

**Women's Actions, Women's Words.  
Female Political and Cultural Responses  
to the Argentine State**

**by**

**Susanne Meachem**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Hispanic Studies  
College of Arts and Law  
The University of Birmingham  
March 2010**

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

*To my husband Keith whose belief in me  
never faltered and whose unconditional  
love and support has made this work possible*

*The political activism in the literature of Latin American women, like the political actions of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and similar groups has become an activity of incalculable force.*

Marjorie Agosín, 1986

# Contents

Acknowledgements		
Abstract		
Introduction		i
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Women and Political Participation</b>	
<b>Chapter 1</b>		
Sarmiento - A Tale of Two Cultures		1
<b>Chapter 2</b>		
Part 1	Gender and Nation	28
Part 2	The Identity of Motherhood	54
<b>Chapter 3</b>		
Peronism		87
<b>Chapter 4</b>		
Muchachas de Mirada clara		123
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Women's Literary Engagement</b>	
<b>Chapter 5</b>		
Women Writers in 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Argentina		160
Juana Manuela Gorriti		
Juana Manso		
<b>Chapter 6</b>		
Feminine Literature and Peronism		209
Marta Lynch		
Beatriz Guido		
<b>Chapter 7</b>		
Women Writers and State Terrorism		252
Luisa Valenzuela		
Liliana Heker		
Conclusion		293
Appendices		297
Bibliography		304

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks, Dr. Conrad James. You always lifted my spirits and my confidence. Your ample knowledge and constructive criticism guided me through the sometimes tough process of writing. Working with you was most enjoyable.

Thank you, Susanne Schicht, my best mate, for always being there for me. Your astute advice and unique friendship helped me through my darkest hours of self-doubt.

Thank you, Dr. Franz Reischl, my dear friend, for always lending me a helping hand in philosophical matters.

Sincere thanks to you, my lovely friend, Ms Rosa Sánchez Riobó, for always, without fail, helping me out with tricky bits of translation.

Thank you, mother; although distant, your love is always with me.

Thank you, dad, for your encouragement and unwavering belief in me. I wish you could still be with us.

I also would like to express my sincere gratitude to the School of Humanities of the University of Birmingham for partially funding my studies; your financial support made my life considerably easier during the process of this work.

## Abstract

This thesis explores the interaction of gender and the construction of the Argentine state. It pays particular attention to the emergence of women's movements as well as women's writing and the way in which both reflect and express the history of the Argentine state after independence.

Beginning with a brief account of Argentine independence and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento as founding-father of the Argentine nation, part one focuses on the historical periods of the Liberal State, Peronism, and the military dictatorships of the 1960s and early 1970s. It investigates how national discourse incorporated gender discourse without including women as citizens in their full right. It then explores how women's movements articulated their ensuing discontent with the patriarchal system that attempted to ensure continuity of this exclusion.

Part two identifies and analyzes selected texts by nineteenth and twentieth century Argentine female authors. Written from a specifically female standpoint, these novels and short stories articulate women's grievances with the political developments addressed in part one.

## Introduction

This thesis explores female political activism and female literary engagement in Argentina as a response by women to the Argentine state. Taking into account women's multiple identities and interests, this thesis investigates these activisms chronologically in two parts during the Liberal State, Peronism, and the military governments of the 1960s and 1970s.

The first Latin American political women's movements emerged in Argentina shortly after independence. Moreover, with an uninterrupted presence in the tradition of female authors since 1830, women's cultural activism in Argentina is one of the most potent in Latin America. In order to effect social reform, women have reacted and responded to political developments, with either civil rights campaigns or with literary production amongst others.

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how both these activisms have provided a space for women to give expression to a specifically female historical perspective of Argentine culture and society. Furthermore, it underlines the need for an interdisciplinary approach in the investigation of women's activisms in order to reveal links between different forms of female expression and gain insight into specifically female concerns which have largely been disregarded by the political classes.

Chapter one is concerned with the complexity of nation-building in the Argentine republic after independence from Spain. The wars of independence in the early nineteenth century precipitated the first crisis of the cultural pattern that had been established gradually since the conquest.<sup>1</sup> The French Enlightenment of the

---

<sup>1</sup> From the first encounter of Spanish with indigenous culture a new cultural model emerged, heavily influenced by Catholicism, leaning towards political authoritarianism and not very open to scientific



eighteenth century, British Liberalism and, later in the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte's positivism played an important role in this process. New forms of stratification emerged that did not depend on racial criteria as had been the case until then. Scientific rationality of nineteenth century Europe began to influence the dominant Latin American classes as well as academics and intellectuals. They thought that the new scientific criteria were the only way to 'order and progress' for the new republics (Larrain, 1994:41). As the subject was replaced by the citizen and the institutions of popular sovereignty became established, it was necessary to define the populace: self government requires a community that is to be the self. The demand for popular sovereignty was accompanied by the difficult task, the fundamental problem of defining the nation or community that was to exercise this sovereignty (Kamenka, 1976:14). Establishing the self, however, requires the positioning of an 'other' against which the self can be defined and which represents everything that the self is not. An important element in that self-recognition is the position of 'liminal groups' who confuse the boundaries between the inside and the outside. As Norton has argued: "Liminars serve as mirrors for nations; at once other and alike, they provide the occasion for the nation to constitute itself in reflection upon its identity" (1988:55, cited in Dodds, 1993). In the case of the Argentine state the *gauchos*, *mestizos* by and large, Afro-Argentines or Indian peoples as well as women in general were prime examples of liminal groups. They all served as a source of identification for the state.

The chapter focuses on Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's work *Facundo*, a thesis that has characterized the Argentine nation in terms of two opposing cultural trends: urban civilization and rural barbarism. Sarmiento and the famous 'Generation of 37' delineated the parameters of the Argentine nation with the

---

reason. This model coexisted comfortably with slavery, the inquisition and the religious monopoly of the Catholic Church.

objective of establishing a European, urban, ‘civilised’ culture, which, in order to be created, needed the selection of a set of representations that involved, by inclusion and exclusion, various social sectors. The early Argentinean nation-builders perceived the violence that plagued the republic in its early stages as an inherent characteristic of its people which they, in time, came to believe was a decisive element of their destiny. With *Facundo*, Sarmiento established a dichotomous Argentine founding ethos which has influenced the country’s subsequent state formations and governments in terms of exclusionary politics and the justifiable use of state violence

In Argentina, like elsewhere, cultural representations constituted a key tool in the socio-cultural construction of the ‘other’ and, therefore, in the creation of new identities, not only in terms of nation but also of class, race, and gender; all of which contributed to the formation of the collective imaginary which supported the ‘imagined community’ (Marre, 2001:29).

Chapter one also addresses the place of women within this community as imagined by Sarmiento. Despite his success in creating numerous academic institutions aimed at the advance of women’s education, their instruction was limited to the improvement and expansion of traditional female activities related to the home and child-rearing. Furthermore, only women of a certain class and status became the beneficiaries of Sarmiento’s educational reforms, while others remained excluded.

Further investigation into Sarmiento’s exclusionary politics in terms of class, race and ethnicity as well as his aggressive suggestions and strategies to deal with undesirable sectors of society concludes chapter one. It thereby highlights the exclusion of various social sectors from the national discourse despite their significant presence during the independence struggles and their important political and economic role in the construction of the Argentine nation.

Drawing predominantly on the theory of Yuval-Davies, part one of chapter two addresses the prominent presence of gender discourse in Argentine nation-building. With respect to women, gender relations have influenced the construction of national identity, political ideologies, cultural politics, and education long before they were considered citizens, (Potthast & Scarzanella, 2001:7). A broad trend in the study of citizenship recognizes that the specific location of people in society - their group membership and categorical definition by gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, 'race', ability, age or life cycle stage - mediates the construction of their citizenship as 'different' and thus determines their access to entitlements and their capacity to exercise independent agency (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999:5).

The chapter then sheds light on the participation of women in the struggle for emancipation of the colony. Women are said to have played a minor supporting role in the fight for liberation from colonial rule as wives and daughters, or perhaps serving the soldiers as nurses, cooks or prostitutes (Williamson, 1992:237-9). They were defined as 'outside' combat even though they were present in the villages and on the battlefield. They served as camp followers and auxiliaries at the front, differentiated from men only in that they did not carry weapons. (Brewster, 2005:20). Naturally, women were present during the independence wars and formed part of the cultural and ideological plans and programmes that were to be implemented in order to construct a nation with its own national identity - not as independent agents of their own fate but rather as a part of society that served to reinforce the continuity of the colonial patriarchal hierarchy. Because women and the family are located in the private domain which is not seen as politically relevant, nationalism and nations have been discussed as part of the public domain

and the exclusion of women from that arena has led to their exclusion from that discourse as well (Yuval-Davis, 1997:14).

One important feature of continuity is procreation. A vital element in nationalist family policy, it guarantees the perpetuation of national culture, values and genetic characteristics (Yuval-Davis, 1997:14). In order to ensure a 'white' and 'civilized' Argentine nation, a variety of groups of women were marginalized, as mothers and as citizens, since they did not display the desirable qualities the state wished for in future generations. Chapter two identifies some of these female sectors and the state's manipulative strategies to render their members invisible and silent.

Staying with the themes of motherhood and citizenship, chapter two also draws on the identity theories of Charles Taylor (1989) and Axel Honneth (1995) in order to reveal the dilemma faced by women as their changing legal and social position became incompatible with the state's ambiguous requirements of women as mothers and citizens. After all, the discourses of motherhood and the particular figures and images of mothers are produced and reproduced at particular historical moments, so that motherhood has to be seen as a contingent identity, that is one produced discursively within different cultures at different times, rather than being fixed or rooted in an essentially female biology. Motherhood is an identity that can be negotiated and rearticulated within particular political, social and economic circumstances. It presents a contested identity where new figures of motherhood emerge within particular discourses in a climate of social and economic change (Woodward, 1997:281-2).

The chapter then goes on to explore how the resulting discontent led to the emergence of female political activism looking at various women's social movements of different political hue. Also important is the nascent concept of political motherhood which has been addressed within those early movements. A

brief exploration of the roles of fathers concludes chapter two in order to obtain a more rounded picture of the state's influences on family life at the time.

Chapter three is concerned with Peronism, a multifaceted historical phenomenon and a fundamental element in Argentine politics of the twentieth century, which has awarded such a particular character to Argentine society that it has generated worldwide academic interest. Inexhaustible analyses of the nature of Peronism have been produced by a large number of political scientists. Since Peronism *per se* is not the topic of this project, I have abstained from trying to produce an analysis of its nature as a political movement. However, Peronism had such a decisive impact on the Argentine women's (and working class) movement, not only at the time of its rise but until the present day, that a brief exploration of its causes and effects was essential in order to analyze the women's movement during the first Peronist period (1946-55) and beyond.

As immigration had virtually stopped by 1930, the necessary workforce now came from Argentina's rural regions and settled in the outskirts of the big cities (Halperín Donghi, 1972:21).<sup>2</sup> Although industry flourished enormously, workers did not enjoy the fruits of their activities in the same proportion. A fraudulent and corrupt state machinery headed by a powerful rural and urban elite kept wages low and working conditions inadequate (James, 1988:8). Partially due to women's integration into industry during the 1930s and early 1940s women had come to represent a considerable part of the country's industrial work force. Disproportional to both the working class' and women's contributions to the country's economy, reforms regarding their political participation were not forthcoming. At first, chapter three outlines the reforms and failures of the *Unión*

---

<sup>2</sup> Two thirds of these migrants were women and by 1949 women came to represent 31.37% of the capital city's industrial workers (Hollander, 1974:42). Nationwide, by 1950, women constituted 50.12% of the textile workers, 67.96% garment workers, and 31.17% of its chemical workers (Hollander, 1974:45).

*Cívica Radical* and the subsequent military *coup* in 1930 in order to provide the historical setting and circumstances that led to the rise of Juan Perón.

The chapter then moves to outline Perón's strategies in order to gain electoral support from the working classes. A crucial component within this endeavour was Perón's attempt to synthesize opposing elements of Argentina's founding legacies: civilization as prescribed by Sarmiento and political authority as asserted by Rosas.

The radical social reforms in favour of women and the working classes implemented by Juan and Eva Perón have also been addressed in chapter three. However, it also outlines the state's manipulation of the women's movement in as much as it underlines the fact that these reforms moved within traditional gender roles and served mainly to gain female votes.

Taking into account the politically central position held by Eva Perón, the chapter then explores her contribution to the enormous popularity of Peronism as well as some aspects of her persona that are less well documented.

Chapter four investigates female participation in urban revolutionary movements, particularly within the *Montoneros* during the late 1960s and early 1970s. At first, the chapter outlines the conception of such organizations which resulted from the severe crisis Peronism experienced for attempting to reform Argentina's socio-economic structures and the increasing authoritarian nature of the regime.

Due to the retrograde policies towards women during the military governments that followed Peronism in the 1960s as well as the emergence of second-wave feminism in the developed countries, feminist groups and movements emerged within political parties or independently across Argentina. Their interests and strategies varied significantly from those of women active in militant organizations.

Included in Chapter four is the disclosure of the discrepancies between these simultaneous movements.

Women's experiences at the time present a history in its own right which, although not independent from men's history, has to be evaluated as a history with particular characteristics and features (Pasquali, 2005:125). The chapter, therefore, addresses the relationship and ensuing complexities between the leadership of revolutionary organizations and the women active within them. This part of the chapter is based predominantly on interviews with women active at the time as documented by Marta Diana (2006) and Feijoó et al (1996). The aim of this part of the chapter is to expound on women's experiences in the attempt to effect social changes and the difficulties they faced in trying to match the traditional female image, particularly in their role as mothers, while living in a dangerous and unstable environment.

Part two of this thesis explores the ways in which female writers during each of these historical periods responded to state and government in their literary productions. To this end, the works of two women writers feature in each chapter; one who is relatively famous and a second who is less well known. This format is deliberate and sets out to enhance existing knowledge on women's literary production in Argentina through detailed engagement with women's voices which have been hitherto under-explored.

Chapter five first outlines the emergence of a number of female writers during the early decades of the nineteenth century. It explores the strategies of these pioneering authors for finding entrance into the public sphere through the publication of their work. They particularly highlight women's grievances with the political systems as profoundly different from those experienced by men, challenging, even at this early stage, the notion of separate private and public spheres.

The chapter then analyzes the work of Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892), whose writings were among the most widely read in Latin America. Gorriti strongly criticised social injustices and particularly highlighted women's suffering caused by political instability and conflict. However, Gorriti never transgressed social conventions in terms of her language and style but sought to improve women's status within traditional gender relations.

Juana Manso, in contrast, whose work also has been addressed in chapter five, can be classed as an early feminist. Far ahead of her time, she advocated no less than a socio-political revolution demanding women's equality with men in all aspects of life by attempting to subvert traditional gender roles.

The final part of chapter five looks at a nineteenth century recipe book as yet another vehicle for women to enter public discourse.

Chapter six is concerned with Peronism's influence on women's literary productions and how these women articulated their experiences in this political era of profound social change.

At first, the chapter explores Perón's attitude towards Argentine literature in general. Then, it looks at the work of Marta Lynch (1925-1985) whose continuous but frustrated attempts to gain recognition on the political stage found expression in her prolific career as an author. Particular attention has been given to her novel, *La señora Ordóñez* (1968), in which Lynch conveys a woman's struggle to adapt to the rapidly changing social demands on women while at the same time trying to escape the confinements of woman's place imposed on her by a specifically female language as coined by Lakoff (1975).

The chapter also analyzes the novel *El incendio y las visperas* (1964) by Beatriz Guido (1924-1988). Unlike Lynch, who addresses the invasion of women's life by



the political system, Guido tells of the disruption by Peronism of the traditional class system and the resulting severe division of Argentine society as a whole.

Chapter seven first outlines Argentina's political development, the increasingly oppressive nature of the regime, writers' struggle to articulate the significance of this experience and, thereby, making sense of the system's deterioration. The military dictatorship of the 1970s in Argentina gave rise to the so-called Narrative of the Dirty War (Corbatta, 1999:22). Luisa Valenzuela's (1938- ) novel *Cola de lagartija* (1983) belongs to this genre and has been analyzed in chapter seven. In this work, Valenzuela creates a monstrous character whose historical counterpart is José López Rega whom the writer posits within the Argentine tradition of the monster as cultural discourse. The novel has to be understood as an act of resistance which can only be expressed indirectly; it alludes to the dominant discourse but presents it as a caricature, in order to undermine its manipulative force.

The last part of chapter seven looks at some of the short stories by Liliana Heker (1938- ). Her work also belongs to Dirty War-literature and is, like most of Valenzuela's work, concerned with solving the problem of relating reality in literature at a time when the state imposed a unilateral version of reality in order to purge any possible opposition to the system. Heker's protagonists all experience an invasion of their private or professional lives by the authoritarian regime. Consequently, their perception of self becomes distorted by the state's manipulations. Their tactics and motives to maintain some degree of normality varies but they all ultimately recognize that they are powerless in their efforts to retain their original identity.

