussed example of Rosa Estruch, whom she describes as:

*Inmóvil en una cama. Sus miembros superiores e inferiores están totalmente atrofiados. Los dedos de las manos retorcidos, anudados entre sí, inservibles para el taco. La columna vertebral no la sostiene, ¡ni siquiera puede incorporarse! Los ojos, ahora atacados de cataratas.* (Italics in original) (Cuevas, 2005: 107)

In this passage, the putrid body of the former inmate is shown as infected by prison and destroyed through discipline. From a political perspective, the permanent marking of the prisoners as deviant bodies provided a lasting vision of the horrors of the Republicans that would reinforce their social condemnation. Additionally, as a representation of the punishment of anti-Francoism, the public displays of decrepitude provided a warning against further anti-state behaviours. Consequently, the deviant physicality of prisoners and ex-prisoners within Francoist society constituted a reiteration of the victor / vanquished binary of the Civil War. Read with reference to this authoritarian context, these portrayals of the

brutalised bodies of the political inmates can be seen as a means for describing the imposition of National-Catholic discourses. Considering the prisoners' body, in these instances, with reference to the metaphor of the mirror thereby renders the body a reflective surface that projects the horrors of the prison and, on a wider level, of Francoist discourses wrought on the subject. By analysing these images of the body as a mirror reflecting and refracting the surroundings it inhabits, the texts come to represent an interrogation of the reproduction and reinforcing of discourses of female carceral subjectivity.

In addition to presenting state rhetoric, prison violence, and abuse, references to carceral inscription also address matters of ageing and time passing. Incarceration itself is served both temporally and spatially through a determined sentence behind bars. The stay in prison constitutes not only a physical, but also a temporal rupture with society. As previously examined, narratives comment on prison sentences as a form of waiting, as highlighted by O'Neill's use of the waiting room metaphor in her statement affirming 'parecíamos viajeras en una estación' (O'Neill, 2003: 45). Likewise, Real's description of the prison as a non-place for the newcomer who 'no [se] sient[a] en ningún sitio' (García, 1982: 124), portrays the prison as a period of suspended temporality. Through such spatial-temporal metaphors, imprisonment is portrayed as bringing with it the suspension of time; Doña explains:

[m]irado en su conjunto le parecía que no era posible que hubiesen transcurrido tantos años. Se le antojaba que los podía coger con las manos, que no habían pasado porque en realidad ella no los había vivido. Pero esos

diecisiete años, estaban allí, pegados a las paredes de las prisiones por las que pasó inmóviles, sin desarrollo, sin expansión, perdidos y putrefactos. No obstante, cuando revivía esos largos años en detalle..., ¡entonces sí!, le parecían tan largos y distantes como una eternidad. (Doña, 1978: 264)

In this passage, Doña portrays prison time as remote, intangible, and unreal. External events, however, serve to mark the passage of time for the inmates. In the case of both O'Neill and Doña this occurs primarily through their children. O'Neill describes 'en la puerta quedaron quietas dos niñas [...] muy delgadas, pálidas y la mirada honda; no las conocía, ellas a mí tampoco' (2003: 131). Through this description O'Neill emphasises the rupture between inside and outside time as experienced through incarceration. This is portrayed through the instance of corporeal misrecognition between O'Neill and her children. Such a moment is constitutive of a failed mirror stage in which both the child and the mother fail to recognise themselves in the mirror image of each other's faces. This occurrence serves to illustrate the physical and temporal schism caused by the very boundaries of the prison, which has repercussions for the individual both inside and outside jail. Through the lack of recognition, this moment highlights the continuing passage of prison time that is inscribed on the body and implicated by O'Neill's experience of misrecognition.

Similarly, through her son's growing body, Doña is reminded of the temporality of her incarceration. She reflects on this whilst making him a jersey for his fifteenth birthday, stating:

siempre que había podido para estas fechas le había confeccionado un regalo y era a través de estas prendas como medía su crecimiento y el paso

del tiempo por el muchacho. Era alto y fuerte y ya empezaba a sombrearle el bigote. Cuando le enviaron estas últimas medidas se asombró del “estirón” que había dado. Le veía dos veces al año y a través de las rejas siempre sombrías de todos los locutorios por los que había pasado, no percibía su transformación con tanta nitidez como por estas prendas (Doña, 1978: 225)

It is thus through her son’s changing form that Doña is able to perceive the passage of time. However, as she highlights with the possessive ‘su transformación’, this temporal progression is ascribed to him. This is distanced from her own experience of time passing behind the prison bars, which is viewed as separate and unreal, rendering prison time suspended.<sup>132</sup>

The prisoners’ changing bodies, however, belie this perceived suspension of time; rather they emphasise the passing years. Indeed, as Shantz and Frigon affirm, prison accelerates ageing (2009: 4). The narratives demonstrate this through images of ageing and old age in references to ‘pelo blanco, las arrugas alrededor de los ojos, el rictus marcado de la boca’ (Doña, 1978: 282). These images serve to present the inscriptions of carcerality with reference to a rhetoric of ageing which frames her lack of identification with the idealised self. This is explored further within an additional passage in *Desde la noche y la niebla* in which Doña states:

Se quitó las gafas y limpió los cristales con cuidado; llevaba el pelo recogido y las sienas le clareaban con infinitos cabellos blancos, Leonor pensaba que estaban demasiado blancos para sus treinta y seis años. ¡Treinta y seis años! Llevaba doce en prisión y ya no se acordaba siquiera de cómo era cuando la detuvieron; hacía mucho tiempo que había perdido el brillo de los ojos a los que circundaban pequeñas arrugas, su tez pajiza denotaba que el hígado no funcionaba bien. La juventud pasó; pasó entre rejas de penal en penal,

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<sup>132</sup> For more on this, see Wahidin and Moss (2004), Wahidin (2006)

celdas de castigo, hambre, frío y calor intensos en una lucha dura y desesperada por sobrevivir. Era el saldo de doce años de represión directa. (Doña, 1978: 225)

Here, Doña emphasises the precise nature of the changes caused by carcerality that are inscribed on the body. These particularly concern premature ageing: her hair is greying, her eyes are wrinkled, and her sight has worsened. These physical traits that typically accompany the passage of time are exacerbated through incarceration, such that carceral temporality is shown as both suspended and magnified. Doña emphasises this by reiterating and repeating references to the 'doce años' she had spent in prison at this point. Critics Azrini Wahidin and Shirley Tate have examined what they describe as 'the inscriptions of penal time of the body' and the interlinking issues of ageing and carcerality for female subjectivity (2005: 60). They highlight that gendered practices of punishment serves to 'rob' women of corporeal, physical femininity (2005: 77). Through the combined experience of time and space within carcerality, female prisoners as embodied subjects are thus altered explicitly. Similarly, Shantz and Frigon draw attention to the intersections of ageing and prison time for the female prisoner in their article 'Aging, women and health: From the pains of imprisonment to the pains of reintegration' (2009). As they affirm, 'prison conditions accelerate the aging process' (2009: 4). Women who thus 'leave prison with the markings of their sentences of their bodies and minds' (2009: 3) must contend with the markers and inscriptions of both ageing and prison. The description of temporal carcerality with reference to premature ageing and the metaphor of 'robbed' time as used by Tate

and Wahidin and Shantz and Frigon are both evident within Doña's statement referring to her hair as 'demasiado blanc[o] para sus treinta y seis años. ¡Treinta y seis años!' and affirming that 'la juventud pasó'. Similarly, Cuevas reiterates 'dejó su juventud en la clandestinidad y en las cárceles' (2005: 73). Carcerality as inscribed on the body is portrayed through a rhetoric of age and loss. Such images are not only testament to the horrors of prison; they also serve to portray the body as a canvas marked by experience. In depicting the incarcerated bodies with reference to such inscription, the texts thus display these truths of carcerality and the importance thereof. For this analysis, the mirror provides an analytical tool that underscores the significance of the corporeal in the constitution of the subject.