## Chapter 1

### Sarmiento - A Tale of Two Cultures

This chapter provides the historical setting for the creation - or invention to speak in Shumway's (1991) terms - of Argentina and the foundational building blocks of its culture and politics with special focus on those social sectors that were excluded from the national project. Particular attention has been given to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's work, *Facundo, Civilización y Barbarie*, and the logic behind his reasoning which has formed the basis for the legitimization of exclusionary politics and the use of force as a means to quell popular unrest.

The chapter then explores the position of women within Sarmiento's ideology. Despite the significant improvements he effected regarding female education, reform of women's civil rights remained elusive and women continued to form the largest of the socially marginalized sectors, relegated to the home and traditional female activities.

Finally, the chapter examines Sarmiento's recommendations for the treatment of other social groups that were to be excluded from the national project, despite their decisive contributions to the success of the independence struggles and the economic development of the country.

## Civilization and Barbarism

Due to the lack of a solution to the vitally important problem of national organization, national unity remained elusive after the declaration of independence even though ten years had elapsed since the colony challenged Spain's authority. The constitution in 1819, produced by the Congress of Tucumán, did not establish the form of government that was to be adopted but it showed 'unitarian' characteristics and was formulated in a way that resembled a constitutional monarchy (several of the Congress' participants were negotiating the coronation of a princess<sup>1</sup> in the Río de la Plata) and, although republican in form, closely maintained the colonial system (Burgin, 1946:76). The constitution reaffirmed the supremacy of Buenos Aires; it curtailed the political and fiscal autonomy of the provinces; it excluded the popular masses from political life of the nation; it assured political control to a group of men whose monarchical convictions and inclinations were widely known.

A decade of conflict between capital and provinces, between central government and regional rights, between Unitarians and Federalists followed and the political framework in the Río de la Plata collapsed. Independent republics emerged and sought to defend their interests which involved taking their struggles to Buenos Aires. After the government was practically destroyed by gaucho and Indian armies following the northern *caudillos*, the capital became drenched in almost total anarchy. In a desperate bid to liberate themselves from the lawless hordes, the *porteños* invited the *estancieros* from the south to come to their rescue. Juan Manuel de Rosas, the wealthiest and most powerful amongst them was only too ready to follow this call since it was in his own interest to avoid an advance of the northern caudillos to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Carlota Joaquina, sister of Fernando VII and wife of João VI, King of Portugal who by then resided in Brazil.

southern *estancias* (Lynch, 1992:85). It can be said, therefore, that it was not the case that Rosas suddenly decided to wage a war against the Unitarian capital and to subsequently oppress its population but that he was effectively asked to combat the belligerent invaders. Because of this, he was later able to justify his actions by claiming that he had acted in favour of the common good and assumed the - not entirely unjustified - title of 'restorer of the law'. In return for his services he was rewarded by the government with even more land. It can be assumed that those who solicited Rosas' help expected him to return to his *estancia* once order was restored but he, of course, seized the opportunity to acquire more military and political power<sup>2</sup>. Once he was in power, he exterminated his rival *caudillos*, some of them once his allies, so that they could no longer stand in his way. The fate of the now 'masterless' peasants and workers was then placed into the hands of inept commanders incapable of disrupting his path to success and power.

Depending on political philosophies, it can be said that coalescing into a political unit took Argentina around seventy years. The country's establishment as a nation can be variously dated starting with its break from Spain in 1810 and the declaration of independence in 1816, through to the abortive constitutions of 1819 and 1826, the federal pact between the coastal provinces of 1831, the constitution of 1853<sup>3</sup>, the first constitutional government of all the provinces in 1862, up to the federalization of Buenos Aires in 1880 (see Scobie, 1964).

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-88) explained the problem as an internal cultural conflict between civilization and barbarism and as a specific condition within

---

<sup>2</sup> Rosas was not against constitutional, central government. In a letter to Juan Facundo Quiroga in 1834 he clearly expressed the republic's need for national organization within the framework of a constitution; however, at the time he strongly believed that regional constitutions had to be implemented in order to restore law and order before the drafting of a national constitution could be contemplated. "In this lamentable state we need now to create everything anew, working modestly at first, and then, gradually, introducing a general system that embraces everything" (Nouzeilles & Montaldo, 2002:77)

<sup>3</sup> The constitution of 1853 is the one still in force today although it has been amended eight times since 1860 until the most recent amendment in 1994.

Argentina. A politician, journalist, and educator, Sarmiento wrote his most famous work, *Facundo, Civilización y Barbarie* while exiled in Chile during the Rosas dictatorship. The most widely read of Sarmiento's work, *Facundo* has invited myriad of comments, praise as well as criticism. With this work, a biography of the *caudillo* Facundo Quiroga (1790-1835) and at the same time an attack on Rosas, Sarmiento tries to explain Argentina's long history of civil unrest and volatile political scene.

### ***Facundo* - a foundational text**

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was a central intellectual figure among those who fought against Rosas. Together with other members of the *Generación del 37*<sup>4</sup> he is considered one of the founding fathers of modern Argentina where, like elsewhere in Latin America, independence had given rise to the problem of establishing a political and social organization for the new nation.

The figure of Quiroga, most noticeable for his opposition to Rosas in the attempt to organize the country within the framework of a constitution is, however, only marginally important. Of much more interest are Sarmiento's ideas and his view of

---

<sup>4</sup> A movement of young intellectuals who, in 1837, founded the *Salón Literario* in a book shop owned by Marcos Sastre in Buenos Aires. They debated cultural issues, social, political, and philosophical theories by European thinkers across the ideological spectrum. The increasing politicization of the group and its critical and reformist opinions led to the salon's closure by Rosas. Clandestinely and led by Esteban Echeverría, Juan Bautista Alberdi, and Juan María Gutierrez, the *Asociación de la Joven Generación Argentina* was founded in 1838 with the objective to resuscitate the liberal tradition of the May Revolution, stimulate material progress, and put an end to the polarization between Federalists and Unitarians by influencing the ruling classes accordingly and support them ideologically. They considered representative democracy as a long term aim and questioned the universal suffrage law implemented in Buenos Aires as early as 1821 because of the political consequences it had led to (in August of that year a new House of Representatives was elected who, in turn elected Rosas governor with 'extraordinary power'), and because they believed that the law was inadequate for Argentina's social reality at the time. To explain and understand this reality was one of the main objectives of the group. By the late 1830s, the members of the group openly opposed Rosas and many emigrated to Montevideo, Chile, Bolivia, Europe, or Argentina's interior where they founded branches of the *Joven Generación Argentina*. Apart from the ones already mentioned above, Domingo F. Sarmiento, Bartolomé Mitre, Vicente F. López, José Mármol, and Miguel Cané were amongst the most famous members of this association.

Argentina's past which he uses to unravel the country's present problems and as a prescription for how to avoid them in the future (Gandía, 1962:68).

The importance of *Facundo* to the subsequent development of Argentine political ideology and literary culture must not be under-estimated. *Facundo* can be seen as the paternal text; it is the foundation of a collective image of self-representation based on violence. The relationship between a previous text and a new one brings forth the idea of paternal authority as a major theme in literature, against which the writer of the new text must struggle (Said, 1975: 108 - 10, in De Grandis). The text becomes a common point of reference and establishes kinship with subsequent writings, their authors, and their readership.

Violence and authoritarianism have characterised Argentina's origins as a modern nation. Its literature is based on a mythology in which political violence is a core feature of narratives of self-representation. Culture and nation are shaped to a great extent by representation of violence through a rich, metaphorical range of themes, myths, figures, styles, and techniques. *Facundo, Civilización y Barbarie* (1845) is the foundational myth from which debate on political violence and culture evolved. Ever since, Argentine literature has reinterpreted this myth, particularly in times of oppression (De Grandis, 2003:91). *Facundo* establishes the pattern that would be preserved from the time of its writing until the present day. Originally conceived as a scheme for the study of the precarious Argentinean cultural structure - then subjected to the bloodthirsty strictures of *caudillismo* - Sarmiento's thesis turned into a universal analysis no longer limited to Argentina but referring to specific Latin American characteristics.

For Sarmiento, Argentina's predominant ailment was its susceptibility to be ruled chaotically by tyrannical *caudillos*. However, there was little one could do about it since this receptiveness for chaos and violence was caused by three major, pre-existing conditions. First, Sarmiento looked to geography, the vast expanse of the country:

Its own extent is the evil from which the Argentine Republic suffers... Immensity is the universal characteristic of the country: the plains, the woods, the rivers, are all immense; and the horizon is always undefined, always lost in haze and delicate vapours that forbid the eye to mark the point in the distant perspective, where the land ends and the sky begins. (*Facundo*, Chapter one in *The Argentina Reader*, 81)<sup>5</sup>

One could not live safely in this vast emptiness; "hordes of ever watchful savages" lived to the north and south; and "when not fearful of the approach of the savage, the plainsman had equal cause to dread the keen eyes of the tiger, or the viper beneath his feet" (*The Argentina Reader*, 81). This permanent insecurity created, according to Sarmiento, a "certain stoical resignation to death by violence which is regarded as one of the inevitable probabilities of existence" (*The Argentina Reader*, 81), the ever present danger had desensitized the inhabitant of the *pampas* to killing or being killed. Sarmiento perceived similarities between the Argentine countryside and Asian or Middle Eastern regions and he compared the lines of wagons carrying travellers with caravans of camels in the desert. The way the Argentine rural population dressed, spoke, and went about daily living bore a certain resemblance for Sarmiento with Arab

---

<sup>5</sup> Translation by Mrs. Horace Mann

Bedouins - all characteristics which, here and there, markedly distinguished the dwellers of the hinterland from the people in the cities. Leadership over such wild, insubordinate groups in this harsh and uninviting environment could only be exerted by a “man of iron will and daring to the verge of rashness, that he may hold in check the audacity and turbulence of the land pirates who are to be directed and ruled by himself alone, for no help can be summoned in the desert” (*The Argentina Reader*, 84). The emergence of local strongmen, the *caudillos*, therefore seemed a logical phenomenon to Sarmiento - the inherent tendency to anarchy of the interior could only be quelled by a brutal tyrant. Survival of the fittest was the law of the plains and forests.

Buenos Aires, on the other hand, was destined to be the “most gigantic city of the Americas one day”. This great city which served thirteen interior provinces as a port was being asphyxiated by the spirit of the *pampas* and the *caudillo* sent by the provinces: Juan Manuel de Rosas. Geographical settings had provided the city’s greatness; its misfortune was caused by the barbarism of the interior and Rosas’ despotism. The *caudillo*, Facundo Quiroga in Sarmiento’s work, was a result of geographical and climatic conditions. Another result for Sarmiento was that now, Buenos Aires took vengeance on the provinces which had gestated Rosas sending them death squads and tyrannical officials. Federalism clearly had not been successful and unitarism was imposed but not within freedom and civilization but embracing barbarism and slavery. As Shumway points out, it is no surprise, therefore, that explaining those failures, with mercilessness that borders on self-defeating negativism, characterizes much of Sarmiento’s thought (1993:51-2). For him, the clash between two irreconcilable cultures was the summary of Argentine history which, in *Facundo*, he attempted to explain (Gandía, 1962:69-70).



Another obstacle for order and progress that springs from Sarmiento's argument and that goes hand in hand with the environmental conditions emanated from the genetic make up of the rural population.

...a homogenous whole has resulted from the fusion of the above-named families [Spanish, Indian, and blacks]. It is characterized by love of idleness and incapacity for industry, except when education and the exigencies of a social position succeed in spurting it out of its customary pace. To a great extent, this unfortunate result is owing to the incorporation of the native tribes, effected by the process of colonization. The American aborigines live in idleness and show themselves incapable, even under compulsion, of hard and prolonged labour. This suggested the idea of introducing Negroes into America, which has produced such fatal results. (Facundo, *The Argentina Reader*, 85).

This is not to say that Sarmiento perceived hybridization as an erosion of an originally positive Spanishness; on the contrary, he goes on to say that "the Spanish race has not shown itself more energetic than the aborigines...in the wilds of America" (Facundo, *The Argentina Reader*, 85). He compares the settlements of Spanish natives with those of European immigrants and finds that while the former are dirty and neglected, the latter are clearly neat and pretty.

However, in relation to black people Sarmiento expressed some reservations: almost extinct in the countryside - a positive development in Sarmiento's view, since the black 'race' had left nothing but *zambos* and mulattoes, a link that connects civilized man with the denizen of the woods - those who lived in Buenos Aires and other cities

“had a tendency to become civilized and possessed talent and the finest instincts for progress (*Facundo*, *The Argentina Reader*, 85). However, even the city-dwelling black population did not escape Sarmiento’s paranoid criticism, for he suspected every black servant placed in Unitarian households to be a spy placed there purposefully by Rosas (Shumway, 1993:54). It is quite astonishing that Sarmiento did not bear in mind that it would have been totally unrealistic to expect the black population to have any political opinion or experience in voicing it considering that these people had only recently been freed from slavery, deprived even of the most basic training and education.<sup>6</sup>

As Shumway points out, the definition of ‘race’ is somewhat blurred in Sarmiento’s work. When he speaks of the Spanish ‘race’ he clearly uses the term in a cultural sense. When he speaks of Indians and Africans, however, the term takes on eugenic overtones, for the Indians and Africans represented many cultures and were united only by shared physical characteristics (1993:52); but it was not physical appearance that repulsed Sarmiento. The fact that a great number of mixed-‘race’ troops were active in Rosas’ militias made him draw connections between ‘inferior’ ethnic origins and the tendency to choose political allegiance to the wrong, i.e. a violent and barbaric, leader.

Moral instruction, indeed, education in general was impossible under these conditions. “Where can a school be placed for the instruction of children living ten leagues apart in all directions?” Sarmiento asks in despair. “Thus, consequently, civilization can in no way be brought about. Barbarism is the normal condition”. (*Facundo*, 2002:88).

---

<sup>6</sup> For detailed accounts which illuminate the presence of Afro-Argentines and their role within the nation see Schávelzon, 2003, Castro, 2001, Solomianski, 2003. Reviews of these works have been provided by Cottrol, 2007:139-156

Finally, Sarmiento attributed Argentina's failure to achieve political stability within liberal constitutionalism to the Spanish tradition inherited by the former colony. That Sarmiento blamed the Spanish 'race' for populating the pampas with hybrid 'races' has already been mentioned; but his reasons for disdain went deeper than that.

It is helpful at this point to look at Spanish political reality in order to understand Sarmiento's aversion: the Bourbons returned to the Spanish throne with Ferdinand VII in 1814. Immediately, the regime turned into an absolute monarchy again as a clear manifestation of the Old Regime, rejecting the *Corte de Cádiz* and the liberal constitution of 1812.

Ferdinand's situation was difficult, to say the least, since he had a variety of problems to solve; first, he had to strengthen his position as a Bourbon monarch after a long period of absence; secondly, he had to confront the liberals who opposed his style of politics; and thirdly, he had to deal with Spain's loss of the American colonies. Consequently his government became weary, unstable, and lost support.

Subsequently, Ferdinand's policy oscillated between liberalism and absolutism until he finally committed to constitutional rule and re-established the *Corte de Cádiz*.

Between 1823 and 1833, Ferdinand's last period on the throne, he took repressive action against Freemasons and liberals; furthermore, he had to face opposition from his brother, Carlos. After Ferdinand's death, the struggles between liberalism and absolutism returned with increased force; moreover, supporters of Carlos and his descendants and the age-old fight over the succession was the subject of a number of Carlist Wars in the nineteenth century. The victorious Cristinos<sup>7</sup> and the heiress to the throne, Isabel II exercised (until 1854) a moderate regime with absolutist tendencies. This was the Spain Sarmiento saw on a visit in 1847 and which he came to describe as:

---

<sup>7</sup> Named after María Cristina, Ferdinand's wife, who became queen-regent after Ferdinand's death, since their daughter, Isabel was only three years old at the time.

...that straggler behind Europe, which lying between the Mediterranean and the ocean, between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, united to cultured Europe by a broad isthmus and separated from barbarous Africa by a narrow strait, sways in the balance between two opposing forces, now rising on the side of free peoples, now falling with peoples ruled by despotism; now impious, now fanatical; now declaredly constitutionalist, now impudently despotic; sometimes cursing its broken chains, then standing still and crying out for the yoke which seems to be its condition and way of being. (Facundo, 2004:24)<sup>8</sup>

It also has to be remembered that Sarmiento profoundly believed in the ideas of the Enlightenment, the foundation of the Spirit of May. Most of eighteenth century Western Europe had started to believe in rationality. Reason became an absolute value and reigned supreme in the fields of literature, the arts and thought. The Spanish tradition, however, did not react favourably to the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. Its way of thought and way of life was fundamentally opposed to the universal vision and the basic, absolute values which this era proliferated. Brizuela maintains that Western Europe had turned to a civilization based on ideas and things; and this contrasted the Spanish tradition of 'great men'. During the eighteenth century, Spain entered a period of political, economic, and artistic decadence and the Spaniards were deeply anguished by their failure (2001:52).