### ***The prisoner in the mirror***

The narratives additionally contain more explicit references to the notion of the mirror, which especially highlight the corporeal and subjectivity changes brought about through incarceration. These primarily occur after the prisoners are released in a moment that O'Neill refers to as 'mi reencuentro frente al espejo' (2003: 242). Equally, Doña faces a similar occurrence at her excarceration in which she 'se había mirado al espejo' (1978: 293). These scenes constitute instances in which the subject comes face to face with herself post-imprisonment. Consequently, they can be read with reference to the Lacanian notion of the mirror stage. As a

philosophical notion, the mirror stage has been widely examined as 'a totalizing ideal that organises and orients the self' (Gallop, 1985: 79) and as a way of emphasising how the subject is 'the consequence of a projection of the body's surface' (Grosz, 1990: 32). Thus conceptually, the mirror stage offers a theoretical insight into and framework for analysing the constitution of subjectivity as corporeal and embodied, and as embedded within dominant discourses of society. Such a method for examination is particularly pertinent here for exploring the narratives by female political prisoners under Franco in order to emphasise how they consider their carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivities.

Crucially for this notion, however, the mirror stage is more than the individual's identification with the complete self that the mirror's image provides; rather, as Lacan confirms, this image is a false reflection of the subject (1977: 4). Instead of being a representation of the subject, it is merely a false image that serves to alienate the self. Indeed, it 'serves up a false image of the child's unified self' (Benstock, 1988: 12). Moreover, this image of unity is 'imposed from without and consequently is asymmetrical, fictional, and artificial' (Ragland-Sullivan, 1986: 26). For Lacan, this fictional nature of the mirror image makes it '*alienating* in that it becomes confused with the self' (emphasis in original) (Homer, 2004: 25). As Homer highlights, through identifying with the mirror image, the subject becomes confused with the object. He states that the totalising sense of self is 'acquired at the price of this self being an-other' (Homer, 2004: 25). The formation of the I is thus made possible through the identification with the other. This also establishes

a discord whereby the subject is rendered through its competition with the other. Lacan describes this as alienation, which is 'constitutive of the subject' (Homer, 2004: 26). The mirror stage thus describes a process through which the subject comes to be perceived as complete; this completeness, however, serves to both underscore the prior fragmentation of the subject *and* render it alienated due to its identification with an object. In the case of the female political prisoner under Franco, this 'an-other' in the mirror is *the Other* as the embodied manifestation of the anti-regime 'red whore'. The mirror stage for these prisoners is thus a means of constituting their own 'No / Body' subjectivity as inscribed upon and inherent within their embodied, carceral selves, as shall be explored below.

In terms of the specifics of these scenes within the life narratives by O'Neill and Doña, the Mirror Stage as a concept provides an analytical approach that highlights the key issues of fragmentation and reconignition made particularly implicit within these textual moments. After her release when viewing herself in the mirror, O'Neill states:

Sí, aquella era yo... ¿Yo era aquella? ¿Como antes? En los cuatro años me había mirado en pequeños pedazos en aquel espejo de bolsillo; la tenía delante, y todo el cuerpo, toda yo, y no me reconocía. Había allí, sí, una mujer con una tremenda expresión de angustia y una arruga, como cicatriz, marcada entre las cejas esa mujer tenía que ser yo.

¿Y adónde iba esa mujer con aquella falda estrecha, larga, y la chaqueta corta, como la vieja estampa de un viejo figurín? ¿Toda pasada de moda, oliente a naftalina recién salida de un arca antigua? (O'Neill, 2003: 242)

In this passage, she uses questions to highlight the rupture between her perceived subject and the image she views in the mirror. By affirming 'la tenía delante' and

'había allí, sí, una mujer', O'Neill uses the third person to distance herself from the reflection to which she is referring. This rupturing is further compounded through her sense of fragmentation: she states that throughout her prison sentence 'me había mirado en pequeños pedazos en aquel espejo de bolsillo'. The image of her reflection in pieces in a hand mirror provides a literal depiction of the fragmentation of the subject prior to their identification with the mirror's reflection as brought about by the mirror stage. Gallop refers to the mirror stage as a 'turning point' that portrays the self as a 'totalizing ideal' and highlights its prior conception as a 'violently non-totalized body' (Gallop, 1985: 79). Indeed, according to Lacan, prior to the mirror stage, the subject only experiences themselves as disjointed, fragmented body parts; the notion of the subject as a whole being is only brought about through the mirror's reflection as a complete individual. O'Neill's reference to the juxtaposition between seeing herself bit by bit in her pocket mirror during her incarceration and observing her whole body at once after her release can be read with reference to the Lacanian trajectory from fragmented to complete subject. The narrative's depictions of the torture and destruction of individual body parts further encourages this reading through illustrations of 'el vientre, [...] grueso y duro como una bola' (2003: 132) and 'el corazón forcejeaba por escapar' (2003: 95). Upon her incarceration, O'Neill is able to see herself as whole through her reflection in the mirror. This experience, however, serves to highlight her prior fragmentation as 'a violently non-totalized body' (Gallop, 1985: 79). On the one hand, this mirror stage moment in which O'Neill views herself as a

whole reflection, provides an illustration of the re-encounter with the mirror's image in which the subject is re-constituted following the experience of incarceration. On the other, however, as a psychical moment, this recognition of the inherently fragmented state of the subject is of particular significance for the 'No / Body' given the explicit reduction to distorted and disrupted corporeality. Extending the Lacanian reading of this scene further, thus, O'Neill's awareness of both her fragmented and her 'complete' images in this mirror stage serve to 'organize and orient [her] self' (Gallop, 1985: 79) as a 'No / Body' subject.

The corporeality of the totalising image provided by the mirror's reflection additionally constitutes the subject. O'Neill describes herself with '*una tremenda expresión de angustia y una arruga*'. She is thus portrayed as the embodiment of anguish, as is literally inscribed on her body. For the subject constituted through the association with the mirror, this inscription of carcerality has significant repercussions: in identifying with the mirror's image, O'Neill thus constitutes her subjectivity through its corporeality and carceral inscription. In this instance, then, the reflection in the mirror serves to render the subject inherently and explicitly a beaten body.

O'Neill, however, also describes her lack of identification with the mirror's image. This constitutes a further means for rendering the 'No / Body' subject. By questioning '*¿Yo era aquella? ¿Como antes?*', she highlights the lack of identification with her reflection. This is primarily framed as due to a schism between the pre- and post-prison conceptualisations of her self which have been bisected through

the experience of carcerality. Her question '¿Como antes?' makes this especially explicit. For O'Neill, the lack of recognition is attributed to the physical alterations engendered through the inscription of carcerality on her body. Imprisonment is thus presented as a way of rendering the subject null and 'No / Body'. The lack of recognition has been explored through the concept of 'méconnaissance'. Leni Marshall describes this as the 'misrecognition that happens during the second mirror stage' (2012: 53). She states:

Lacan makes clear that the ideal self, the creation of boundaries, and the sense of the social self that arises from those phenomena are illusions. Méconnaissance exposes these illusions. [...these] can lead a lived self closer to recognizing the discontinuity of the human subject. (2012: 67)

Through this, the subject becomes reconfigured as a body in process, or rather, as Marshall emphasises, 'the lived selves [...] may also develop' (2012: 67). O'Neill's lack of self-recognition thus constitutes a mirror stage of méconnaissance through which she highlights the illusions and fragmentations of subjecthood. Marshall goes on to reiterate that méconnaissance 'can lead to the de- and reconstruction of the self, with the self being aware of this process of change. [...] méconnaissance creates the possibility for individuals to consciously participate in producing a new set of selves' (2012: 68). This moment, which occurs at the end of her text, reframes the narrative within the parameters of subjectivity as in process. Through méconnaissance, O'Neill emphasises the falseness of the mirror image as the self. Lacan adds that through the mirror stage the subject is 'socially embedded'. The experience of méconnaissance thus has repercussions, which underline the

fallacious nature of social paradigms of subjectivity. Reading this scene, and by extension O'Neill's text, through these Lacanian concepts thus emphasises the problematics and complexities of subjecthood, as inherently socially constructed and informed. As a result, subjectivity is in constant flux.

Much like O'Neill's passage explored above, Doña's reference to her re-encounter with the mirror can also be examined through the Lacanian mirror stage as an interrogation of the carceral, corporeal subject. She states:

se quitó las gafas y limpió los cristales con cuidado; llevaba el pelo recogido y las sienes le clareaban con infinitos cabellos blancos, Leonor pensaba que estaban demasiado blancos para sus treinta y seis años. ¡Treinta y seis años! Llevaba doce en prisión y ya no se acordaba siquiera de cómo era cuando la detuvieron; hacía mucho tiempo que había perdido el brillo de los ojos a los que circundaban pequeñas arrugas, su tez pajiza denotaba que el hígado no funcionaba bien. La juventud pasó; pasó entre rejas. (Doña, 1978: 225)

In this previously-discussed extract, Doña portrays an image of the female prisoner as a prematurely aged figure. She describes the disintegration of her sight and her liver function, her greying hair, and the appearance of wrinkles on her face. References to these examples of the ageing body present the female prisoner as dishelved by the brutalities of Francoist carcerality. These carceral inscriptions are framed by the notion of loss, as Doña emphasises: 'había perdido el brillo de los ojos', 'ya no se acordaba', and 'la juventud pasó'. Imprisonment is thus presented as an experience that destroys and de-constructs the individual. In coming face-to-face with herself in the mirror, Doña thereby comes face-to-face with both the physical and the emotional repercussions of her confinement. Moreover, in affirming that she can no longer remember her pre-prison self and by extension

identifying with the carceral figure in the mirror, the act of looking in the mirror is a constitutive act that (re)produces the carceral subject.

The depictions of separate body parts additionally provide a fragmented image of the prisoner, which can be further analysed with reference to Lacan's concept of the mirror stage. This act of scrutinising her reflection in the mirror by focussing on individual physical attributes illustrates the inherent fragmentation of the subject. For Doña prison re-constitutes the subject as a shattered individual, a 'No / Body'. By reading this scene through the mirror stage, Lacanian theory thus provides a framework for analysing prison as a constituting process. At her release, Doña re-encounters the mirror's reflection and is forced to identify with a subject that is at once familiar and inherently different. The female imprisoned corporeal subject as seen in the mirror is simultaneously hypervisible in its grotesque, decrepit materiality, and invisible, in its fragmentation and social exclusion. Acknowledging this through the mirror, as Doña, and indeed O'Neill, do, is a means of constituting the self as the 'No / Body'. Doña demonstrates this further in her later passage:

[q]uiso recordar cómo era antes de que la encerraran, sin que a pesar de su esfuerzo lograra recordarlo. Hacía sólo una hora, que se había mirado al espejo para recogerse el pelo canoso y su cara familiar de hoy no le dejaba ver la de antaño. (Doña, 1978: 293)

Here, the fragmentation and schisms inherent within the 'No / Body' are present through the rupturing between past and present conceptualisations of the self. That these are portrayed through the disjointed images of her face and hair

additionally emphasised the fragmented nature of her subjectivity. The recognition of her 'cara familiar' can be read as a further indication of the constitution of the female political prisoner as a fragmented 'No / Body' subject.

Conceptually, these mirror stages are also problematic in terms of narrative and socio-historical representation. Both Doña and O'Neill question the break between past and present constitutions of their subjectivity through the mirror's image. The presence of such ruptures provides a narrative moment that interrogates the constitution of their very subjectivity as female political prisoners under Franco. In this case, the use of these mirror moments, analysed with reference to the notion of the mirror stage, is a means of querying and interrogating their subjectivities. Indeed, Doña and O'Neill each struggle to identify with their perceived selfhood as articulated through the mirror's reflection, albeit in different ways. This struggle allows them both to illustrate the invisibility and the hypervisibility of their prisoner selves and even begin to consider moving beyond their carcerally inscribed, corporeal, subjectivities. Nevertheless, as they both indicate, this remains an impossibility due to the inherent disjuncture with their former self-conceptualisations.

### **Recognition and the social mirror**

As Lacan confirms, the mirror within the mirror stage is not limited to a literal

looking glass, rather it additionally encompasses any reflective surface - including the mother's face and, on a wider level, society (Homer, 2005: 24; Lacan, 1977). Indeed, this social aspect constitutes a significant part within the mirror stage, which 'is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history' (Lacan, 1977: 4). Lacan develops this point further by highlighting that 'the dialectic [...] will henceforth link the *I* to social elaborated situations' (emphasis in original) (Ibid.: 5). In terms of a psychological process, thus, the mirror stage illustrates the development of the individual as subject embedded within the social. Raglad-Sullivan affirms that, by the latter part of this process, 'the specular subject of identification has turned into a social one' (1986: 29). For the corpus of prison narratives explored throughout this thesis, this social level of the mirror stage is of utmost importance given the significance of dominant discourses of being and belonging for the prisoners' experience of life behind and beyond bars, and on account of the inherent collective and reflective situation of the carceral, both of which readily provide mirror-like surfaces that constitute the subject.