---

<sup>8</sup> Translation by Roberto González Echevarría

With the beginning of the Renaissance, Spain became the largest political force in the Western world; and the century that followed this political triumph saw the emergence of magnificent works of art and literature on the same footing with those of any other region during this era. That Golden Age in the history of Spain was followed by a period of national decadence which reduced the country to an entity with almost exclusively military and political pursuits of the worst kind and an unproductive or imitative cultural scene (Brizuela, 2002:52). It is necessary therefore, to remember the differences between the values and way of life in Spain and the values and way of life in the rest of the Western world when trying to unravel Sarmiento's dislike for Spain's legacy in her former colonies. From Sarmiento's point of view, from Spain came "the Spanish-American people's lack of ability in political and industrial matters which keeps them in constant turmoil, like a ship churning the ocean, with no support or rest in sight" (in Shumway, 1993:53). He perceived in Spain, i.e. in the colonial period, the historical cause for Argentina's condition and ultimately, its failure to achieve a state of civilization. He lamented that Argentina had not been colonized by a more civilized power, one that would have left a better foundation for political and economic development.

As can be seen, Sarmiento perceived Argentina's problems in its geography and in its people and thought that these were the elements that defined politics and history. He observed that the country's two main cities, Córdoba and Buenos Aires, distinguished themselves by their appearance of regularity, civilized way of life, and elegantly dressed inhabitants. The man of the land, on the other hand, was the complete opposite: he dressed differently, more coarsely; he held the cities in disdain; did not yield to government, and so forth. There seemed to be two societies, two peoples alien to one another.

Lamenting the absence of a 'Latin American De Tocqueville'<sup>9</sup>, Sarmiento takes it upon himself to classify the opposing cultural elements of the region. He exactly determines the spaces which these elements deserve to occupy - on the one hand, national consciousness burdened by Spanish heritage and on the other, the unquestionable progress enjoyed by Europe and the United States. In other words, Sarmiento seeks to elaborate a theory which clearly separates two poles of Latin American culture - indigenous barbarism and European civilization. As Moreno-Durán observes, confrontation with this claim immediately demands the choosing of 'sides' (2002:20-1). However, choosing presupposes the existence of a certain state of freedom which allows individuals to compare the alternatives on offer and make an informed decision as to where to position themselves. For Sarmiento, one could either choose to be a 'barbarian' or a 'civilized' person - there was nothing in between; and 'civilization' meant the rich and prosperous alternative offered by Europe and the United States for the successful deployment of efforts to achieve development and progress. 'Barbarism', on the other hand, described the condition of man in his natural state; the human being, not yet subjected to any social restrictions, all their instincts unleashed with primitive strength; a mass of Freudian 'ids', so to speak. Civilization's triumph over barbarism was the goal, difficult yet necessary, should he/she ever become a responsible 'I'.

So, was Sarmiento's notion of civilization and barbarism a valid tool for analysis? It can be said that whatever Sarmiento saw and described so vividly and eloquently was, of course, true. According to Young, Sarmiento's *Facundo* clearly reflects the idea, originally coined by Said's *Orientalism*, of misrepresentation of what is actually there (2001:399, cited in Rock, 2008:51). Sarmiento clearly saw what was there but did not

---

<sup>9</sup> See Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/tocqueville/alexis/democracy/complete.html> (08/04/2008)

recognize its meaning. What was not true were the reasons for the conditions he so much lamented. The three categories that spring from his argument, the Spanish tradition, the expansion of the land, and hybridization, were all of a fundamentally essentialist nature - all three were facts that could not be remedied; therefore, casting the blame became a somewhat futile undertaking since it was to be found in 'natural' causes rather than in human error; however, a solution to this tragedy had to be found and reading *Facundo*, it becomes quite clear that Sarmiento saw himself as the right man for the task.

Based on his studies of Argentina's specific conditions he suggested a variety of solutions to the problems: the development of means of communication, European immigration, widespread public education, and the establishment of a representative democratic system; within this framework of law and constitutionalism he would improve people's economic situation so that material forces might not deter the process of their civilization.

### **Sarmiento and Women**

In *Facundo* (1868), Sarmiento only mentions women on a handful of instances, mainly describing the division of labour in indigenous or gaucho communities (21, 23, 33). On other occasions, he elaborates in detailed fashion on the suffering by the population in general through the brutality displayed by General Rosas or Facundo Quiroga (50, 53, 82, 92). On page 94, however, he makes a statement that is worth quoting. A beautiful young woman, Severa Villafane, arouses Facundo's desire; in love with somebody else, however, not only is she unwilling to give in to his advances, but also is repulsed by his interest - she fiercely resists. But, says Sarmiento:

*No solo es virtud lo que la hace resistir a la seducción; es repugnancia invencible, instintos bellos de mujer delicada que detesta los tipos de la fuerza brutal, porque teme que ajen su belleza.<sup>10</sup>*

This passage implies that only “delicate” woman possess the beautiful instinct to be disgusted when confronted with undesired male advances and also that only the beautiful ones are disgusted by brutality. As to *why* decent women hate brute force confirms traditional perceptions of women’s minds: it is detrimental to their beauty, what else?

All in all, it can be said that in *Facundo*, Sarmiento says very little about women; what he does say is either more of the racist criticism of the rural population or well known commonplaces about women’s nature and behaviour.

Considering that *Facundo* represents the foundational text on which Argentine literature and culture are based, this exclusion of women had far-reaching, negative consequences, not least because it excluded women from the Argentine discourse altogether; and not until the socio-political women’s movements and the literary productions by women from the 1960s onwards would this issue be addressed in a meaningful way as we will see.

Of all the solutions to the national crisis Sarmiento suggested, it was the one regarding education where his achievements have to be acknowledged. The fact that in the late nineteenth century Argentina could show one of the highest rates of female literacy in

---

<sup>10</sup> “It is not only virtue that makes her resist seduction; it is invincible repulsion, the beautiful instinct of a delicate woman who detests the type employing brute force, because she fears that it will make her beauty wilt”.



the world was undoubtedly due to Sarmiento's educational reforms<sup>11</sup> while occupying the country's presidency (1868-74). During his term in office, the writer Juana Manso<sup>12</sup> became the first female member of the *Comisión Nacional de Escuelas*. Sarmiento believed that "an intelligent woman has a natural ability to educate young minds" (1938:22). Consequently he encouraged Argentina's women to become school teachers - coeducational schools for the more progressive recruits, all-female ones for the more traditional students (Houston Luiggi, 1965:28). More such schools followed; they were the only institutions to provide secondary education for women, creating new aims and ambitions for girls; many became teachers, self-supporting or supporting whole families (Houston Luiggi, 1965:28). They learned the latest North American pedagogical philosophies and methods of teaching involving questioning and reasoning.

In *Discursos parlamentarios* (1875), Sarmiento proposes policies to end women's exploitation in the workplace. He was well aware of the fact that women received only about half the wages of their male counterparts even though they often worked more hours (208).

Nevertheless, however progressive Sarmiento's educational reforms might have been, he moved strictly within the traditional parameters appropriate for women and the requirements of nationalism. Schools emphasized the importance of self-discipline,

---

<sup>11</sup> Some of Sarmiento's journeys during exile led him to the United States where he established a close relationship with Horace and Mary Mann, the 'parents' of US public education. Mary Mann translated many of Sarmiento's works into English, interviewed applicants for teaching positions in Argentina, and sustained a long correspondence with him about new educational ideas and practices. Sarmiento also admired Mary's sister, Elisabeth Peabody, who trained kindergarten teachers in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Some of the women she taught helped to establish public kindergartens in Argentina. During this period Sarmiento also came into contact with the most advanced ideas on women's role in society. The impressive pace of economic development convinced him of the necessity to apply such principles in Argentina (Romero cited by Jeffress Little, 1978:126-64). Sarmiento was convinced that governmentally supported public schools would transform Argentina into a prosperous, civilized nation. He founded a normal school in Paraná in 1870, run by Dr. George Stearns, a famous New England educator. This coeducational institution provided the training ground for Argentina's first generation of normal school teachers. These men and women made a substantial contribution towards lowering Argentina's illiteracy rate from more than two-thirds in 1869 to less than one-third in 1914 (James R. Scobie, *A City and a Nation*, cited by Jeffress Little, p. 237). Sarmiento also was adamant that education be secular.

<sup>12</sup> The life and work of Juana Manso will be addressed in some detail in one of the following chapters.

physical fitness and manual labour as this would raise levels of culture and productivity (Chavarría, 1947:362). He was impressed by the educational system in France where women could choose to study mathematics, anatomy, or botany (*De la educación popular*, 1849:7); however it was not until 1889 that the first female doctor, Cecilia Grierson, graduated in Argentina. Sarmiento believed that progressive ideas learned by children in school could easily be undone by an ignorant home-environment. In *educación popular*, he finds that “thousands of existences could be saved from the ignorance of their mothers by raising babies in state funded infant homes.”

*Las Salas de Asilo...confiadas al instinto maternal de las mujeres, dirigidas e inspeccionadas por señoras, producen además resultados sociales del más alto carácter, interesando a las mujeres de las clases superiores en la cosa pública... (8)*

Besides, all women had to be educated in fitness and household duties; this was supposed to raise healthy, hard-working Argentine citizens, put an end to children being raised by ‘ignorant and superstitious’ nannies (which implies that Sarmiento also found ignorance amongst those who could afford a child-minder), and would create healthier women who would bear stronger children (*Programas de pedagogía*, 1901:19). In *De educación popular* he states on page 71:

*De la educación de las mujeres depende, sin embargo, la suerte de los estados; la civilización se detiene a las puertas del hogar doméstico cuando ellas no están preparadas para recibirla. Hay más todavía, las mujeres, en su carácter de*

*madres, esposas, o sirvientes destruyen la educación que los niños reciben en las escuelas. Las costumbres y las preocupaciones se perpetúan por ellas, y jamás podrá alterarse la manera de ser un pueblo, sin cambiar primero las ideas y hábitos de vida de las mujeres.*

What Sarmiento effectively suggests here is that, so far, women had failed in their roles as mothers, wives, and educators and that reform of national culture depended solely on them. What he is attempting to do is to change people to fit the policies and not *vice versa*. For Sarmiento, people, and women in particular, become a means to an end. In the following chapter we will see that this practice is inherent in a patriarchal society.

### **Sarmiento's failure**

Sarmiento was a poor, self-educated provincial whose mind and thought had been formed against the background of his early reading of authors, representative of the French and North American eighteenth century Enlightenment. He had conceived a mental picture of how the world should be, which was rational and well ordered. Men should act according to moral and ethical principles and they should act politically within a structure of natural and written law that was discoverable by the rational mind.

Rationalism, however, to which the Generation of 37 fervently subscribed, perceived man as an isolated entity and therefore thought that a transformation of society could be achieved by the implementation of civil laws and constitutions. They did not recognize the evolution of society as a force that could be ignored or overcome

by mere legislation. In their attempts to change society, they paid no attention to cultural differences. Sarmiento firmly believed that the political situation, i.e. civil war and bloodshed, was caused by the inherent hostility of the rural population while in reality, their readiness to go to war was caused by political and institutional inadequacies; thus, he studied the conditions of the countryside not in order to gain knowledge about the political thought of the rural population or to find out what sort of political system they desired but to find the most fitting methods for imposing on them a way of life which he called 'civilization'.

Looking at Bertrand Russell's description of the Romantic Movement, one can only conclude that Sarmiento was a prototypical product of it

The Romantic Movement generally sought to liberate the human personality from the shackles of social conventions and social morals. Partially, these shackles were mere obstacles for desirable forms of activity since in any old state rules of conduct have been developed which have no further significance than their being traditional; but once egoistic passion is unleashed, it is difficult to force it back to submission to the demands of society. To a certain degree, Christianity managed to tame the Ego but economic, political, and intellectual causes tempted people to rebellion against the Church and through the Romantic Movement, this rebellion also spread to the field of morals. Because of its support of a new, unrestrained Ego it made social cooperation impossible and confronted its followers with the alternatives of anarchy or despotism (Russell, 2004:692).

Sarmiento had a predilection for biographical writing and his accounts of the lives of *Aldao*, *Facundo Quiroga*, and *Dominguito* are all thinly disguised opportunities for him

to speak about himself (Alonso, 1994:39). Reading Sarmiento's works one finishes confused and puzzled. As Alonso has noticed, this is a textual universe where contradictions proliferate, inconsistencies flourish, outlandish turns of phrase or metaphors arise unexpectedly, wrongly attributed or incomplete quotations<sup>13</sup> abound, digressions multiply, and where tone can shift from the sublime to the maudlin or crass in the space of a single sentence (1994:36).

It has to be remembered that Sarmiento is lauded in Argentina to this very day; on the date of his death (11 September), the National Day of the Teacher is celebrated and his writings form part of the national curriculum. Argentinean government websites and most of the academic ones teem with praise for this founding father of the modern nation. Criticism is rare and limited to private sites or those of a more dubious nature which have to be dismissed for their lack of references. However, some of Sarmiento's vicious outpourings are documented and reveal a side of him that the school text books probably do not contain.

According to the poet and essayist Leopoldo Lugones, "Facundo constitutes Sarmiento's entire programme: his literary ideas, his political propaganda, his educational plans, his historical concept, they are all there" (1945:165). Crow notes that Sarmiento, in search of the ideal civilizer, displays exaggerated hatred towards the inhumanity of the gaucho whose elimination he desires (1992:578). This is also corroborated by Eduardo Galeano who cites a letter by Sarmiento to President Mitre in 1862: "Do not spare gaucho blood - it is the only human trait they have; it will serve as a fertilizer to enrich the land and make it useful" (1972:289). In the same year, Mitre unleashed a campaign to exterminate the gauchos actively supported by Sarmiento. In

---

<sup>13</sup> In the introduction to *Recuerdos de Provincia* he attributes a quote from *Macbeth* to *Hamlet* - "Es este un cuento que con aspavientos y gritos, refiere un loco que no significa nada" (*Proyecto Sarmentino, Recuerdos de Provincia, 1850:3*)

his *obras completas*, Mitre himself expresses his plans to eradicate the barbarism of the desert in order to “sow the seeds of civilization”.<sup>14</sup>

It has to be remembered that on the eve of independence the popular sectors displayed such an ethnically diverse complexity that future attempts to create cohesive national communities were destined to run into difficulties. However, although the racial composition of the different Spanish American societies varied in mix according to province and region it can be said that indigenous peoples, mestizos, mulattos, *pardos*, and *morenos* were actively involved, in one form or another, in the wars of independence.<sup>15</sup> They became the foot soldiers, cavalymen, muleteers, pioneers, and labourers on both sides. Archer points out that military leaders like Bolívar could not have won independence in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, or New Spain without their support while the Spanish army had also recruited men from most racial backgrounds since 1764<sup>16</sup> (2000:8 - 9). It can be said that tactics and motives varied across the region but, by and large, marginalized groups united behind a Creole leadership in a struggle against colonial rule defending a range of interests so diverse that existing class discrepancies and race antagonisms were temporarily transcended. This unity, however, could not be of a permanent nature since the dissident elites, anxious to recruit the popular classes, were at the same time opposed to granting any meaningful social reforms. This is important because it serves to explain the subsequent struggles to create viable nations within states implementing exclusionary politics. In this sense, it was only the communities of the

---

<sup>14</sup> The obsession with creating an Argentine civilization led to legislation in 1869 to fence large areas of the *pampas* with barb wire brought by the Englishman Richard Newton. For the gauchos this mission constituted a fight for life and death since they could not conceive of their existence without horses and open land in a fenced in environment. In 1879, General Julio Roca successfully subjugated the last Amerindians in Patagonia in a massacre aided by an army mostly composed of gauchos (Crow, 1992:594).

<sup>15</sup> Women’s participation in the independence struggles will be addressed in the following chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Although initially blacks and Indians were exempt from military service, confusion about racial origins increasingly blurred distinctions and eventually ‘all colours’ were admitted as long as no more than one third of a company belonged to one racial type (Archer, 2000:9)

ruling classes that would represent the nation as a whole since this elite claimed the success of the independence struggle exclusively for itself (McGann, 1953:156). The communities of those on the periphery, therefore, did not figure in the national imaginary and continued to move in and out of their marginality according to their strategic usefulness to those of the centre.