Based on a number of oral interviews, the production of the text *Presas* is inherently collaborative. In this instance, the 'mirror' of mirror stage is not the reflective surface of the looking glass, but rather that of the fellow inmate collaborating in the construction of their prison testimony. This face thus constitutes the reflective surface of the mirror stage through which the individual comes face-to-face with themselves. Through the testimonies within *Presas*, Cuevas

comments on her re-encounters with her former cellmates, stating '*después de tantos años ¿cómo la iba a reconocer? [...] después de tantos años cómo recordarla*' (Italics in original) (Cuevas, 2005: 55). She also highlights: '*la señora que me abrió era la misma Pascuala, pero ni ella me reconoció ni yo la reconocí, habían pasado muchos años*' (Italics in original) (Ibid.: 50) and reiterates this experience in a later testimony, stating '*hoy no nos hubiésemos conocido, han pasado muchos años y nuestros recuerdos guardan la imagen de aquellas caras jóvenes*' (Italics in original) (Ibid.: 111). In each of these moments, Cuevas underscores the lack of recognition she faces upon seeing these women again. This perspective is also demonstrated through the narrators of the testimonies; as one affirms '*los físicos han cambiado, fíjate en mí, yo era finita, delgadita y mira ahora, pues cualquiera me reconoce, he cambiado de todo [...] ya no somos jóvenes*' (Cuevas, 2005: 38). Much like Doña and O'Neill, then, the women within *Presas* are preoccupied with the notion of recognition. In depicting such a preoccupation, the examples from *Presas* use the concern with recognition and change to emphasise the alterations engendered by imprisonment. The testimonies in Cuevas' *Presas* refer to these changes through the passing of both youth and time and thus frame carceral inscription with regards to the concept of loss, as previously discussed.

From a metaphorical perspective, the lack of recognition of '*méconnaissance*', to use Lacanian terminology, is further significant owing to the temporal lapse between the moment of imprisonment and the moment of narration, which are frequently years apart. Although such a lack of recognition to

some extent inevitable when meeting with an old friend, the context of the silencing of Francoist oppression and discipline makes this particularly poignant. Given the historical amnesia of the dictatorship and the transition, Cuevas' re-encounter with her former fellow prisoners constitutes a re-encounter with an erased past. That this volume could only be written and published after Franco's death serves to further reiterate the prevalence of historical amnesia and the resultant importance of 'facing' this past, in this case, literally, by re-encountering fellow inmates. Indeed, as bodies indelibly inscribed by carcerality, in encountering the ex-prisoner Cuevas also encounters herself, and, by extension, all the other female prisoners under Franco. In not recognising the prisoner, thus Cuevas also fails to recognise herself. Such a lack of recognition is demonstrative on a wider level of the erasure of the female prisoner: the inability to identify with the mirror's reflection is tantamount to the inability to constitute the subject. Nevertheless, despite the initial lacking of familiarity, the women do reconnect, as Cuevas confirms: *'hemos recordado nuestras peripecias'* (2005: 81) and *'nuestro encuentro ha sido un abrazo inmenso: hemos reído y llorado y hemos recordado'* (Ibid.: 137). Through the narrative re-connection between the women, thus, the prisoners are able to gain a sense of recognition. By analysing this through the mirror stage, the process can be viewed as a means for (re)constituting the self. In facing the fellow ex-prisoner, Cuevas comes face-to-face with herself, her carceral subjectivity, and her eradicated past. As a narrative act, the portrayal of this serves to bring the female political prisoners of Francoism to the public foreground for the

recognition they deserve.

For Real, the social mirror is not the emotional re-connection with former cellmates, but rather the derogatory re-encounter with a society 'que te despreciaba además' (1982: 193). After her release, she moves to Madrid, where she is treated with scorn and hatred by both members of the public and the police, as commented above. She describes:

Esta misma señora un día paso yo por su lado y se bajó de la acera y me escupió a los pies. [...] Una señora dice: Oigan, yo vengo a comprar aquí porque pienso que es un sitio respectable y de gente honrosa, pero mientras esté esta señora aquí no pienso comprar y creo que la debe expulsar usted. [...] Porque es una comunista y una presidiaria. (García, 1982: 203)

These examples can be explored as mirror stages in which the scornful face of the public forms the reflective surface. Through such instances Real thus encounters the socially projected image of the ex-prisoner as a denigrated Red Whore. Her recognition comes in her affirmation that 'a mí en la calle me habían creado un ambiente tan espantoso, tan espantoso' (García, 1982: 203) and in her reiteration of Paco's declaration that 'siempre estamos en condiciones de inferioridad porque hemos estado en la cárcel, y todo el mundo tiene derecho a meterse con nosotros' (García, 1982: 203). These encounters represent a confrontation with her own 'No / Body' subjectivity as both invisible and hypervisible through which she must interrogate and reconstitute her subjectivity amidst a backdrop of inherent oppression.

### ***The text as mirror***

As a metaphorical and critical concept, the notion of the mirror is inherently embedded within autobiographical and life writing. Critic George Gusdorf confirms this in his definition of the autobiography as ‘the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image’ (cited in Benstock (1988: 15)). Indeed, in constituting a process of self-reflection, the act of life writing represents a psychological exploration of the self that can be considered through the metaphor of the mirror, as Susanna Egan does in *Mirror Talk* on the one hand, and that can be examined through the Lacanian construct of the mirror stage, on the other. Benstock highlights this in the following passage:

[i]n a definition of the autobiographical act that strikingly recapitulates the effects of Lacan’s mirror stage, Georges Gusdorf has written: “Autobiography . . . requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time” (35). (1988: 14-15)

Here, Benstock thus affirms the direct comparisons between the Gusdorfian definition of the self-reflection of autobiography and the Lacanian notion of the constitution of the subject mirror stage, both of which have been considered as a process of development and self-awareness. Other critics also reflect upon this correlation, confirming that the Lacanian ‘specular model of selfhood is intrinsic to autobiography’ (Merrill, 1985: 12), thereby cementing this conceptual overlap. Furthermore, for more contemporary research grounded in post-structuralist

thought, the mirror stage has had a profound impact on the conceptualisation of selfhood within autobiographical writing, bringing 'a thoroughgoing reconceptualization of the relation between the author – the writing "I" – and the "I" which is written about by the author' (Radstone, 2002: 202). The mirror stage as a theoretical construct thus provides new means for examining the life writing process and the life-writing subject. For the narrative corpus of Francoist female political prisoners' life writing, this new means for analysis serves to re-frame these texts as conversations about the reflective and reflexive construction of subjectivities through the self-referential, representative act of life writing.

On a very basic level, as narratives about ignored oppression under the authoritarian regime, the texts inherently aim to reflect (upon) the silenced experience and the erased social demographic of the female political prisoner under Francoism. Throughout, the narrative corpus confirms the need to 'revivir una historia que había sido la mía o la de mi generación [...] que nos había sido silenciada, escamoteada o falseada' (García, 1982: 9). The introductions make statements such as 'me urgía que se conociera todo el horror' (Doña, 1978: 15). Such affirmations attest to the urgent political personal need for representation. The narratives confirm this dual focus, portraying the act of telling as a necessity and 'un alivio' (Doña, 1978: 225); this is particularly emphasised through the paratextual features that frame the texts as important socio-political narratives, particularly given the fact that 'este sacrificio no se ha visto nunca reconocido' (Cuevas, 2005: back cover). The texts thus respond to these catalysts in

representing silenced histories. Consequently, they contribute to what Doña refers to as the 'recuperación de identidad' (1978: 15) that took place after the death of Franco and they serve to pay 'homenaje a todas las mujeres que durante el régimen franquista sufrieron represión, tortura, presidio e, incluso, la muerte' (Cuevas, 2005: back cover). By countering the personal and political erasure enacted by the regime, the corpus can be read as a form of mirror that reflects and represents these women and their experiences.

On a further level, this need for representation and recognition can be examined from a Lacanian perspective, based on his affirmation that the mirror stage process 'decisively projects the formation of the individual into history' (Lacan, 1977: 4). Critic Merrill applies this to her analysis of autobiography, arguing that life writing constitutes a 'birth into time' (Merrill, 1985: 12), a movement into the social, and a 'birth into fiction' (Merrill, 1985: 12). She states, 'the autobiographical act, like the child's contemplation of her form in the mirror, thus marks both a plunge into history and a desire for a transcendence of that history' (Merrill, 1985: 12). Reading the textual corpus with reference to this comment emphasises how the texts engage with the narratives of contemporary Spanish history, particularly on account of the fact that they serve to shed light on forgotten histories and re-write the discourses of these events. This re-framing of historical narratives is more than a contemplative exercise; rather it constitutes an important political fight for recognition that forms an impetus informing the texts themselves. The introductions confirm the influence of this need to tell through

affirmations such as 'me urgía' (Doña, 1978: 15) and 'me desasosegaba' (O'Neill, 2003: 19). Additionally, O'Neill emphasises how she was compelled to write by her fellow inmates, who argue 'tienes que escribir' (2003: 213). Thus writing the texts forms a response to this personal and political need to communicate an erased history, through which the subject is projected into (narratives of) history. Considered further within the context of narratives that respond to decades of political amnesia, the description of the mirror stage as a 'birth into time' (Merrill, 1985: 12) gains particular significance when applied to this corpus. As history(iograph)ically eradicated subjects, the act of giving testimony is also personally and psychologically significant. Doña describes telling as 'un alivio' (1978: 255), further adding 'era la inmensa tragedia de su pobre vida lo que tenía que contar, lo que llevaba en el estómago como un revulsivo lo que tenía que vomitar una y otra vez' (1978: 257). Telling is both a relief and a compulsion. The grotesque imagery of vomiting again and again highlights the visceral and emotionally difficult nature of telling. Using a rhetoric of abjection, Doña thus portrays the 'project[ion] of the formation of the individual into history' (Lacan, 1977: 4) as inherently based on concepts of alienation and the abject. This very physical image also emphasises the corporeal and embodied aspects of self and subject. Reading the narratives through Lacanian mirror stage theory allows for an analysis of the narrative corpus as a process by which the subject is formed; the construction of the text additionally constitutes the establishment of the self through the mirror's reflective surface – in this case the texts' images.

The work of Lacan moreover permits a reading that moves beyond the texts as mere constructions of subjectivity. Indeed, Lacanian theory promotes a reading of the corpus as *interrogations* of subjectivity. Doña's quotation demonstrates this to a certain extent. In stating 'tenía que vomitar una y otra vez' does not just underscore the visceral need to tell, but also the inherent failures of telling, and by extension, the failures and fictions of language and narrative itself. The testimonies gathered by Cuevas demonstrate a similar concern with the failures of language through such comments as 'que no acabaríamos de contar a pesar de estar contándolo' (2005: 38) and 'si contásemos las calamidades que hemos pasado no terminaríamos nunca' (Ibid.: 42). As these statements highlight, language is shown as incapable to portray the realities of the carceral experience. Throughout the narratives' underlying need to tell and the impossibility of this, there is thus an awareness of the problematics of doing so which, when considered through the concept of the mirror stage, reiterates the false image of the mirror. As such, the narratives serve to both address the institutional silences of their [hi]stories, and problematise the discourses of history itself. The texts thus come to embody these interrogations of subject and self, and as a result they serve to constitute a mirror stage in themselves.

Metaphorically, both the process of narrative production and the final life narrative product also interplay with the question of the mirror and the mirror stage. The texts' focus on (self-)identification with the represented o/Other particularly lends itself to an analysis grounded in the process and development of

the subject that Lacan describes with the notion of the mirror stage. O'Neill demonstrates this most explicitly in her progression from 'outsider' to 'insider'. She begins by separating herself from the others as she describes herself lying awake whilst the inmates 'se quedaron dormidas, como apaciguadas por la voz del doctor' (2003: 53). This segregation is further emphasised through her depiction: 'desperté por completo. Dormían mis compañeras' (Ibid.: 54). Here, the use of full stops to differentiate the phrases also serves to construct a barrier between O'Neill and her fellow inmates. She later refers to the actions of her fellow inmates, who 'cuando se tropezaban conmigo en el gesto altivo, al volver la cabeza me exultaban su asco; y yo estaba allí, entre ellas, entregada a ellas en convivencia íntima, sin refugio posible, sin oxígeno posible' (Ibid.: 156). The depiction of her alone amongst the group emphasises her solitude and difference. However, as the narrative progresses, she begins to establish her position within the group, particularly by developing friendship with other inmates, such as Maimona and Germaine. She is so entrenched within the prison community that at her release she does not wish to leave, stating 'hubiera preferido subir con todas a las celdas, hasta me parecía que había nacido allí dentro' (O'Neill, 2003: 241). Throughout the course of the text, O'Neill thus constitutes her identification with the prison population. The other narratives within the corpus also highlight this question of belonging within the prisoner group by foregrounding the collectivity of their incarceration. They refer to 'la solidaridad completa' and state that 'estos nombres simbolizarán a miles de mujeres' (Doña, 1978: 17). For Cuevas, her narrative even

forms 'un homenaje a todas las mujeres' (2005: back cover). Through these images of collective incarceration, the narratives thus serve to establish the identification of the inmates with their prisoner status. In Lacanian terms, this represents the uniting of fragments, brought together through the whole image of the prisoner collective.

From a further perspective, analysing the texts in their entirety as a form of mirror stage additionally underscores the issues of fragmentation and false imagery. The texts portray differing subjectivities for the women, including politicised, maternal, and chaste models of femininity. These are often shown as incompatible through social discourses of the period. This fragmentation is mirrored by the form of the texts, which fragments the standards of life writing. *Presas* particularly demonstrates this fragmented use of genre through its collection of testimonies. A Lacanian perspective allows us to read these subjectivities as fragments of the subject. This also has implications for matters of both gender and genre. The irrefutable presence of fragments calls into question the problems of a genre that is categorically based on a complete notion of self.

Lacan's work underlines the schism between 'self' and the idealization of self in the mirror image. As Benstock emphasises, these 'can never coincide in language' (1988: 15). Using this to read life writing is thus a means for highlighting matters of truth and perception. This reading provides a theoretical and critical means for moving beyond the limited and problematical definition of life writing as a mirror replicating an image of the coherent, ideal self. Benstock affirms this,

arguing 'such writing puts into question the whole notion of "genre" as outlined by the exclusionary methods of Gusdorf's rather narrow definition of the autobiographical' (1988: 15). Merrill emphasises this by a Lacanian reading of Stein's *Autobiographical and Alice B. Toklas* (see (Merrill, 1985)). Similarly Parkin-Gounelas' analysis of Barthes with reference to Lacan highlights the correlating problematics of genre of the self and conceptions of the self. Applied to life writing, or rather, to borrow from Felman (1992), life writing as implicated by Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, thus allows us to re-examine a whole genre with reference to its comments on subjectivity and selfhood. Through the mirror, this corpus can therefore be examined as a form of deconstructive radical practice that interrogates discourses of female prisoner subjectivities and, moreover, their representations within narrative.