Sarmiento's hatred for those marginal groups is well documented and his intended treatment of them displays exactly the barbarism he wanted to eliminate from national culture. The historian Federico Martín Maglio provides some of Sarmiento's ferocious quotes:

On the indigenous:

*El Indígena: "¿Lograremos exterminar los indios? Por los salvajes de América siento una invencible repugnancia sin poderlo remediar. Esa calaña no son más que unos indios asquerosos a quienes mandaría colgar ahora si reapareciesen. Lautaro y Caupolicán son unos indios piojosos, porque así son todos. Incapaces de progreso. Su exterminio es providencial y útil, sublime y grande. Se los debe exterminar sin ni siquiera perdonar al pequeño, que tiene ya el odio instintivo al hombre civilizado. "El Progreso", 27/09/1844, "El Nacional", 19/05/1887, 25/11/1876 y 08/02/1879.*

*El Pueblo Paraguayo: "Estamos por dudar de que exista el Paraguay. Descendientes de razas guaraníes, indios salvajes y esclavos que obran por instinto a falta de razón. En ellos se perpetúa la barbarie primitiva y colonial. Son unos perros ignorantes de los cuales ya han muerto ciento cincuenta mil. Su avance, capitaneados por descendientes degenerados de españoles, traería la detención de todo progreso y un retroceso a la barbarie... Al frenético, idiota, bruto y feroz borracho Solano López lo acompañan miles de animales que le obedecen y mueren de miedo. Es providencial que un tirano*

*haya hecho morir a todo ese pueblo guaraní. Era preciso purgar la tierra de toda esa excrecencia humana: raza perdida de cuyo contagio hay que librarse.* (Carta a Mitre de 1872).

These statements confirm Rock's opinion that while independence ultimately was the outcome of the long lasting resistance against the Spanish colonizers, it was also the beginning of chronic struggles between modernizing Creole elites, the agents of coercive westernization and popular indigenous resistance (Rock, 2008:51); so-called liberals like Sarmiento found no discrepancy between proclaiming liberal, anti-colonial values and waging the most savage campaign against the indigenous peoples in order to appropriate their land.

As Moreno-Durán points out, apart from the original meaning of 'barbarism' as cultural inferiority, Sarmiento clearly adds to it a certain abstruse moral twist that justifies the disqualification of those who stand outside civilization which in turn takes on an implicit notion of political and economic predominance (2002:23). His following quotes about marginalized groups make that quite clear:

On orphans:

*Huérfanos: "Si los pobres de los hospitales, de los asilos de mendigos y de las casas de huérfanos se han de morir, que se mueran: porque el Estado no tiene caridad, no tiene alma. El mendigo es un insecto, como la hormiga. Recoge los desperdicios. De manera que es útil sin necesidad de que se le dé dinero. ¿Qué importa que el Estado deje morir al que no puede vivir por sus defectos? ¿Los huérfanos son los últimos seres de la sociedad, hijos de padres viciosos, no se les debe dar más que de comer.* (Del discurso en el Senado de la Provincia de



Buenos Aires, 13/09/1859).

On social class:

*Tengo odio a la barbarie popular... La chusma y el pueblo gaucho nos es hostil... Mientras haya un chiripá no habrá ciudadanos, ¿son acaso las masas la única fuente de poder y legitimidad?. El poncho, el chiripá y el rancho son de origen salvaje y forman una división entre la ciudad culta y el pueblo, haciendo que los cristianos se degraden... Usted tendrá la gloria de establecer en toda la República el poder de la clase culta aniquilando el levantamiento de las masas. (Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, En Buenos Aires, 1853; Carta a Batolomé Mitre del 24 de Septiembre 1861; en EE.UU., 1865)*

*Cuando decimos pueblo, entendemos los notables, activos, inteligentes: clase gobernante. Somos gentes decentes. Patricios a cuya clase pertenecemos nosotros, pues, no ha de verse en nuestra Cámara (Diputados y Senadores) ni gauchos, ni negros, ni pobres. Somos la gente decente, es decir, patriota. (Domingo Faustino Sarmiento Discurso de 1866).*

These quotes really speak for themselves and need no further comment. However, it is very interesting indeed that the collection *Sarmiento - Mitre Correspondencia (1846-1868)* within the 'Proyecto Sarmiento', a site that enjoys sponsorship from the *Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes* and *Proyecto Gutenberg* (University of Illinois), does not contain any of the above letters.

Eduardo Pogoriles, from the daily *El Clarin*, is therefore right in saying that Sarmiento, for various reasons, continues to be a stranger for Argentines, be it because of official indifference or the lack of funds. His article tells of the Argentine government's plans to increase its holdings of Sarmiento's work, many of which remain unpublished in inaccessible archives.

Just how much importance the government lends to Sarmiento's writings becomes clear when realizing that in 1999, a law (25.159) for the re-edition and re-printing of Sarmiento's work was passed in parliament. The original work was contained in fifty two volumes; the new edition was to comprise sixty. However, the project was subsequently abandoned, supposedly for lack of funds (28/01/2006). One can only speculate about the real motives. It is quite feasible that, confronted with the economic crisis in 2001, cultural projects were put on hold; but is also quite possible that quotes like the ones above would have been quite uncomfortable for a government that still hails Sarmiento as one of the founding fathers of the nation.

Concluding this chapter it can be said that literary, cultural, and political references to the nineteenth century form a framework to connect previous periods of dominance of liberal ideology with the current one. From this connection, a thesis on nation formation as a failed project of the Enlightenment is consolidated and developed in order to explain not only the continuous internal struggles that have marked the country's own history, but most importantly, the endemic faults of Argentine nationalism. Crises have been perceived as re-enactments of past 'guiding fictions' (Shumway, 1991:92).

One of the constants in studies of Argentine culture is the contribution to an understanding of national character, gained by analyzing the ideological, thematic, or

semantic elements surrounding the founding of the Republic. Many discover preludes in the nineteenth century to the disastrous institutional and personal life experienced by Argentines during various periods of the twentieth century (Foster, 1995:135-6).

The intelligentsia of the May Revolution in 1810 configured a model of political action and representation based on political divisiveness and on the inability to adapt successfully the ideas of the Enlightenment in Latin America. This ideological legacy is somehow a mythology of exclusion rather than a call for pluralist consensus and keeps manifesting itself throughout the historical transformation of Argentina as a nation (De Grandis, 2003:92). Continuity can be found between early tyrannies in the past and subsequent dictatorships.

However, it seems that insisting on these continuities, which can be found in many interpretations of Argentina's past and subsequent development, has been instrumental to diagnosing the 'inferior' quality of democracy in Argentina. That is not to say, that the past should be ignored by any means, on the contrary, but constantly referring to the mistakes of the revolutionaries and the tyrannies of the early nineteenth century somehow turns these tragedies into a sort of historical destiny. Oppression, brutality, and death camps thus become an essential element in national culture; something that is inherently Argentinean - not unlike how Sarmiento viewed geographical conditions and other unchangeable givens.

There exists a vast amount of literature, mainly novels, about dictatorships and dictators since the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly about Chile, Argentina, and Central America (see for example Paley Francescato, 1979) Now, the topic has extended to include domestic conflicts, gender issues, and other displays of violence connected with neo-liberal economics (Moraña, 2002b; Rotker, 2002, in De

Grandis, 2003:91). These issues cannot be resolved if violence is perceived as a fundamental characteristic of *argentinidad*.

As Jopling observes, political violence is central to a nation's questioning its own being in its quest for self-knowledge and understanding. Self-knowledge is an instrument of value in terms of promoting ethical action and a basis upon which other virtues can be cultivated (2000:3). In this sense, *Facundo* clearly has to cease as a paternal text on the national curriculum.

A clear duality can be observed in Sarmiento's attitude to women. In theory, his implementation of educational policies and the building of a large number of schools for girls were, without a doubt, his most significant achievement and certainly a progressive step forward. In practice however, his ideological motivation behind these reforms prohibited female education beyond the established parameters. Thus, what could have been a helpful early tool in women's struggle for equality only reinforced female subordination to traditional gender roles.

Furthermore, for Sarmiento, female education seems to have been contingent on geographical and economic conditions. Although evidence suggests that there were pockets of educational provision in the country's interior at the time, it is reasonable to assume that he did not place particular emphasis on the diffusion of such facilities amongst the more remote rural population (male or female) who remained largely neglected in this respect since he dismissed them as citizens in the first place.

# Chapter 2

## Part 1

### Gender and Nation

Nationalisms have been overwhelmingly male ideologies; not because women are less nationalist than men but because the strength and power of a nation is often perceived as equivalent with the strength and efficiency of its armed forces, clearly masculine domains. Within traditional gender imagery, men die in armed combat mainly in their role as protectors and defenders of the women and children. Women's long-established task is the biological and social reproduction of the nation<sup>17</sup>; they are, thus, mothers and wives and as such their personhood and identity are not autonomous.<sup>18</sup> Procreation is a vital element in nationalist family policy since it guarantees the perpetuation of national culture, values and genetic characteristics. Classical theories of 'the social contract' are widely influential and have laid the foundations of a common sense understanding of state and society. These theories divide the sphere of civil society into the private and public domains. Women and the family are located in the private domain which is not seen as politically relevant. Nationalism and nations have been discussed as part of the public domain and the

---

<sup>17</sup> Both these descriptions of male and female gender roles belong to traditional views and facts which have been challenged constantly by different views and alternative facts.

<sup>18</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, John Locke examined the conditions that constitute responsible personhood when he posed the questions under what circumstances people can be autonomous citizens and in what way sovereign power could be distributed among them. The exclusion of women and men without property is based on their being dependent, not fully autonomous. Since they will be led, not by their own reasoning but by those they depend on for their livelihood, they cannot voice an opinion of their own. Thus, their identity is derived from that of their 'guardians' (Dunn, 1984: 370, II, §128).

exclusion of women from that arena has led to their exclusion from that discourse as well (Yuval-Davis, 1997:14).

Enlightenment principles of egalitarian citizenship, one of the fundamental ideological building blocks of the independence movements, were clearly at odds with the maintenance of the traditional family, entrenched as a male-headed corporate unit, the role women occupied within it and their position in wider society in general. Yuval-Davis and Werbner point out that the inconsistencies between the principles upholding family and citizenship led to the kind of *ad hoc* rationalizations and secondary elaborations of belief recognized as commonsense reasoning. These sustained gendered inequalities and exclusionary practices while simultaneously continuing to assert the primacy of universal equality and freedom (Yuval Davis, 1997:6-7). For Argentine nation-builders it was relatively easy to dismiss inconsistencies because of their eclectic selection of philosophies and political schools of thought that formed the basis of their programmes. The desire to define American-ness and, within it, *argentinidad* as a distinct and unique identity justified their practice of 'pick-and-choose'. Thus, they did not find a discrepancy between referring to the 'Spirit of May', which had sprung from Enlightenment principles of universal equality and freedom, as a core element of their politics and the perpetuation of inequalities and exclusion of certain social groups.

Many studies which have not, so far, taken into account the influences that gender has on the state and its institutions, emphasised mostly the gradual progress regarding women's rights and the elimination of traditional restrictions they experienced with respect to their participation in public life. Dore, for example, particularly mentions historians stressing the liberating effect of secularisation, arguing that the expansion of women's rights was due to a great extent to the church relinquishing power in

favour of the state (2000:5). The Liberal State in Latin America seems to be particularly supported by this analysis. According to Dore, however, it is debatable whether liberalism signified 'Order and Progress' for gender relations. In fact, she argues that the relationship between state politics and gender politics and the general direction of change in nineteenth century Latin America was regressive rather than progressive (2000:5). In Argentina it continued to be so far beyond the nineteenth century as will be seen throughout part one of this work.

In the present chapter, focusing on the Argentine state in particular, it will be demonstrated that the pragmatics of commonsense reasoning with respect to the position of women was a practice the Liberal State frequently engaged in. In this context it is necessary to view this particular kind of reasoning with respect to gender politics not only in terms of laws implemented and abolished by the government but also in terms of more abstract cultural concepts like moral values, gender imagery and gender practices whose meanings have been subjected to constant changes during the period in question. These concepts experienced alterations simultaneously with ideological changes the state sought to engender and it is not unreasonable to say that the impact they had on women's status in society were at least as significant as the law making process.

Part one starts with a look at women's contributions to the Wars of Independence. Despite women's significant efforts and contributions to the creation of the Argentine republic that extended well beyond their traditional roles as mothers and home-makers, their participation in these conflicts has not been recognized until recently. Following on from the discussion of concepts and practices of exclusion in chapter one

it then moves to determine which groups of women in particular have been excluded from the national project and the underlying reasons for this exclusion.

Part two will focus on the importance of women's role as mothers and on the extent to which the state manipulated the institution of motherhood in order to construct the national image. The last section addresses the early Argentine social and feminist movements which can be understood as early collective attempts to articulate a female response to state and government.

### **Women in the Independence Wars**

It cannot be disputed that during the colonial era across Spanish America women were legally subordinate to men. The colonial state regarded families dominated by patriarchs as an indispensable prerequisite for an orderly state. From the time of the conquest a number of royal decrees codified men's supreme rule over the household and its members. Women's and children's legal status was regulated by law as subordinate which imposed restrictions but also intended to guarantee protection. Obviously, the issue of equality in legal and social terms was not a matter of public discussion, since men's superiority was considered a 'natural' law to the same extent as women's submission and inequality.

The importance of the family unit as a stabilising factor in society is further demonstrated by a royal decree issued by Charles V by which any married male had to arrange for his wife to join him from Spain in order to resume an orderly family life in the colonies. Failure to do so resulted in heavy fines or even jail sentences which often had devastating effects on businesses and livelihoods. Married men with the



intention to embark for the colonies were legally obliged to do so only when accompanied by their wives (Baudot, 1992, cited in López de Mariscal, 2002:89).

However, it seems to be a myth that women in colonial times had no rights at all or that they were generally denied legal personhood. The rights they were entitled to depended by and large on class, race, and marital status, but certain women enjoyed a more advanced legal position than their European counterparts. Unlike European women at the time, women in colonial Latin America had the right to sign contracts, appear as witnesses in court, ratify official documents, and make wills. They were also allowed to own and administer property<sup>19</sup>.

At the lower levels of colonial Hispanic society, men still dominated in public activities, but women's opportunities seem to have been modestly greater in the sense that their economic prospects appear to have been less limited to any possible inheritance. There were no laws that prevented women from earning an independent living or from administering their own finances and property. There are some known cases of women who acted as independent traders and merchants who, although dependent on the local elite patriarch for merchandise and credit, were not accountable to their male relatives for their economic activities (Tutino, 1983:379).

Despite the desire to incorporate the new ideas of reason and liberalism, the white male-dominated structure of society remained largely unchanged when the Creole-

---

<sup>19</sup> In colonial Mexico, for example, and admittedly only in a few notable cases, elite women exercised great power while men and women lived as their dependents (Tutino, 1983:359, Socolow, 2000:9)<sup>19</sup>. In general, narrow patriarchal rule predominated in both the initial activities aimed to amass wealth and the subsequent control of the estates aimed to ensure the perpetuation of the families' elite status; however, once a patriarch died, rules of succession rarely excluded women who had realistic chances to inherit entailed properties. They also regularly inherited shares of unentailed wealth which remained subject to laws of partible inheritance. Thus, women in established landed families often held legal title to important estates (Tutino, 1983:366). However, if women did find themselves in a position of power it was normally hidden from public eyes and they were represented by a trusted man at public meetings or ceremonies. It is true that such women only were able to personally control and independently exercise power over their estates as long as they remained unmarried or were widowed and even then only in a minority of cases they escaped male, patriarchal rule over their economic affairs but this seems to be due mainly to social customs, like the wish to marry, rather than to laws implemented by the state (Tutino, 1983:374).

elite took the place of their Spanish predecessors. Women were not included in the constitution of the nascent republics, nor were they deliberately excluded - they were largely ignored. As Inés Quintero points out, during the independence struggles and immediately after, documentation of these conflicts did incorporate the contributions of women to the war effort, albeit as a mere gesture to the new freedom. Their participation was associated with their extraordinary moral virtues and their patriotism. No differentiation was made between them; proclaimed heroines they found their way into history but at the same time they were stripped of their individuality, their specific life stories, and their personalities. Furthermore, although their contributions to the war were generally recorded in a way that admitted their vital role in the conflict, it always happened within the parameters of values and qualities traditionally ascribed to women<sup>20</sup>. It had to be this way because once the confrontation was over, the social order had to be recovered, primarily the customary practices and values in respect to women's position (2001:57). When the independence movements first erupted, a modification of this age-old position was not on the agenda. Like in other revolutions and political processes, women did not officially form part of the issues that were to be solved. Nevertheless, the impact of independence was of such magnitude that it changed the life of society as a whole; not only socially, economically and politically, but also in respect to everyday- life. Family life became subjected to the exigencies of war; women, mothers, wives and daughters of those involved in the conflict could not be isolated and they responded to the new situation. Inevitably, in doing so they violated the conventions and precepts

---

<sup>20</sup>Quintero particularly refers to Manuela Sáenz who was a political activist for the independence cause but also Simón Bolívar's lover. Sáenz led an unconventional, rather colorful life and frequently transgressed social norms, not least because of her illicit affair. Nonetheless, in historical records she is portrayed as a woman who, motivated by her love for the fatherland, dedicated her services and female virtues to the republican cause - from the position she was destined to occupy as a woman, namely her home.

that prescribed and shaped their behaviour within society. Once independence was achieved, they were expected to return to their homes (Quintero, 2001:58).

Contrary to the prevailing ideology, women's labour was crucial to the daily conduct of war, even when engaging in non-combat activities<sup>21</sup>. Thus, women's work was multiplied significantly by the war and gives lie to the general assumption that they had to do this work anyway. Claire Brewster lists the political activism of a large number of women from both of the republican and the royalist camps. These ranged from raising money for arms, sewing uniforms, giving shelter and hiding refugees and spies, to passing on information and distributing proclamations and pamphlets. Many middle and upper-class women donated money and jewellery to their cause and hosted tertulias<sup>22</sup> at which the nobility had the freedom to discuss revolutionary themes (2005:26-8).

The separation of women from the battlefield had important political and ideological implications. By increasing men's sense of entitlement to rewards from conflicts, women's marginalization from status and rewards and political struggle helped to disguise any ethnic or class cracks that might otherwise separate male combatants; because only men's participation in combat was defined as contribution to the war, the marginalization of women increased the size of the rewards in the shape of land and post-war political participation<sup>23</sup>.

---

<sup>21</sup> Using the records of two Mexican towns, Tetela and Xochiapulco, Florencia Mallon finds that women of these towns made between 1,800 and 2,400 tortillas for the guerrillas every day, additional to their usual work. One must not forget that no mechanized corn mills, let alone any modern cooking aids and appliances were available at the time and to arrive from the basic corn to the stage where usable dough can be made into a tortilla required a large number of staggering tasks (1995:77).

<sup>22</sup> See also Sahra C. Chambers, who looks at the unpublished writing (letters) and social lives of three women, Manuela Sáenz, Mariquita Sánchez and Carmen Arriagada all of whom hosted literary salons which counted amongst the most important venues for the exchange of ideas and revolutionary strategies (2003).

<sup>23</sup> Latin American women did not gain the vote until well into the twentieth century, ranging from 1929 in Ecuador and as late as 1961 in Paraguay, with Mexico and Central American countries in the 1950s.

This is not to say that women's efforts in the struggles were not acknowledged; San Martín and Bolívar both praised female contributions on various occasions. San Martín worked with several women during the conflict and ensured that they received national recognition for their efforts; in 1821, 180 women in Peru were nominated for receiving the medal of the *Orden del Sol*, a reward scheme set up by San Martín for civil and military merits (Brewster, 2005:31). Praising the contribution of women from Trujillo Province (Venezuela) Bolívar said in 1813:

*Vencedores del Carache, sabed que el pueblo que venís a rescatar es tan digno de vuestros heroicos sacrificios que todo él está lidiando por la libertad, o padeciendo por ella, hasta el sexo bello, las delicias del género humano, nuestras amazonas han combatido contra los tiranos de San Carlos, con un valor divino aunque sin suceso. Los monstruos y tigres de la España han colmado la medida de la cobardía de su nación, han dirigido las infames armas contra los cándidos femeninos pechos de nuestras beldades: han derramado su sangre: han hecho expirar a muchas de ellas, y las han cargado de cadenas, porque concibieron el sublime designio de libertar a su adorada patria. ¡Las mujeres, sí soldados, las mujeres del país que estáis pisando combaten los opresores y nos disputan la gloria de vencerlos! Y con estos ejemplos de singular heroísmo en los fastos de la historia ¿habría un solo hombre en Colombia, tan indigno en este nombre, que no corra veloz a engrosar nuestras filas, que deben marchar a San Carlos, a romper las prisiones en que gimen esas verdaderas Belonas? ¡No, no! Todo hombre será soldado puesto que las mujeres se han convertido*

*en guerreras y cada soldado será un héroe, por salvar pueblos que  
prefieren la libertad a la vida. (Bolívar in Lecuna, 1939:36-7)*

Bolívar's approach to women can be interpreted in different ways. Cherpak suggests that his emphasis on women's participation in the wars served to motivate men to do the same by shaming them into joining the revolutionary armies (1978:222). Earle maintains that he saw women as either "amazons or innocents" rather than human beings; his use of 'nuestras' amazonas suggests that he saw women as possessions and not individuals (2000:139).

Both Cherpak's and Earle's observations are undoubtedly correct. However, despite Bolívar's praise of women, this speech is all about men - not only those who are standing before him but men in general; he reminds them of the traditional gender role they have to perform. Bolívar certainly points to women as an example for bravery; but at the same time he also touches on the image of the male which first and foremost was one of manliness. Faced with the courage displayed by women in this conflict and not participating with due enthusiasm, would lower men to a level 'below' that of a woman; unable or unwilling to fulfill their 'natural' role of protectors. Bolívar's appeal to the *macho*-instinct probably recruited more men to his lines than any ideological reasoning would have done. He cleverly and respectfully says 'naïve female breasts'<sup>24</sup>, reminding the soldiers what they were defending - the bodies of their women, their property. The image of a Spanish soldier directing his bayonet against a woman's chest was probably followed immediately, in the mind of Bolívar's troops, by one of the woman being raped. The women he refers to in his speech are of

---

<sup>24</sup> 'Pechos' can mean chests or breasts in Spanish. By adding the adjectives 'naïve' (innocent) and 'female' he conjures up the image of breasts while remaining perfectly within acceptable language.

only secondary importance; they are, of course, all beautiful and they all weep inside the prisons. No wonder, the plan these women had hatched might have been 'sublime', yet it ended in disaster because of the women's naivety. How could they even remotely have thought that they could succeed against the Spanish troops! The speech's real purpose, therefore, was to re-address and re-entrench traditional gender roles while at the same time increasing the number of fighters for the independence cause.

Bolívar differed little from other men of his times in as much as he thought that a woman's place was in her home - "Es muy impropio de señoras mezclarse en los negocios políticos" he wrote to his sister in July 1826 (Lecuna, 1929:13-14) and "...una mujer debe ser neutral en los negocios públicos" only one month later (Lecuna, 1929:53) and one can detect a large measure of contradiction in Bolívar's approach to women in the independence wars; but looking at the different contexts in which these statements were made, a certain political pragmatism becomes clearly visible. It could be reasonable to assume, for example, that by saying "...y nos disputan la gloria de vencerlos" he already had in mind a future post-war situation when women would be able to partly lay claim to victory and demand a fair share of the spoils. In the cited letter to his sister he says "señoras" which might imply that he differentiated between "guerreras" - women in combat who came largely from a working-class or peasant background and "señoras" whose connections and higher level of education enabled them to mingle in politics. In this context it could be suggested that Bolívar had mixed feelings about women's participation in the revolutions but opted for a pragmatic attitude. While in 1813, the year of the above speech, fighting was still very much in progress and women's involvement was crucial to success, their temporary setting aside of traditional female values was perfectly acceptable in favour of the greater

good. In 1826, the year of the cited letter, the last remnants of Spanish forces had long been defeated and women should have found their way back into their homes by then.

All these attempts to explain Bolívar's (and his male contemporaries') position towards the status of women in society are, of course, purely speculative; but from his comments, the manipulation of women's role in order to fit the gender-hierarchy the state desired to establish was already taking roots.

## **Women between civilisation and barbarism**

### **Captives, chinas, and criollas**

“Order and Progress”, as is well known, was the *leitmotiv* for state and nation-building during the Liberal period. In a changing society, for the dynamics of its growth, when the transgression of norms was a sign of disorder, it was a priority for the state to impose values and norms for behaviour that clearly defined “the masculine” and “the feminine”. Within this framework of liberal thought, the state endorsed models of citizenship for men and women (Lionetti, 2001:223). Men as heads of and providers for the family should uphold their civic duties - political participation by means of the vote and the defence of fatherland and nation in case of armed conflict. Women in contrast would not enjoy full citizenship. To the extent the state intended to populate the country with “racially pure” individuals, the bodies of women of European origin became inscribed in nationalist texts as means to eliminate the undesirable characteristics of the minorities. On the other hand, they were meant to be models of citizenship that depended on the female population as the guardians of “race” and

republic in order to assure the nation's continuity and prosperity. In this sense, it was crucial to insist on women's efficiency as "good" daughters, wives, and mothers who would reproduce orderliness in their children (Lionetti, 2001:223).

The relationship between the female part of the population and the emerging nation state in Argentina was not limited to the problems of citizenship and women's right to vote or to the volatile dividing line between the private and the public sphere; it also contained issues of civil rights, education and the economy, as well as family politics, sexuality and healthcare. As was clearly the case in Argentina, the nation is often constructed by elites, who have the power to define the nation in ways that further their own interests, the same elites are also able to define who is central and who is marginal to the national project (Mayer, 2000:12)<sup>25</sup>. In the intersection of nation, gender and sexuality the nation is constructed to respect a "moral code" which is often based on masculinity and heterosexuality. This is why leaders of the nation may try to represent their nation as 'modest' and in turn speak in terms of the ideals of the nation in imposing on women a traditional moral code (see Mosse, 1985, introduction). The nation has been symbolically figured as a family and as such has acquired a patriarchal hierarchy within which members are assigned distinct roles in accordance with their gender. Like the patriarchal family, for the nation to sustain itself it needs both masculinity and femininity; both are indispensable for their mutual existence and without them the nation as we know it would not exist (McClintock, 1993:62). It can be said, therefore, that nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalism's emphasis on popular unity most nations owe their very existence to the legitimisation of gender difference. Access to the same rights and

---

<sup>25</sup> The construction and spread of a nationality in Latin America has primarily been attributed to the state, as Nicola Miller points out (1999:12), and the elites, due to their economic power, have exerted a strong influence on matters of government and the state in Argentina as well as elsewhere until the present day.



resources of the nation state is never equally distributed between men and women of the same nation.

The state also is often symbolically depicted as a family; most people refer to authority relations in the private sphere, the hierarchical family structure, to interpret and justify authority relations in the public domain. Generally, governments across the political spectrum refer to well ordered families as the building blocks for smoothly functioning states. Joan Scott suggested that one cannot separate politics from gender (1986:1070 ff.) and seen in this light, gendered rhetoric and policies can symbolise and express important facets of the desired political and social orders. The legal regulation of gender, for example the changes in family and property law, demonstrate how states use gender relations to promote a certain state formation and its desired moral values, gender practices, social structures, and cultural identity (McGee Deutsch, 1991a:260).

Continuity in gender politics from the colonial era to the formation of the nation state in Argentina can be observed with the marginalisation of '*la china*' (female inhabitant of the *pampas*) in the construction of the Argentine nation. The idea of civilisation as opposed to savagery and barbarism did not first appear after independence, that is to say, with the publication of the famous writings of Sarmiento and Alberdi, but had already found roots in the texts of Spanish authors who described the regions in their travel journals in the second half of the eighteenth century. They established 'city' and 'civilisation' as synonymous. These texts, which can be considered fundamental for the construction of Argentine national identity, identified the rural population of the Río de la Plata region with an 'uncivilised' and 'barbaric' way of life, whose representatives were the *gaucho* and his female counterpart *la china* (Potthast &

Scarzanella, 2001:9). But while the gaucho later became transformed into a national symbol, this was not the same in the case of *la china*. This was mainly due to the fact that these rural women could not be categorised as belonging to a single ethnic group; they could be white, indigenous, or *mestizas* and were, therefore, unsuitable for the construction of a white, cultured image of the nation. The same was, of course, true for the *gauchos* but it can be assumed that because of their skilful handling of cattle which was necessary to produce the main export products of the region, leather, tallow, and fats, they enjoyed at least some degree of respect within the social hierarchy. Their women, however, were perceived as the personification of female laziness in the eyes of the white traveller and demonstrated the insolence that characterised barbarism. It was particularly their perceived lack of housewifely skills that aroused criticism - European women took pride in their home making and elaborate cooking which, through the ample use of condiments, was a clear sign of high civilisation. *Las chinas*, on the other hand, did not lend that much attention to these female duties<sup>26</sup>. Furthermore, they displayed a far more relaxed attitude to sexual relations than would have been deemed proper in European circles. They often granted sexual favours to the winners of local contests, their union with men was not formalised through marriage and they were, therefore, useless, even damaging, to the state because their children did not experience the stabilising effects of an intact family life. Following the moving cattle herds they did not form stable settlements

---

<sup>26</sup> In his travel writings, the government official, Alonso Carrió de la Vadera (c. 1775), particularly criticised the prevailing division of labour among the gauchos. ...”While the men roasted the meat on fires they had difficulty to build and with hardly any seasoning, the women made *mate* and doled out slices of watermelon. Then they sat on ropes that had been tied hammock style between some trees and enjoyed swinging to and fro” (1973:248, in Marre, p. 44). Had Carrió visited some indigenous tribes, he would have found that they remedied the lack of fuel in a quite ingenious way. In his article *El menu de la selva*, Horacio Guido explains that many Amerindians not only used salt, they also employed clever cooking methods, for example for ostriches which they filled with hot stones before tying them up and roasting them; they also collected the cooking juices for gravy (1968:86-9).

capable of defence against invading 'Indians'. In other words, *las chinas* were unsuitable as biological reproducers of the civilised, urban culture, modelled on European cities that the liberal state was trying to establish as Argentine-ness. Thus, these women fundamentally represented the 'other' in the construction of the Argentine nation.

By stressing the opposing characteristics of urban/rural during the liberal state, nation-builders neglected the necessity of efforts to effect social changes that would end the divisions European/indigenous which were synonymous with modern/backward. Rural women were termed as inferior because of their indigenous heritage, unsophisticated life style, and perceived low moral standards; but at the same time they were a much needed element in the process of the construction of national identity in order to clearly distinguish the desirable characteristics of the urban population.

Another group of women, whose existences have been omitted in the writing of the nation and have successfully been erased from collective memory, are the white captive women. In times of peace, indigenous people frequently worked on the large estates of the white settlers as a seasonal work force. In war times, one of their strategies was to rape and kidnap white women, a custom which, practised over a long period, produced a considerable number of individuals who were 'white and fair' (Ulloa, 1990:313 cited by Marre, 2000:36). According to Rotker, the capture and rape of white women were not isolated occurrences but happened on a frequent basis. Little is known about the fate of these women who, unlike those captured by North American 'Indians', left no personal stories, although stories were told about them (2002). An important strategy during the invasion of the interior regions was to

populate the conquered land with white descendants of the conquerors. To this end, the rape of indigenous women by the Spanish soldiers was officially encouraged; on the other hand, the coupling of white women with indigenous males was completely inadmissible.

“Marta Riquelme”, by William Henry Hudson, is one of the few stories that evoke the exclusion and suffering the captives had to endure. It is the tragic tale of a beautiful white woman who was captured by ‘Indians’ and subsequently forced to live within the tribe and bear three children to the chief. She finally is allowed to leave but has changed beyond recognition when she arrives in her native village: “Was this woman indeed Marta, once the pride of Yala! It was hard to believe it, so darkened with the burning suns and winds of years was her face, once so fair; so wasted and furrowed with grief and the many hardships she had undergone! Her figure, worn almost to a skeleton, was clothed with ragged garments, while her head, bowed down with sorrow and despair, was divested of that golden crown which had been her chief ornament”. Marta’s husband rejects her and she finally becomes a *kakué*, a bird of the pampas who terrifies people with its agonising shrieks.<sup>27</sup>

As in the case of the *chinas*, it becomes obvious here, that underlying the oppression of the ‘other’ is the fear of the unstable and the nomadic, not only the fear of ‘racial’ difference. Once captured and raped by the savages, the women became devoid of the clean, chaste image that builders of the nation held of the female who was to reproduce this image in her offspring. Mothers of mixed-blood children clearly did not fit into this building of a white nation<sup>28</sup>.

---

<sup>27</sup> The captive white woman as an object of dispute and negotiation between two antagonistic cultures had already been the subject of colonial historiography in Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s (1554-1629) *Lucía Miranda*. For more detail on “Marta Riquelme” also see Frederick, 1989:7-18.

<sup>28</sup> Rotker points out that in terms of erasure from collective memory Afro Argentines as well as indigenous peoples experienced the same fate as the white captive women. While in paintings produced at the time of the settlement of Argentina’s interior, black people, ‘Indians’, and scenes depicting the capture of

More than 230 years have passed since Carrio de la Vandera ate his bland meal of roast meat in the Argentine *pampas* and it can be assumed that the gaucho-cuisine has experienced some changes since. Astonishingly though, attitudes towards certain rural women have not. In a study by Kristi Ann Stølen published in 1996 she explores the relationship between gender discourses and gender relations in Santa Cecilia, a multi-ethnic rural community in Argentina. Composed of middle-class farmers (*gringos*), descendants of immigrants who arrived in the 1880s and seasonal labourers (*criollos*), descendants of indigenous people, the community engages in agricultural production. The sexual division of labour within the farmers' household is the traditional one: the husband's role is to ensure the material welfare of his wife and children. This implies having access to land and planning, cultivating, and selling agricultural produce. Men also control the family's finances. Domestic work and childcare are women's domains and defined as complementary to agricultural work. 'Atender y ser mantenida/mantener y ser atendido'<sup>29</sup> summarizes the way in which *gringos* talk about their marital arrangements.