This is also important for gender issues, as Susan Stanford Friedman emphasises. She states that traditional autobiography 'raises serious theoretical problems for critics who recognise that the self, self-creation, and self-consciousness are profoundly different for women, [and] minorities' (Stanford Friedman, 1988: 34). She examines this further in the following passage, which describes the metaphor of the mirror in the construction of the subject as

the reflecting surface of cultural representation into which a woman stares to form an identity. [...] That mirror does not reflect back a unique, individual identity to each living woman; it projects an image of WOMAN, a category that is supposed to define the living woman's identity. (Stanford Friedman, 1988: 38)

The construction of subjectivity as based on an image of completeness that is

inherent within the autobiographical genre is thus portrayed as a falsehood. Stanford Friedman's comments are reflective of Lacanian theory, which emphasises the false nature of these images. She adds, however, the members of dominant social groups, such as white heterosexual Christian men, have 'the luxury of forgetting [their] skin color and sex, [... thinking of themselves as] "individual"' (Ibid.: 39). Minorities, however, do not share this luxury. According to Stanford Friedman then, the mirror stage calls into question issues of false completeness which minority groups are constantly forced to confront since their identities are defined by dominant cultural representations. For non-dominant groups, the mirror stage is thus a model that illustrates these matters of cultural representation and prescription. Applied to prescribed genres, such as the autobiography, the mirror stage provides a lens through which we can examine the shortcomings and problematics of a genre traditionally predetermined by individualism and completeness. This is most especially addressed through a Lacanian reading of fragmentation within the narratives.

Lacan allows us to address the fragmentation within the texts as a defining structure of the narratives. By addressing the fragmentation inherent in structures of selfhood – as is demonstrable in both form and content – this focus underlines the problematics and falsehoods of social images and discourses, particularly those of "completeness". Integrating the concepts of the mirror image and the socially embedded nature of the subject, Stanford Friedman argues that 'the mirror is the reflecting surface of cultural representation into which a woman stares to form an

identity' (1988: 38). The image of complete selfhood is thus not just a falsehood, as Lacan proposes; it is also categorically foregrounded in unattainable social images and "cultural representation". Such a focus on the fragmentation of the self emphasises the problematics of a genre traditionally contingent on complete selfhood, and is a means of interrogating these social images. The narratives dissect cultural discourses of womanhood throughout. This is primarily evident within the rupturing of the social paradigm of the 'puta roja' through the self-representation of the women in accordance with normative paradigms of femininity. Moreover, the texts demonstrate the intersections between disparate ideologies, such as Communism and Francoism, by drawing attention to the shared need for sexual purity, chastity, and traditionalist gender roles. The narratives therefore serve to outline the different subjectivities of prisoners, underlining how these intersect. Additionally, the focus on fragmentation provides a Lacanian image that draws attention to the false nature of mirror and social images of self and subject. As a result, reading the texts through Lacan serves to render them interrogations of notions and constructions of the subject, the instances of fragmentation become points of contention and interrogation. Highlighting the schisms of personal and political subjectivities is thus a means for questioning these very constructs.

## **Revisiting the 'No / Body Narrative' through the mirror**

On a much wider level, the mirror metaphor also provides a framework for analysing the narrative technique of texts that reflect (on) social discourses of gender and representation, as occurs in this corpus of the 'No / Body Narrative'. This refers to a form of life narrative that centres on the simultaneous hypervisibility and invisibility of the Francoist female political prisoner subject and discourses thereof. This thesis has already explored how these narratives constitute a transgressive corpus that subverts the confines of discourses of female representation both in terms of literary practice and social paradigms within the discussion on female prisoner (writing) subjectivities. When taken as a whole and examined through the concept of the mirror, the use of transgressions gains further significance to the narrative corpus. Compelled by a need to tell and yet prohibited by the threat of further persecution and severe censorship laws, the texts all demonstrate a shared struggle to communicate: O'Neill is forced to destroy her first attempts at constructing her experience of prison and rewrite it in exile; Doña only manages to reconstruct her narrative after the re-constitution of Spain through the Transition to democracy, after being rejected by underground publishers on account of her 'feminine' subject matter; and Real and Cuevas only get the opportunity to publish their testimonies after the death of Franco. The texts are thus united by the collective fight to tell and struggle to be heard. As each narrator affirms, the narratives all serve to provide political, social, and historical narratives

about the erased experience of female incarceration in Franco's prison. They argue that the respective narratives 'viene[n] a llenar el hueco' (Cuevas, 2005: 7), tell of 'todo el horror de veinte años en las cárceles franquistas' (Doña, 1978: 15), and 'revivir una historia [...] que nos había sido silenciada' (Garcia, 1982: 9). Personally and politically, historically and socially, the texts constitute a need to tell, to remember, to represent.

In order to do so, however, the narrators had to engage in new methods for giving their testimonies that frequently comprised subversive narrative strategies and non-normative textual practices. The narratives demonstrate awareness of such techniques for publishing their testimonies. O'Neill comments on the process of writing and re-writing her text using the technique of *captatio benevolentiae*; she states,

Lector amigo: Me parece que he escrito este libro más de dos veces. Lo tuve escondido, allá en España, bajo tierra, envuelto en un hule; también estuvo dentro de un horno apagado, pero su destino era el fuego. [...]

Pasó el tiempo y volví a sentir la desazón de reconstruirlo. [...]

En Venezuela volví a escribirlo en 1951, el primer año de mi llegada. Lo hice cansada, y cansado y cansino quedo el libro: cuando fui a corregirlo encontré mal dicho todo. Y me dispuse a hacerlo otra vez. La versión que ahora te ofrezco espero que será la última. No porque esté perfecta –pues nada he hecho perfecto–, sino porque, al igual que nuestro Don Quijote, cuando por segunda vez probó su celada, yo no me meteré en autocríticas y lo dejaré tal y como quede, encomendándome a tu buena voluntad, lector amigo. (O'Neill, 2003: 21-20)

In this prologue to the narrative, O'Neill portrays textual production as a constant process of reflection. By referencing the many versions of her testimony she not only emphasises her struggles amidst a period of political oppression, she also

highlights the many versions of her 'truth' that exist. Indeed, in stating that the final published edition is not perfect, she serves to frame the narrative as an imperfect recollection. The comments in this prologue play with the questions of truth and perception and present the text for what it is: a narrative. Such an introduction thereby serves as a meta-narrative device that portrays the process and practise of writing by making the reader aware of textual variation and imperfection.