Categorized as either permanent or seasonal workers, the *criollos* make their living as farmhands mainly in the cultivation of cotton. Among the *criollos* there is no rigid sexual division of labour. Paid work as well as housework is normally shared by both sexes. Unlike the *gringas*, the *criollas* administer the family's finances. In material terms, the resident *criollos*, and to an even larger extent the seasonal ones

---

white women were frequently present; subsequently, these groups of people completely vanished from any representation. Rotker likens these 'disappearing acts' to the disappearances during the dirty wars of the most recent dictatorship. One who has disappeared is not an entity, is neither dead nor alive; officially, they have never existed at all (2002:3). It is also interesting to note that in Argentina the period of the Dirty War still is referred to as "*proceso militar de reorganización nacional*" (military process of national reorganization), a euphemism used by the junta for the violent measures to reinforce their power; an example of how the dominant system manipulates language (Díaz, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com), 05/08/2009).

<sup>29</sup> To attend and be maintained/ to maintain and be attended to.

(*golondrinas*)<sup>30</sup>, have a far lower standard of living. In general, a distinction is made between two categories of people: ‘colonos/gringos/blancos’ on the one hand and ‘cosecheros/criollos/negros’ on the other, which invariably can be translated into the occupation, class, and ethnicity of the bearers of these denominations: land owner/wealthy/white as opposed to labourer/poor/black.

The *gringos* are proud of their dominant economic and social position, and consider it absolutely justified. They see their wealth as a result of hard work and the observance of Catholic values and practices. They consider themselves the moral superiors of the *criollos*, whom they depict as lazy, wasteful, addicted to drinking, and ‘without morals’. Sexual behaviour - particularly female sexual behaviour - is an important distinguishing factor. Whereas *gringas* are normally *caseras* (household and home loving), staunchly Catholic, and decent unless proved otherwise, *criollas* are deemed to be *fáciles* (easy). *Gringos* maintain that this derives from the *criollas*’ *sangre caliente* (hot blood) and an upbringing that lacks control of their sexual desire and urges. They also believe that this is due to the *criollo* children’s early exposure to sexual activity since in many cases they have to share a bedroom with adult members of the family.

Unfortunately we do not know what the *chinas* thought of the Europeans since the colonial travellers did not consider it worthwhile to ask them. Stølen, however, inquired about the *criollas*’ opinion of the *gringos*, who are perceived as a quite boring lot, incapable of having a good time; a lifestyle they would not swap for their own even if they could.

---

<sup>30</sup> Swallows

## Rural labourers and urban sex-workers

The economy of Argentina's interior provinces relied almost entirely on women who pursued traditional crafts producing textiles and ranching utensils until the 1870s. These activities were not limited to working-class women but middle-class women also often provided the bulk of family income through embroidery and weaving. In many of these regions there were more female than male inhabitants due to military conscription, the tendency of male immigrants to remain at the coast, to the migration of native males from the interior to the littoral and to the casualties of the civil war. The industrial and pastoral development of the coastal regions, particularly the province of Buenos Aires after 1813 caused a fundamental transformation of Argentina's labour patterns in rural and coastal areas (Solberg, 1970, cited in Archetti, 1999:30-1).

The rise of the free market economy and international trade as well as the increased importance of cash crops and meat virtually made the cottage industry of the interior redundant. The shortage of male labour in the province of Córdoba, for example, led to the implementation of the anti-vagrancy law which specifically discriminated against women. This law had existed since 1772 but had so far not included provisions specifically related to women. After 1813, however, new regulations enabled authorities to enact special female anti-vagrancy laws, predominantly under the pretext of safeguarding women's morality, implying that any woman facing financial difficulties would, sooner or later, turn to prostitution. Under this law, poor and unemployed women could be charged with idleness or immoral behaviour and subsequently put to work on public projects ranging from road building to work in factories which were run by the local police (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de

Córdoba). In this way, authorities were able to regulate the scarce labour supply and ensure sufficient numbers of workers for critical areas of the economy (Guy, 1981:69).

Other regions soon followed suit; in Tucumán province, the law was implemented in 1823 and amended in 1832, then called 'forced labour law' which stipulated that women be led away from immoral earnings by placing them into honest work. According to this law an arrested woman had to seek employment within eight days or be considered vagrant. Police were instructed to find them employment and were also entitled to determine their salary. In 1889, the number of women arrested for offences other than drunkenness totalled 175; 148 of them were charged with vagrancy; no adult male faced similar charges in that year. Statistics for 1882 in the same province show that 55% of women arrested were charged with vagrancy. Men charged with the same offence presented 0.5% of total male arrests. In short, the anti-vagrancy law was applied with much greater frequency to women than to men (Guy, 1981:74).

In Buenos Aires prostitution also became the target for new legislation. By 1875 the city had experienced a decade of rapid urbanisation and population growth due to increased migration from the countryside and to massive immigration from abroad. This population growth, characterised by a high proportion of unmarried men, had created problems of social control and public health issues that had to be addressed by the authorities. In order to improve public health, they legalised female sexual commerce within authorised bordellos which kept prostitutes off the streets and at the same time provided lucrative revenue for the city treasury through expensive licence fees for such establishments. During the following thirteen years these fees were also imposed on café and hotel owners who employed waitresses who, in turn, also had to



register as prostitutes. Female domestic servants and wet-nurses also came under scrutiny and had to register (Guy, 1988:60). Needless to say, this drastically reduced female employment, even though it was 'honest' work. Despite extensive evidence of male prostitution, nobody ever suggested mandatory registration of male prostitutes, nor criminalising homosexual activity. Doctors who acted as official consultants for the government in this matter represented the view that male homosexual prostitutes - unlike inherently immoral female prostitutes - had acquired their sexual preferences and were temporarily mentally ill because they misunderstood female sexuality (Guy, 1988:65). It was female prostitutes that came to be seen as the origin of urban disorder instead of its economic and social consequence. The problem of controlling prostitution thereby was conflated with the more general issue of the potentially revolutionary working classes, and it formed the core of debates about political authority, gender and class relations (Guy, 1991:75). The ideas of officials seeking to control this female disorder underscored how gender operated in their thought. Physicians, for example, believed, even after modern insight into germ theory had been gained, that venereal diseases could be eliminated by treating women alone and practically denied the existence of male prostitution and the fact that female prostitutes often became infected by their customers. At the end of the nineteenth century doctors and politicians were able to scientifically or socially explain male criminality and yet, they seemed to be unable to shake off gender-based moral judgement of women.

Laqueur states that "whoring" had long been regarded as wicked and detrimental to the common good, like other disturbances of the peace like drunkenness and blasphemy but in the nineteenth century it rose to be *the* social evil, a particularly disruptive vice (1992:212). Particularly in relation to motherhood and women's role as

reproducers of the nation it can be seen why prostitutes especially became outcasts of society: in accordance with scientific belief at the time, prostitutes were believed to be barren or, in any case, very unlikely to bear children because so much traffic passed over their reproductive organs; because their ovaries, through overstimulation, were seldom without morbid lesions; because their fallopian tubes were closed by too frequent intercourse; and, most tellingly, because they did not feel any affection towards the men they had sex with (1992:213). In this sense prostitutes were considered an unproductive commodity and therefore, no valuable asset for the nation.

Examining the phenomenon of the changing representation of women from the field of Argentine literature, Masiello states that “when the state finds itself in transition from one form of government to another, or from a period of traditionalism to a more modernising programme, we find an alteration in the representation of gender - “a different configuration of male and female emerges” (1992:8). To superimpose Jonathan Rutherford’s thought on this picture, targeting female prostitutes averted the public eye from the state’s inadequacy to deal with change, effectively creating an ‘enemy’ who was to blame for all that was ‘not right’ in society (1990:10). Safeguarding morality was nothing but a smoke screen - the real goal of the law was to control independent, lower-class females at the same time that unsupervised women workers were being removed from the urban workplace and weeding out, so to speak, those women whose offspring could not be deemed valuable citizens.

## Reform and Continuity

The civil laws defining individual and family rights in Argentina did not change significantly with independence, nor were the regulations of the internal affairs of the Church and its relationship with the state altered. Those laws regulating gender relations, however, clearly had a negative effect on women's legal status. The state's admiration for European culture also spread into areas of administration and legislation and between 1858 and 1879 Argentina adopted civil codes inspired by the Napoleonic Code and contemporary English law (Lavrin, 1995:193). Under these laws women could not enter into any legal action, assume or relinquish a contract, or sell or mortgage their property, unless authorised by their husbands; any suit against a married woman was addressed to her husband; she could not enter a legal suit against his will, unless authorised by a judge. Husbands retained the right to oppose their wives' activities and obtain an injunction against any commercial or professional transaction. A husband also had the right to control his wife's earnings (Lavrin, 1995: 195). In Argentina, these restrictions for women remained in force until the Civil Code was reformed in 1926; the changes reflected many years of debate and incorporated the essential elements of female juridical emancipation as understood at the time. Although its objective was to free women from legal impediments, it still left significant concessions to the husband, regarding property; for example, he still had the right to administer his wife's property without accounting for it, only after the reform, could she register her will to the contrary.

The pursuit of industrialisation by the Liberal State as well as the free market economy also had detrimental effects on women. The evolution of women's work in Argentina provides an ideal historical example of the effects of economic

modernisation on females. Consequences of this modernisation process prompted the state to implement laws that clearly presented a regressive step in terms of women's rights and equality before the law.

The decline of the cottage industry in the interior of the country as well as the spectacular economic development of the coastal region resulted in a drastic reduction of the percentage of adult women who either claimed a profession or received payment for their labour. In both regions, distinct patterns of labour legislation related to peonage and the advent of modern protective industrial legislation influenced by European conditions created trends that led to the channelling of women into domestic service or unemployment (Guy, 1981:67)

The ideology that women should not work at all, let alone in industrial settings, also found expression with the industrial labour legislation implemented in and around Buenos Aires at a relatively early stage of industrialisation. Intended to protect working women from abusive conditions such labour legislation often resulted in discouraging the expansion of industries that relied on female labour, particularly the Argentine textile industry. Specific industrial legislation came into force in 1918 which made jobs in thirtysix industries inaccessible to women (Guy, 1981:84). Typically female jobs, however, were exempt from protective laws as well as from regular work inspections. So, for example, domestic servants, women working in hospitals, hotels, boarding houses, and bath houses had no legal protection from dangerous or unhealthy working conditions, nor did they have a mandatory day of rest. In rural areas, agricultural processing plants were also closed to women workers. There, the minority of women who did find work earned appalling wages for laundering and ironing at wealthier households (Guy, 1981:82). In the provinces, pockets of prosperity started to emerge resulting from the budding wine and sugar industries while half the female

population was struggling for daily sustenance. The social pattern that gradually started to emerge then has characterised Argentina until the present day.

While the Positivists were enthusiastic about progress and clearly enamoured by the idea of incorporating the nation into the mainstream of technology and international trade, they had doubts about women's role in society. The female/feminist wing of the Socialist Party contributed in the elaboration of reform bills to broaden women's civil rights that were proposed on a number of occasions; politicians, however, were still unsure about the meaning of feminism. They commonly shared the feeling that women's equality could be achieved through juridical changes that would not challenge prevailing notions of gender roles. The law was to be used as leverage to eliminate some inequalities stemming from gender and class that stifled women's intellectual and economic abilities. Legislators recognised the incompatibility of work and submission, but their perception of independence was incomplete insofar as it considered women's ability to earn money, and not the true value of those earnings in the economy of the family. Therefore, all proposals for reform of the Civil Codes were based on the assumption that women should have the same rights as men, but under a set of carefully spelled out conditions (Lavrin, 1995:201-7).

The legislation specifically regarding women during the Liberal State was marked by constant push and pull action. Legislators and thinkers of the famous generation of 1837, like Sarmiento were convinced that access for women to education and their entering into the professions was a fundamental prerequisite for Argentina's economic prosperity on the one hand and for the reproduction of healthy, responsible citizens on the other (República Argentina, 1901:19). Juan Bautista Alberdi saw the need to free women from Spanish law and customs which subjugated them to fathers' and

husbands' control. Women should be able to assume full duties of citizens to contribute to the country's economic growth (1886-7:396-7); and it is true that many women benefited from this new ideology particularly with respect to the opportunity to receive education. And yet, the loss of control over their persons, their property, their movement, their ability to exercise their own will, and their children was the main source of discomfort for married women at the turn of the century. Whether factory workers or university professors, married women were equally restricted by the law (Lavrin, 1995:196). The attempts to link Argentine national identity to the city, particularly the city of Buenos Aires, excluded all those who did not share certain domestic and sexual practices, that is to say, all those incapable of or resistant to taking part in a project of cultural homogenisation which would eradicate their own cultural particularities as well as their way of life. This 'non-cooperation' in the national project, led by a group of intellectuals, freed, to a significant extent, the Buenos Aires metropolis from the responsibilities to solve the internal conflicts that divided the Argentine nation. The very structure of the Liberals' arguments presupposed that the promise of modernity was male and the inertia of tradition was female. This was a significant distinction in Argentina, where intellectuals, who strongly influenced the government, were determined to build the new nation against the past rather than on its foundations, (Tulio Halperín Donghi, 1987, cited in Mead, 1997:647).

## Part 2

### The Identity of Motherhood

“Being a mother” and “motherhood” have been constantly changing concepts which are expansive in the sense that they came to represent a wide range of issues within the emerging women’s organizations in nineteenth century Argentina<sup>31</sup>. It is therefore no simple tasks to pinpoint what it meant for these women to be mothers and why and how their position as mothers served as a point of departure for social movements. To disentangle the identity of motherhood one has to look at the intersection of culture, politics, modernization, and at the way in which political identities intersected with ethnicity, gender, class, and nationalism in relation to national histories and systems of governance.

Having briefly outlined the Argentine state’s approach to women, it is important at this point to draw attention to the ways women responded to the systems and institutions that asserted dominance and control over them because these reactions presented the beginnings of what would develop into women’s social and political movements.

One route that women used to overcome their construction as ‘different’ and often as non-rational was to stress their superior ‘maternal’ qualities of caring, responsibility, and compassion as key constituents of citizenship (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999:7), but, as Werbner argues, the point is not whether men are compassionate and loyal or women rational and objective; the point is that all these

---

<sup>31</sup> I would like to point out that my analysis could probably be applicable across Latin America as well as elsewhere but has been undertaken in a specifically Argentinean context.

qualities embody and objectify the ideal of citizenship and their absence delegitimizes the state and its political authority (1999:227).

The strength of political motherhood<sup>32</sup> as an evolving social movement has been to introduce new human qualities into the public sphere and to define them as equally foundational in the legitimization of the political community. However, even though women's role as mothers in relation to social change was a frequently discussed issue in Argentina at the time, women who organized in women's movements did not do so specifically *as mothers*<sup>33</sup>. Nevertheless, they joined political organizations as workers and employees, mainly in order to achieve higher pay and better working conditions. Having said that, even in this early participation in social movements, women took advantage of the state's emphasis on their roles as mothers precisely because existing policies, or the lack of them, made this role increasingly difficult. In doing so, they posed less of a threat to the establishment than women in feminist organizations who demanded women's entry into male power structures. Or, in Icken Safa's words, "as women move away from practical to strategic interests, they are likely to encounter more opposition on both gender and class lines from established interest groups who are unwilling to grant them the same legitimacy as men in the public arena" (1990:367)<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>32</sup> This term was coined by Jennifer Schirmer in her article on 'motherist' movements in El Salvador and Guatemala (in Westwood & Radcliffe, 1993, 30-64)

<sup>33</sup> Not until the late 1970s, when the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo took up their protests would such a strategy emerge. Taylor argues that in relation to the Madres that "the mother's movement did not begin when the individual mothers became acquainted in their search for their children; it originated when the women consciously decided to protest and agitate *as mothers*. That *as* marks the conceptual distance between the essentialist notion of motherhood attributed to the Madres and the self-conscious manipulation of the maternal role - understood as performative - that makes the movement the powerful and intensely dramatic spectacle that it is." (1997:194, in Stephen, 2001:59)

<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, this line of reasoning suggests that movements that are associated with traditional meanings of gender will be more acceptable than those that resist such meanings. Political participation has been seen as "normal" for men; in contrast, women's participation is perceived as anomalous, ineffective, and inappropriate because it contradicts gender expectations (Einwohner et al., 2000:681). In this sense, Taylor argues, group demonstrations of public motherhood engender a contradiction that allows those performing motherhood to be reclassified as whores or madwomen (1997, in Stephen, 2001:60).



While it is clear to women in social movements that participation is a constant process of negotiating difference, the need to create unitary names, symbols and goals can result in the essentialization of women as mothers; and organizing requires the projection of sameness to outsiders (Stephen, 2001:54). Pinpointing one's identity becomes a major factor in political mobilisation because it involves claiming one's identity as a member of an oppressed or marginalized group as a political point of departure. It also involves the celebration of a group's uniqueness as well as analysis of its particular oppression (Stephen, 2001:54). However, as Hall has noted, unity based on identity is not natural or inevitable but the result of the continual construction of artificial closure against the constant grain of difference (1996:5). However, the fact that political recognition of women (and other marginalized groups) requires political action on the basis of essentialized identity categories points to at least an initial strategy based on affirmative action rather than on abstract notions of universal citizenship (Stephen, 2001:67).

### **Women and the state**

As already mentioned, the positivist intellectuals in Argentina exerted considerable influence on government policy during the Liberal State. In their attempts to create "Argentine-ness" they established a 'grid', so to speak, in which to fit all social and political groups - an order that would lead to progress and an organized national consciousness. Women presented a particular troublesome group to them because on the one hand they supported reform of social services for women in terms of access to education, health and childcare, but on the other hand their understanding of social groups as well as political economy was based in biology and evolutionary Darwinism.

Although all the reformers shared a belief in the elevation of women's status through education, they had not abandoned the main assumption underlying all education for women: their preparation was to serve their ultimate destiny as wives and mothers in an improved manner (Lavrin, 1978:304). The science adopted by the positivists served progress but at the same time upheld inequalities as naturally given, unchangeable and therefore moral (Haraway, 1991, cited in Mead). There is no doubt that the state intervened (and still does so, in Argentina and elsewhere) in the private sphere of the family for the sake of larger, sometimes open and sometimes disguised, national projects (Plummer, 1995). The state also has a major role to play in articulating masculinities, femininities and the role of women through a series of discourses which position women as family members, mothers, and as class subjects (Alvarez, 1990, in Westwood & Radcliffe). But it is also the case that these discourses are racialized and thereby privilege specific ethnicities. In Argentina, only certain women are celebrated as mothers of the nation and idealized against the position of all 'other' women who are non-white or do not subscribe to the dominant way of life. In addition, the state and political parties have sought to articulate discourses around the family and motherhood in relation to the powerful Catholic Church in Latin America. The symbol of the mother in Latin America has been used both to signal opposition and resistance to the excesses of the state and to represent the epitome of the national subject. (Westwood & Radcliffe, 1993:12).

Mothers in particular, as reproducers of the nation, are often the target of bio-political discourses and eugenic policies as we have seen in the case of *las chinas* and the *criolla* women. These can vary in their means from gentle persuasion and propaganda to bribes and coercion - from viewing 'people as power' to a Malthusian perspective which constructs every baby born as a threat (Yuval-Davis, 1996),

according to the economic situation or class and ethnic background of the newborns. Often, different populations are distinguished by their positive or negative biological 'contribution' to the national project.

The social value that is awarded to contributions to the common good, biological or otherwise, is, according to Taylor, determined by 'imagined' frameworks which provide the space and the horizon within which one can try to determine from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what one endorses or opposes (1989:27). These frameworks, as Taylor points out, provide the background, whether explicit or implicit, for our moral judgement, institutions or reactions. To articulate a framework is to explicate what makes sense of our moral responses. That is, when we try to spell out what it is that we presuppose when we judge that a certain form of life is truly worthwhile, or place our dignity in a certain achievement or status, or define our moral obligations in a certain manner, we find ourselves articulating the boundaries within which we think. Doing without them is utterly impossible for us; in other words, the horizons within which we live our lives and which make sense of them always include strong qualitative discrimination. For example, there is no question that one of the core elements of the frameworks within which nineteenth century Argentines conducted discourses related to all kinds of social groups was Catholic doctrine. Religious scriptures and their interpretation have undoubtedly influenced their thinking to a great extent since they have presented, for many hundreds of years, a moral guideline for human behaviour and the ideal way in which people should interact. These influences, as pointed out by Schüssler Fiorenza, are not only important for religious communities but are fundamental building blocks of Western culture as a whole. As such they will always be involved in the

development of thought that influences the systems that regulate society, be they of an oppressive authoritarian nature or of the kind that subscribe to emancipation and liberation (1997:344)<sup>35</sup>. In this sense, Catholic teaching provided moral foundations for both the women who stressed their motherhood as a justification for their demands of rights and the positivists who stated women's female-ness as the reason for denying them those rights. On the one hand they rejected feminized Catholicism as opposed to their own masculine rationality in their attempts to make positivism a vehicle to order and progress, replacing religious views of reality; on the other hand they supported one of the most fundamental aspects of Catholic teachings, that of androcentric interpretation of the social order, female subordination and traditional gender roles.

Equally as entrenched in Catholic teachings as male dominance are the notions of motherhood, self-sacrifice, and domesticity as the most celebrated elements of female virtues as contained within the *Marianismo* ideal. Without going into too much detail here about what exactly constitutes *Marianismo* it has to be pointed out that it does not present any inherently biological female markers but is a socially constructed concept denoting 'appropriate' female behaviour (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996:11-12). According to Stevens, it proclaims the semi-divinity of all women because of their ability to live a life of suffering, their silent submissiveness, humility and self-denial. Followers of *marianismo* claim that women's 'natural' moral superiority acts as a counter balance to men's 'natural' wickedness (*machismo*) and will ultimately redeem them before the eyes of God for their transgressions. In other words, women will suffer willingly for men's sins and achieve absolution for them with their prayers (1973, in Pescatello). The *marianismo/machismo* model of gender relations is also

---

<sup>35</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is a leading feminist theologian. She identifies as Catholic and her work is generally in the context of Christianity, although much of her work has broader applicability. Her work focuses on questions of biblical, theological, and feminist epistemology, hermeneutics, rhetoric, the politics of religious/scriptural interpretation, and on issues of theological education, equality, and democracy.

often resorted to in order to answer the question as to why women put up with bad male behaviour.

It can be seen here why the woman-question was so important for policy makers, and why gender is an indispensable concept in the analysis of political-cultural movements, of transition, and of social change. It is in the context of the intensification of religious, cultural, ethnic, and national identity - itself a function of uneven development and social change - that we see the politicization of gender, the family and the position of women. The ideal woman and the ideal society seem to go hand in hand, although the specific status of women depends very much upon the specific vision of the ideal society.

Because of their reproductive capacity, women are seen as the transmitters of group values and traditions, and as agents of socialisation of the young. When group identity becomes intensified, women are elevated to the status of symbol of the community and are compelled to assume the burden of the reproduction of the group. Their roles as wives and especially mothers are exalted, even fetishized - in the Argentine case supported by a thoroughly entrenched following of the *marianismo* ideal. Women's place in the home is lauded. It is woman as wife and mother - not woman as citizen, student, worker, and so forth - who is ideologically constructed in the discourse and programme of the nationalist project.

Nari notes that mothers became a political object of the state which, beyond its specific goals, allowed the political classes to impose or reinforce a female identity linked to motherhood. Furthermore, these questions became the subject of public debate because they were constructed as issues that were central to the future of society, the nation and "race". Motherhood became politicized and on this public/political stage it was re-introduced from different perspectives and for

different reasons, often antagonistic ones (2004:150). The most significant politics of motherhood focused on the implementation of new legislation and justifications for such actions abounded - from claiming rights that legitimately were considered as pertaining to women to the notion that public health, particularly that of future citizens, was a duty of the state. In this sense, women came to be perceived as the nation's reproductive asset. Their persons and bodies practically ceased to belong to them; it was not they but society that decided over them (2004:151).<sup>36</sup>

This is why women's behaviour becomes so important for the nationalist movement and why it becomes so important to establish an appropriate role for women (ordained by nature or by divine will) and to put women in their place. Women who resist this role are accused of disloyalty (Moghadam, 1994:18).

Papanek's observations can be applied very fittingly to the Argentine developments at the time when she says that there is a paradox here that places women in a double bind: many societies make women the carriers of tradition or the centre of the family, insisting that, especially during periods of rapid social change, their actions and appearance should alter less quickly than that of men, or should not be seen to change at all. Demands for family stability and an unchanging role for women may be especially strong when the processes of change are perceived as coming from 'outside' the group and somehow alien, threatening existing patterns of life (1994:47). In nineteenth century Argentina, the large immigrant population and their role in economic and political and thus also social change clearly was perceived as a threat from the 'outside'; the blame for the decline of morality was almost solely put at the

---

<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting that this sort of legislation and its application was also demanded by those who supported women's emancipation in granting them those rights they deserved precisely because they were mothers; out of the notion that motherhood was a function, a practice, and a fundamental value of humanity (Nari, 2004:151)

feet of foreign women or “alien” women since this line of reasoning included all those women who were different to the prevailing image of the female.

The demands on women to strictly adhere to their traditional roles even though the social environment is rapidly changing presuppose a high degree of female conformity to male controls, particularly in the Argentine context because those women were supposed to maintain their typical female roles on the one hand and contribute to the nation’s progress on the other by entering education and the labour market; this clearly is a further example of the push and pull policies towards women by the liberal state that has already been mentioned above. Female compliance, Papanek argues further, in turn, provides men with a sense of mastery over events that seem to be out of control. The double bind of greater ‘normal’ exposure to identity change and greater responsibility for maintaining group stability through their conformity contributes to women’s difficulties (1994:47).

According to Charles Taylor, to identify oneself is a kind of determining where one stands; but it also involves the existence of others whose opinions, expectations and appraisals in respect to the self one internalizes (1992:27). These expectations of others are transformed into self-expectations (Gerth & Wright Mills, 1964:80); and in the light of the situation experienced by Argentine women as described above they clearly could not have determined where exactly they were standing or what exactly was expected of them because of the mixed messages the state was sending out. I would like to argue therefore that this uncertainty presented an obstacle to their self-recognition - another crucial element for achieving a sense of personal identity as Honneth points out (1995:18-23). Self-recognition, in turn, takes three forms: self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem.<sup>37</sup> Simultaneously, Honneth argues that

---

<sup>37</sup> Whereas self-respect is a matter of viewing oneself as entitled to the same status and treatment as every other person, self-esteem involves a sense of what it is to make one special, unique and

there are three forms of disrespect which coexist with the three forms of recognition, and which would contribute to the creation of social conflicts and to a 'struggle for recognition' on the part of social sectors deprived of these forms of respect. They are physical abuse or threats to the physical integrity of a person which affects the subject's self-confidence; the systematic structural exclusion of a person from having certain rights, which damages their self-respect; and the cultural devaluation of certain modes of life or beliefs which are considered to be inferior or deficient, which prevents the subject from giving social value or esteem to his or her abilities and contributions (1995:138). Therefore, as Taylor states, 'due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people; it is a vital human need' (1992:26).

The esteem accorded for a certain task hinges on a range of particular cultural factors. If, for example, homemaking is considered an insignificant contribution for the common good, then homemakers will lack the evaluative resources in terms of which they can acquire a sense of personal accomplishment. In this sense, the social conditions for esteem are determined by the prevailing sense of what is to count as a worthwhile contribution to society. Honneth situates esteem within the horizon of values of a particular culture and opens up the possibility of conceiving of the conditions for self-esteem as a field of contestation and cultural struggle for the recognition of previously denigrated contributors to the common good (1995:122).

Although Argentine women's contribution to society as mothers and home makers was recognized, it was recognition based solely on essentialist, biological claims and as such restricted them to the home and the role of moral guardian, even though on the

---

'particular'. This cannot be based on a set of trivial or negative characteristics. What distinguishes one from others must be something valuable. Accordingly, to have the sense that one has nothing of value to offer is to lack any basis for developing a sense of one's own identity. Individuality and self-esteem are therefore linked (Honneth, 1995).



face of it this 'natural' female role was celebrated. Motherhood was idealized to the extent of becoming mythological and part of the cultural meaning system (see Woodward, 1997:6) but in practice, and because it was perceived as 'natural', it was also perceived as not requiring a physical or intellectual effort on the part of women. One did not require anything other than natural instincts to be a mother and since motherhood does not attract any financial remuneration, it was situated within an abstract, spiritual space that did not merit political participation.

Moral motives for revolt and resistance - that is, those based on a tacit understanding of what one *deserves* - do not only emerge in the defence of traditional ways of life but also in situations where those ways of life have become intolerable. Because key forms of exclusion, insult, and denigration can be seen as violating self-confidence, self-respect, or self-esteem, the negative emotional reactions generated by these experiences reflect not just the idiosyncratic misfortune of individuals but experiences shared by many others, the potential emerges for collective action aimed at actually expanding social patterns of recognition. Here, the symbolic resources of social movements play a crucial role in showing this disrespect to be typical of an entire group of people, thereby helping to establish the cultural conditions for resistance and revolt (Honneth, 1995:138).

The lack of universal suffrage or non-recognition of female intellectual abilities, when experienced long-term, can certainly be interpreted as disrespect and can make life intolerable. Looking at working-class women's predicament in industrializing nineteenth century Argentina, however, is more illustrative of the insult and denigration Honneth talks about. While it is important to recognize that the entry of women into the paid labour force was historically progressive, because it offered

women the opportunity to attain a degree of independence from the family and to enter into direct relationships with other members of the working class, Argentine women were as exploited by domestic and foreign capitalists as their counterparts elsewhere in industrializing settings. Receiving on average only about half of what men earned for the same jobs and the fact that women were more subordinate and had lower rates of absence from work than men (Bialet Masse, 1904, cited in Guy, 1981:82) made women workers very appealing to employers and by 1895, 30% of the paid work force in Buenos Aires was composed of women (Hollander, 1977:182). Most of them, due to long working hours and filthy conditions, acquired chronic diseases shortly after beginning to work, such as menstrual irregularities, rheumatism, sciatica, and tuberculosis. Not until 1907, with the promulgation of Law 5291 which regulated working conditions of women and minors, were these issues officially addressed; and even then the law existed mainly on paper and was hardly ever enforced<sup>38</sup>. The labour legislation towards women as well as that regarding civil rights as touched upon further above underscored legally the idealized image of women in Argentine culture which remained that of the housewife-mother. Paradoxically, as pointed out by Hollander, often the very men who spoke of women as the 'weaker sex' in need of male protection found no inconsistency in their positions as the owners of industry in which women of the working class were so exploited (1973:144). Additionally it could be said that the state, who promoted motherhood to such a large extent, made it very difficult indeed to bear and raise children; and considering that it was working-class

---

<sup>38</sup> Law 5291 also provided for maternity leave and daily rest periods for breast feeding. Ironically, if not surprisingly, even today this fundamental right is being increasingly violated. According to a report by the Human Rights Commission of the UN, globalization and flexibilization of the labour market have practically led to the loss of paid maternity leave while at the same time introducing the possibility of instant dismissal upon the knowledge of pregnancy in non-registered workers - a situation which affects circa 40% of women workers. Despite the legislation currently in force, even in formal employment the reduction of the working day in order to breast feed is the exception rather than the norm (2005:3)

women (who were composed to a large extent by rural women seeking work in the cities) in particular who were faced with such difficulties, one is tempted to suspect a covert eugenic politics on part of the state<sup>39</sup>.

### **Women, mothers, and social movements**

Due to the expansion of industry women entered paid labour in large numbers and constituted a growing sector of the urban workforce; in particular the textile, shoe, and food industries as well as the meat packing plants required female employees. In the second decade of the twentieth century they came to include telephone operators and administrative posts in government institutions. The bulk of the female labour force in this period was constituted by teachers, domestics, and women who worked from their homes for the manufacturing industries; however, these women remained at the margins of the labour force in terms of their mobilization (Lavrin, 1989:91)<sup>40</sup>. The entry of women into the labour market soon gave rise to debates about the personal, familial, and social aspects of this new phenomenon, particularly the compatibility of motherhood and paid work.

---

<sup>39</sup> In her discussion of motherhood and population policies in the United States, but undoubtedly applicable to any other racialized nation states, Patricia Hill Collins highlights the state's differential attitudes to the birth rates of different populations. Women as mothers and citizens, she demonstrates, are constructed as the bearers of either negative or positive futures. Selective population policies are thus applied to middle-class or working class white women, to African-American women and to undocumented Latinas (1999, 118-129). Ideas about idealized and stigmatized motherhood within family rhetoric contribute to the links between family, race and nation. As a result, the issue of who will control women's mothering experiences lies at the heart of state family planning decisions. When attached to state policy in a racialized nation state, this question of controlling the fertility of women within different race, class and citizenship groups becomes politicized (Davis, 1981). Eugenics movements illustrate the thinking underlying population policies designed to control the motherhood of different groups of women for reasons of nationality and/or race (Haller, 1984). Davis and Haller cited in Hill Collins (1999:119, in Yuval-Davis & Werbner).

<sup>40</sup> Not until much later were teachers and domestic workers included in unions or other organized groups and even then it was a question of class and social perception. The mostly middle-class teachers did not feel any solidarity with the domestic or industrial workers; the domestic labourers were too isolated, uneducated, and poor that few organizations ever considered their inclusion (Lavrin, 1989:91).

Factory workers were absorbed to a large extent into both socialist and anarchist organizations that already represented male workers. Amongst the revolutionary groups active at the time, the Anarchists stood out in as much as they were the main undertakers of public agitating until the Socialists emerged on the scene at the turn of the century (Molyneux, 1986:122). Female participation within the Anarchist movement has to be given special recognition because it belongs to one of the first recorded instances in Latin America where feminist ideas merged with working-class and revolutionary orientation (Molyneux, 1986:119).