In a similar manner, Doña also plays with the notions of truth and fiction in introducing her text. She states that

no podía poner nombres auténticos para relatar hechos reales [...]. Entonces decidí hacerlo en forma de novela con nombres supuestos, pero quiero dejar constancia, que ni uno solo de los relatos que se cuentan aquí, son producto de la imaginación; quiero aclarar, así mismo, que no es una novela auténticamente autobiográfica; yo por entonces estaba incorporada a la lucha clandestina y tuve que desfigurar algunos hechos para no dar mi propia identidad, confiaba que de alguna manera, el relato podría editarse y guardé esas elementales precauciones. (Doña, 1978: 17)

Through these affirmations the text is presented as part novel, part autobiography, yet neither solely one nor the other. This generic hybridity is attributed to the continuing political oppression during the time of writing. However, these statements concerning narrative type also serve to question the notion of fully adhering to prescribed genres. As a comment on publishing and belonging within literature, this generic hybridity and the rejection of strict genre classifications gains further significance based on her earlier statement that

tenía la vana pretensión de que alguna editorial hiciera una edición "pirata", pero las editoriales no hacían "piraterías" tratándose de una "cosa" de mujeres, decían que no "estaba el horno para bollos" y... así era. (Doña,

1978: 15)

She thus highlights both the silencing of women within literature and the silencing of the politically oppressed under the dictatorship and during the years that followed. In making such reflections, Doña's prologue considers the issues of truth, gender, oppression, belonging, and representation within both the literary establishment and Francoist and post-Francoist society. By highlighting her need to wait and to obscure the identities of her protagonists, she illustrates the techniques she resorted to in order to guarantee publication.

These examples of narrative subversion and alternative strategies for textual production are evidence of the compelling need to tell experienced by these women. The narratives thus construct their own generic hybridity in the form of the 'No / Body Narrative' in order to communicate and reproduce their histories. They both utilise and condemn discourses of gender, literature, and history from which they have been excluded by using and distorting autobiographical genre traits, such as the autobiographical pact, the use of third person and second person narrative moments, repetition, linearity and fragmentation, and collectivity. Consequently, the texts constitute a call to action that invites a reconfiguration of discourses of Spanish history, particularly those of female political prisoners under Franco. They call into question the need for new discourses and new narrative forms in order to discuss such invisible, erased content, most especially from the marginal perspective of the predominantly un-educated Francoist female prisoner.

By referencing such subversions the narratives also query the issues of

visibility and invisibility with regards to normativity. As texts that simultaneously demonstrate normative textual practice and radical narrative strategies in terms of their life writing, they call to account the concurrent hypervisibility and invisibility of the female corporeal prisoner subject as 'No / Body'. They resort to both normative and subversive genre techniques in a manner that is reminiscent of the portrayal of the female subjects within the texts. Textual form and content thus come together in representing the paradoxical invisible yet hypervisible presence of the female political prisoner within these narratives and the social discourses of gender and representation therein.

These subversions further call into question the notions of false representations and fragmentation, which exist on a meta-textual level at the moment of narrative production, as the narratives all confirm. When forced to destroy her draft text, O'Neill keeps notes, explaining

Antes de deshacerlo tomé notas para poder seguirlo más tarde. Y metía en el equipaje unas cuartillas que eran un jeroglífico sólo entendido por mí..."NOTAS PARA UNA NOVELA POLICÍACA Y DE AVENTURAS", ponía, y todo lo que en estas páginas queda escrito, allí era un puro disparate, que nadie hubiera logrado descifrar si muero antes; ni mis propias hijas. (2003: 19)

*Una mujer en la guerra de España* is thus presented as a construction from a number of fragments. Nevertheless, as O'Neill recognises, this construction is never fully complete; she says of her 'final' draft, 'no porque esté perfecta – pues nada he hecho perfecto' (2003: 20). In a similar manner, Doña comments on the reconstitution of her testimony amidst the 'recuperación de identidad' (1978: 15)

experienced in Spain following the death of Franco. Meanwhile, for Cuevas and Real, the fragments comprising their texts takes a very literal meaning given the oral interviews on which they are based. These acts of reconstitution common to all the narratives within the corpus not only serve to illustrate the inherent notion of rupture within the 'No / Body Narrative'; they also invite a Lacanian analysis of the corpus that pays homage to the overt and implicit fragmentation and fallacious nature of the subject.

In terms of genre, content, and narrative production, the texts thus condemn the failings in discourse and strive to both recognise and move beyond these failings. For the corpus, there is therefore a need to retain the invisible in these representations. Reading such approaches to genre and representation through the concept of the mirror not only serves to present the narrative process as a transitional and developmental mirror stage for the narrator; it also provides a means for highlighting a number of problematical and significant aspects. Lacan's affirmation that the image in the mirror is false becomes particularly relevant in the case of these narratives struggling to tell and to be heard within such a context of oppression and silencing. By reading the mirror image as false, fragmented, and dialectical, we can explore the texts' genre as further problematical for the representation of the female prisoner narrating subject and female prisoner narrative. The mirror as metaphor and analytical framework allows us to question the notion of self-referential practice within a discourse-heavy society and re-posit the texts as interrogations of representation. Analysing the narrative corpus in and

of itself through the notion of the mirror thus presents these texts as a means for inherently querying the nature of discourses of gender and representation for female political prisoners under Franco.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has explored the question of carceral inscription through the concept of the mirror. In so doing, the Lacanian notion of the mirror stage has provided me with an analytical device through which I have examined the narrative (re)production of carceral corporealities and subjectivities for the Francoist female prisoner. I have thus drawn on the central interlinking issues of (in)visibility and representation amidst dominant social discourses of being and belonging that underlay this thesis. In this chapter, the focus on the mirror has allowed me to consider how the texts query and interrogate (self)-representation by emphasising the limitations of societal discourses and moving beyond these. This critical focus has made for an analysis that posits the texts as narratives that attend to notions of invisibility, hypervisibility, and the 'No / Body' and the complications that this encompasses. Through the mirror, I have thus shown how the narratives play with and distort social images of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity as a means to re-consider the question of female prisoner subjectivities and representations.

In the case of Doña's and O'Neill's texts, this particularly entails the exploration

of carceral inscription within the narratives' mirror stages. Using a Lacanian framework to explore these has allowed me to consider the fragmented and false nature of societal discourses of carcerality. By considering these discourses through the mirror's image, the texts foreground the corporeal and embodied aspects of carcerality. In deliberating and questioning the reflection in the mirror both O'Neill and Doña underscore the problematics of social constructions of prisoner subjectivities. Within the narrative corpus this interrogation of discourses of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity for the female political prisoner under Franco extends beyond the literal mirror's image. As Cuevas and Real in particular demonstrate through their texts, radical narrativity constitutes a means of questioning and disrupting dominant self-referential practice. Exploring the narrative interrogation of dominant notions with reference to the mirror stage has allowed me to re-position these as false images, whilst taking into consideration their ongoing significance. Indeed, rather than simply overlaying problematic normative discourses, the narratives instead draw attention to and consider the ingrained nature of these for female prisoner representation(s) in terms of both textual form and content, as well as proposing new and interrogative methods for considering and portraying female corporeal, carceral subjectivities.

## CONCLUSION

### No / Body, Now/Here?

In concluding the brief but moving narration of her experience as a young mother in Franco's prisons, ex-prisoner and exile Pilar Fidalgo makes the following affirmation:

At last here I am safe. I have been saved, a little by chance but mainly through the working of the laws of war which make hostages a rate of exchange. It is like a resurrection for me to find myself out of prison, free from all oppression and sure of never being replunged into barbarism. But I hold in my heart the sad images of those 200 interminable nights of nightmare. Nightmares that were *not* dreams – but undeniable reality. That reality was and remains, because, although once more I breathe as a free woman, in our cell pass to and fro some 40 women, endlessly suffering indescribable torture, while thousands of men are crammed in the halls, passages and court-yard, and await the fall of day to light them to the slaughter-house and the common grave into which their entangled bodies will be thrown.

In my liberty I am still one with them, as I was when I was in prison, and to this day I share their sufferings. What else can I do for them but denounce the cruelty of their executioners? (Fidalgo, 1939: 31-32)

She thus terminates her text by emphasising the paradoxical situation of freedom and confinement, silence and sound, visibility and invisibility in which she found herself after her release from prison. As she highlights, she is 'free' and 'saved' and

yet she must carry the 'sad images' and 'nightmares' within her forever, irreducibly changed by her experience of Francoist incarceration and brutality. These statements confirm the trauma of regime imprisonment as vital within the prisoners' conceptualisations of their experiences and themselves. What Felman and Laub designate as the concurrent 'need to tell' and 'impossibility of telling' faced by the trauma survivor (1992), thus becomes very real for the female political prisoner on both a personal, emotional, and a socio-historical, political level. Victims of authoritarian discipline, the prisoners endure the literal and discursive erasure of their lives alongside the social and political visibility through public acts of discipline and denigration. The conflicts recounted within Fidalgo's excerpt above, thus constitute a (b)latent issue the ex-inmates must approach and address through their testimonies.

Ángeles García-Madrid finishes her narrative on a similar note, affirming 'levantó decididamente la cabeza y contempló el lejano horizonte. Era preciso vivir: incluso por cuanto dejaba atrás.... O tal vez, esencialmente, por ello, sobreviviría!' (1982: 334). García-Madrid, too, emphasises a precarious balance between the visible and the invisible in this declaration for survival. As she affirms, her survival and her visibility are necessary both *despite* and *because of* the numerous erasures, invisibilities, and destructions wrought on the Francoist female prisoner. Both texts are now out of print and widely unavailable, yet their words remain indelibly inscribed within preserved texts and copies; they thus serve to epitomise the interminable conflict between erasure and survival echoed within these excerpts

that in many ways defines their prison testimonies. Although taken from narratives that have not been discussed throughout this thesis, these statements draw together a number of the key conflicting issues faced by female political prisoners under Franco and explored throughout their literature.

Stemming from this experience of inherent paradoxes, this thesis has explored the representations of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity within the narrative corpus of texts by female political prisoners under Franco. The focus of this thesis began in the examination of life narratives by female political prisoners under Franco and how these served as self-(re)presentations. Overall, it has argued that the texts attend to paradigms and discourses of belonging and being for women as prisoners of an authoritarian regime; it has questioned to what extent their life narratives replicate, reject, and interrogate such discourses and paradigms. By exploring these questions with reference to a range of critical constructs based on subjectivity, the a/object, spatiality, the collective, and the mirror, this thesis has posited the multifaceted influence and intersection of social discourses in the constitution of the subject. Indeed, such a diverse theoretical and critical approach has served to emphasise not only the embodied and spatial nature of subjectivity, but also the problematics and complexities of the unique subject-position of the female carceral, and corporeal subject under Francoism, as depicted within their texts.

An underlying focus has been the concept of the 'No / Body' as a means to delimit and designate this unique and problematically paradoxical subject-position

of the female political prisoner under Franco. This term thus illustrates the invisible yet hypervisible status of these women as 'nobodies' that are grotesque bodies. Throughout this thesis, the presence of this notion within the narratives has been of continuing importance: I have argued that the texts can be read as 'No / Body Narratives' and thus constitute radical narrative practice, that they serve to develop, explain, and depict this notion, and that they emphasise the significance thereof in their construction of carceral, corporeal subjectivities. Moreover, I have also demonstrated how the narratives serve to question and disrupt the 'No / Body' as the dominant status for the female political prisoner under Franco. I have examined the 'No / Body' in conjunction with other constituent aspects of subjectivity, including the Other, spatiality, collectivity, and the mirror in order to affirm the intersectional nature of societal discourses of gender and genre. Finally, and most significantly, I have shown that the narratives foreground the ongoing 'No / Body' status of (ex) female political prisoners within their representations of lives, experiences, and subjects. Indeed, in a context of overt repression, erased histories, and silenced pasts, portrayals of 'No / Body' conflicts and paradoxes visibilise the presence and significance of disciplinary paradigms concerning carceral, corporeal subjectivities. By underscoring these matters, I assert that, in terms of both narrative form and content, the texts thus provide a new discourse that engages with the two sides of the 'No / Body' paradox: the hypervisible and the invisible.

I began this thesis with the consideration of the female political prisoner as

a 'No / Body' 'nowhere' in order to explore to what extent the narratives combat and move beyond this subject position. Vilified and reduced to a decrepit body, eradicated within discourses of histor(iograph)y, criticism, genre, and by Nationalist discipline, the female political prisoner under Franco represent an invisible victim of the dictatorship and its continuing remnants. In writing their life narratives that dissect regime carcerality and its consequences, the prisoners themselves confront these discourses of hypervisible invisibilities, invisible hypervisibilities, and of the 'No / Body' through self-referential radical narrative acts. As I have shown through my continued focus on the concept from differing critical perspectives, this notion of the 'No / Body' constitutes an integral aspect within the texts as personal, political, socio-historical, and literary narratives that interrogate dominant paradigms and discourses of female prisoner subjectivities and corporealities. In attending to these discourses, the texts do not simply replicate or reject societal ideologies; they do not disregard the 'No / Body' with the intention of becoming a 'somebody' – in fact, they cannot ignore the 'No / Body'; rather, the narratives serve to bring the 'No / Body' to the present. The corpus foregrounds the notion through their self-constitutive narrative acts in a manner that allows for a recognition of the past, a consideration for the influence of dominant discourses in the present, and a chance to transcend these for the future. Through these narratives the 'No / Body' is thus not nowhere, but 'Now / Here' as a radical statement of being, belonging, and interrogating the paradigms contained within these notions.

This focus on the re-presentations of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity within the life narratives by female political prisoners under Franco constitutes an original contribution to the growing body of scholarship examining contemporary Spanish history. In exploring these primary sources with reference to their socio-historical and political contexts, on the one hand, and to gender, genre, and philosophy theories, on the other, it offers a new approach to the analysis and consideration of historical narratives within the present. By spanning a range of critical concepts, it represents an integrated and intersectional exploration and provides new ways of reading female political prisoners under Franco in terms of the three key and interlinked tenets of carcerality, corporeality, and subjectivity. Unlike previous research, which has tended to be limited to the descriptive or the historical, this thesis puts forth a wider analysis of narratives of Francoist female imprisonment as a starting point for future research. It has opened out a discussion of new modes and ways of being and belonging in discourses of gender, literature, and history for the population of an obscured recent past that can still be discussed further. In posing the concept of the 'No / Body' it contributes a diverse and vibrant analytical methodology to consider narrative and discursive representations beyond the binaries of left-wing / right-wing, male / female, victor / vanquished. This thesis thus provides new methodologies for the exploration of narrative discourses of the corporeal, carceral subject in Francoist Spain that simultaneously move beyond and question boundaries of being and belonging, whilst still attending to the necessarily ever-

present, undeniable, and significant influence of dominant socio-historical, political, and literary ideologies.

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