The first issue of *La voz de la mujer*<sup>41</sup> clearly expressed women's grievances with the system. They strongly identified the object of their attacks and the roots of their discontent: authority in all its forms but particularly the religious (God), the socio-economic (boss), and the familial (husband) - hence their slogan "Ni dios, ni patrón, ni marido" (No God, No Boss, No Husband). Against each of these forms of oppression the women who wrote in *La Voz* proposed radical changes; not only did they hope for the explosion of revolution in society, they also demanded a revolution in the home and family and in the conduct of every-day life (Ateneo Virtual). This is not to say that they rejected motherhood but that they demanded the freedom to decide their circumstances. By politicizing the private sphere, these women redefined rather than rejected their domestic role and extended their struggle against the state beyond the workplace into the home and the community (Safa, 1990:367).

---

<sup>41</sup> Paper with anarchist orientation published between 1896-7, written by women for working-class women. The writers of this paper clearly distanced themselves from those feminist ideas or the ideas of other middle-class and educated women who struggled for equality with men but without actually changing the traditional social order (Ateneo virtual, [http://www.alasbarricadas.org/ateneovirtual/index.php/La\\_Voz\\_de\\_la\\_Mujer](http://www.alasbarricadas.org/ateneovirtual/index.php/La_Voz_de_la_Mujer), 20/06/2006). One year earlier, in 1895, the pamphlet by the Italian Ana María Mozón, *Propaganda anarquista entre las mujeres*, appeared in Buenos Aires and raised issues like *La Voz* did later: free love, the family, exploitation in the work place, different forms of violence. "We want to free ourselves of the bosses' greed that exploits us, the priests who lie in wait to fill your head with superstitions, the authority of the husband who mistreats you".

However, the response by male Anarchists to these demands ranged from silence to hostility to praise; the latter mainly in relation to practical interests in the workplace and the family but, with respect to strategic interests, Anarchist men were clearly opposed to women's ideas (Ateneo Virtual). The Anarchists welcomed women as militants for the Anarchist cause but they were given less encouragement to struggle for feminist demands and none at all to form autonomous feminist groups (Molyneux, 1986:129).

In 1902, however, the women Anarchists did found a female group, *Las libertarias*, whose intention was to search for alternative ways of resistance for working women. Two years later, the Comité de huelga femenina emerged, a female branch of the *Federación Obrera Anarquista*, albeit the group was short lived, due to the very opposing nature of Anarchism to institutional organization. At the same time the female group Alcalá del Valle was created which changed its name to *Centro Femenino Anarquista* in 1907. Numbers of women who participated in these groups on a regular basis, however, were rather low. However, the low number of women amongst the higher ranking Anarchist leadership also reflected the participation of women in these newly emerging women's groups. Not many attended meetings on a regular basis which was due in part to the fact that the same few leaders were active at the same time in resistance organizations, women's centres, and strike committees (Belucci, 2006)

Despite these restrictions, Molyneux further observes, there were a number of reasons that attracted women to Anarchism: its main struggle was against authority and feminists struggled against power being exercised over women in the home and family. The Anarchists' emphasis on oppression and power relations opened up a space within

which these women could rebel against oppression by the state and by male authority (Molyneux, 1986:129). Ultimately, however, as Barranco notes, the discrepancies between mainstream and feminist Anarchists could not be reconciled; precisely because of Anarchism's opposition to the juridical and institutional order it could hardly support women's demands for the vote. Following the same reasoning, the Anarchists could not campaign for the right to divorce based on the fact that they saw no necessity for legal marriage in the first place (1997). She therefore has described Anarchist policies towards women as "a peculiar feminism, more like a reform in the domestic, intimate domain" (Barranco, 1997).

Anarchists tended to romanticize the role of women - to them the idea of woman as emotional support to the alienated male worker took priority above women's own pursuits in the labour market. They further believed that capitalist exploitation of women was detrimental to the role of men as protector of the family. The employment of women was perceived as a distortion of the traditional sexual division of labour that prevented men from earning a decent living. To an extent, they also criticized the Church for its conservative position with respect to marriage and so forth but the Church could not be held responsible for low wages that hampered men in the fulfilment of their duties as providers for their families. The Church, therefore, did not receive much direct criticism from the Anarchist camp (Carlson, 1988:123). Stressing women's role as mothers as a key requisite for full citizenship rights Anarchist ideology, at least in this respect, conformed to Catholic doctrine<sup>42</sup>.

The number of women in socialist organizations was much higher than those with Anarchist orientation and their policies much more appealing to women which was also

---

<sup>42</sup> It is important in this context to note that the anarchists were composed mostly of foreign workers, originally from other Catholic countries. Italians presented the largest, Spaniards the second largest immigrant groups (Molyneux, 1986:121).

reflected in their internal structures. By 1904 the socialists had founded a female branch within the workers' union in which some women occupied important positions<sup>43</sup>.

In time, women's association with socialism increased even further and led to the creation of more female groups and even though they sometimes competed amongst themselves, they remained linked with respect to the most fundamental party issues (Barrancos, 1997). Many female university students became socialist feminists, not least because they knew of women's difficult position in male-dominated environments like universities. Some of them became medical doctors and between 1889 and 1921, twelve of them wrote their doctoral theses on topics closely related to women's health. Perhaps the most well-known of these women were Cecilia Grierson (first female medical doctor in Argentina), Elvira Rawson, and Julieta Lanteri<sup>44</sup> (Lobato, in Nari, 2004:14).

It seems important, however, to point out that the few women who were active in any prominent role within Socialism were all related to male Socialists; in fact, the whole leadership, male and female, seems to have been inter-related<sup>45</sup> and they all, with the exception of Carolina Muzzilli who came from working-class immigrant stock, belonged to middle-class backgrounds. However, it can be assumed that Muzzilli was not the only participant from working-class origins. According to Lavrin, we cannot be

---

<sup>43</sup> Because of the high number of organized female workers the Socialists had to re-structure their organizations. It is worth noting that one of the founders and main director of the Unión Gremial Femenina also was a woman, Cecilia Baldovino, a socialist activist who frequently gave speeches to union members and at other public venues. Later, Gabriela L. Coni and Carolina Muzzilli dedicated themselves to the improvement of working and living conditions of working class women and their children - issues that figured prominently in the Socialists' programme (Barrancos, 1987:10). The latter, a consumptive worker, who attended Socialist-sponsored educational programmes, provided reports on the conditions for female workers in factories that were used in the 1906 campaign for protective legislation (Carlson, 1988:130).

<sup>44</sup> Lanteri later founded the *Partido Feminista Nacional* (National Feminist Party) and in 1921 staged a mock-election with a mock-female electorate (see Carlson, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> Carlson explains the complicated family relations in more detail (1988).

sure of the social origins of the anarchist women, but all indications are that they emerged from the ranks of the workers (1989:102).

The input of socialism into the early development of feminist and female groups was of great importance since it introduced a focus on welfare and other social services that would transcend and outlive the vicissitudes of the campaigns for suffrage that emerged in the early twentieth century (Lavrin, 1989:97).

At the other end of the political spectrum, a number of women's organizations emerged that were strongly associated with the Catholic Church and engaged in debates about the same questions. It can immediately be seen that the use of maternal symbolism presents a coin with two faces since it often is used by opposing ideologies alike; after all, apart from being a mother there is a whole array of other identities a woman might call her own such as political principles.

The institutional Catholic reaction to the changes associated with modern life tended to conflate the role of women and the role of the masses. According to Sandra McGee Deutsch, "the two issues were so intertwined that the Catholic views of the female status not only indicated attitudes about women but also symbolized and expressed attitudes about the labourers' 'rightful' lowly place in society" (1991b:320). Her work also shows, however, that many local clerics and lay thinkers endorsed a somewhat surprising range of activities for women, including wage work and the vote, because these activities did not necessarily interfere with a hierarchical organization of society. Although they often supported anti-democratic political groups, many Catholic spokespersons viewed the situation of poor women "compassionately and, for the most part, realistically" (McGee Deutsch, 1991b:319).



The Church, moreover, in keeping with its vision of the family as the basis and model for all social hierarchies, did not ignore the power of mothers. Women owed “honorable and dignified” obedience to their husbands, “chief of the family and head of the wife”, but she, in turn could expect love and obedience from sons and daughters<sup>46</sup>. It is of course difficult to determine how far poor women benefited from such pronouncements in terms of their own empowerment but many privileged women took such visions as an encouragement to organize associations after 1880 whose members saw themselves as mothers of the poor - a role Eva Perón would take on later and never tire to reiterate in order to promote Peronism - as they went about their charity work and evangelical mission. During this period the number of Catholic women’s associations increased drastically.

It is interesting that this increase in number should coincide with the positivists’ most vehement efforts to curb the influence of the Church on the state. Mead states that this movement can best be understood as a response to the immigrant-driven social changes occurring in the cities (1997:654). But in addition to this argument I would like to suggest a further explanation. Without a social function, states Elias (1978), human life remains meaningless. If life is too restricted, and the surrounding political and social culture lacks ideals and vision the need for meaning will be frustrated. It might then express itself in spiritual or political radicalism, because the need for broader perspectives is not integrated into everyday life. A political culture and mentality that expresses only the basic needs of human existence bears significant dangers (1990, cited in Rommelspacher). This might be especially true for women, who are ‘damned to immanence’ (de Beauvoir, 1986). The need for transcendence is a particularly frustrated one for women (de Beauvoir, 1986). This might help to explain

---

<sup>46</sup> Quote by Pope Leo XIII, encyclical, 1880, *Arcanum divinae sapientiae*, (in McGee Deutsch, 1991:309).

many women's readiness to participate in religious or spiritual movements, and also in radical right-wing activities (Rommelspacher, 1999:57); and the ideological basis of the vast majority of these new women's organisations was Catholic doctrine and right-wing politics. Their field of activity was marked by very rigid and restricted boundaries and the political and social culture of the liberal state, although not lacking visions and ideals, did not include publicly active women and was altogether too limited to cope with social change in a way that would have created a more cohesive society in terms of increased gender and class equality.

Middle-class women did not have any broader perspectives than their work as home makers and mothers and therefore saw only their basic needs satisfied (not in a material sense but in terms of fulfilment and self-realisation). Activity on the basis of Christianity allowed these women to carve out a public space for themselves from which the need for reform could be voiced without antagonizing those in power. The public demand for extending political and legal rights to women satisfied their need for a social function in a much broader sense than that of sole housewife and mother. But despite their perception of themselves as feminists and reformers they only acted within existing traditional patriarchal power structures, supported by the male headed Church and state. This, and the fact that they had practically nothing in common with their working-class counterparts might help to explain why they had difficulties in recruiting working-class women who preferred secular, leftist organisations as their representatives. Not until after the financial crash of 1890 did female workers join the Catholic associations in any significant number (see McGee Deutsch, 1991b:317-19). It can be assumed that this was due to the fact that hitherto their emphasis was placed on long-term strategic interests like universal suffrage and legal reform while after

1890 this was accompanied by practical support in the form of financial aid and the provision of medical, legal, and educational services.

It could be said, therefore, that the emergence of women's movements was due to a struggle for recognition by women in order to acquire self-esteem. Such a struggle, in which the dimension of esteem is central, can be seen as attempts to end social patterns of denigration in order to make new forms of distinctive identity possible. Argentine women at the time were clearly seeking a new, distinctive identity - one of which motherhood was a component but would also allow space for additional identities such as women as workers, professionals, and citizens. Esteem is accorded on the basis of an individual's contribution to a shared project; thus the elimination of demeaning cultural images does not provide esteem directly but rather establishes the conditions under which members of certain groups can then build self-esteem by contributing to the community. In this sense, the underlying motivation for women's movements in Argentina seem to allude to even more profound reasons than just self-esteem; it could well be argued that what women demanded first and foremost was a serious revision of the Argentine discourse that excluded a vast number of women from the "imagined community" (see Anderson, 1983) that was the Argentine nation as prescribed by Sarmiento and his contemporaries.

Stuart Hall proposes that we think of identity in a detotalized and deconstructed form. He also suggests that we focus on the process of identification which he sees as a construction, a process never completed. In the end identification is "conditional, lodged in contingency. Once secured, it does not obliterate difference...Identification is, then, a process of articulation, suturing, an over-determination, not a subsumption...And since as a process it operates across difference, it entails discursive

work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier-effects' (1996:2-3). In this sense, Argentine women identified themselves first and foremost as mothers since this was the only identity that could collectively be applied across differences of class or ethnicity and that was supported by the system - Church and state; but motherhood also allowed them to mark the boundaries and create the frontiers Hall talks about since their ability to give birth clearly distinguished them from men.

The potential of motherhood as identity to transcend class and ethnicity facilitated identification with a much larger group, although in the context of the early Argentine women's movements that group could have been much more extensive than it actually was, not least due to antagonisms within the Left and the patriarchal nature of their male leaders, as well as the discrepancies between the practical interests of women workers and the strategic interests of middle-class feminists. As Woodward states, a group's uniqueness, which is the basis of its political solidarity, can be translated into essentialist claims based on women's identity and unique qualities which men *per se* cannot possess. There are, of course, different ways of understanding and defining that 'uniqueness'. It may involve appeals to biologically given features of identity; for example, the claim that women's biological role as mothers make them inherently more caring and peaceful (1997:24). These early women's movements, it can be said, claimed their right to full citizenship through a claim to something about the position of women which has remained fixed and unchanged by history and which applied equally to all women as a kind of trans-historical truth. Or, as Werbner puts it, women's active citizenship starts from pre-established cultural domains of female power and rightful ownership or responsibility. These culturally defined domains, or the attack upon them, create the conditions of possibility for women's civic activism

which, in the face of male resistance, comes progressively to challenge authoritarian structures of power, usually controlled by men (in Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999:221).

We begin to see at this point that the dilemma concerning the women-question that liberal governments and intellectuals were faced with included all women - on the one end of the scale the prostitutes, foreign or domestic, which have been mentioned above who functioned as potent symbols of social disorder; rural and working-class women who did not fit the image of the ideal mother; and at the other end the Catholic matrons who symbolized another social order, equally abhorrent to the intellectuals since they represented an archaic social doctrine, inappropriate and detrimental to the visions of progress the liberals had made their purpose. To embrace the traditional family as the core element of a well functioning state and as a metaphor for the modern nation therefore was a more difficult challenge than it first appeared. Prior to promoting the family as a cure for social disorder, the blame for which was put at the feet of women (and the popular classes in general, one might add), the positivists, as Mead has recognized, had to empty the notion of motherhood in particular, and female in general, of any association with a kind of power that could be manipulated by women themselves (1997:654). This power could have been used much more effectively had the different women's organisations worked more closely together and had, therefore, been able to identify with a much larger group of women; instead, although feminism, both socialist and bourgeois offered women a framework in which to place their activities, Argentine feminism failed to create a solid front by not integrating women from all classes into their movement (Jeffress Little, 1978:249). Political motherhood in Argentina did not achieve any meaningful recognition until the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo initiated their protests against the military dictatorship in the 1970s. Hegemonic gender construction did allow these

women to tread on political terrain where others dared not go under repressive times. Their roles as wives and mothers justified their protests because it somehow legitimized their anger and frustration (Jelin, 1987) in the sense that even though the state insisted on their efficiency in these roles, it effectively deprived them of this role because their children had been taken away.

It can be observed that there existed a large number of groups and organizations that demanded women's right to be active in the public sphere; however, as Barranco has noted, deep down, nobody really liked women's pursuit of public activity; nobody really wanted them to leave their homes and go to work. There are not many sources that show a great initiative by anybody to facilitate women's entry into the labour market. Socialist and Anarchists promoted women's rights in relation to wages and working conditions but their efforts were not as enthusiastic as might have been expected from the political Left. If women could stay at home, so much the better, was the opinion amongst all classes and political hues; the most progressive ones as well as those who proposed moderate reform and, of course, those from the Catholic camp, all proclaimed their reservations with respect to female work (1997).

### **Fatherhood:**

It is important to say a few words about fatherhood at this point in order to obtain a more complete picture about the interference by the state into the private sphere of its citizens and also to avoid the impression that only the role of women was/is manipulated by the authorities. Furthermore, mentioning the fact that not only

femininities but also masculinities are constructed and negotiated rather than given has a place here.

Research exploring this topic across Latin America has shown that gender roles and imagery have varied according to age, class, 'race', and locality over time (see Chant, 2003). As for the latter three, the example of the *criollo* and *gringo* communities investigated by Stølen (see above) shows that there is much more fluidity in family relations, and much less in the way of formal marriage, monogamy, and so forth amongst the *mestizo* population than amongst the whites who also demonstrate a more pronounced gendered division of labour than their *criollo* counterparts.

If female behaviour was regulated within the constraints of the *marianismo* ideal, men were allowed to behave according to the almost unrestricted concept of *machismo*<sup>47</sup>. Investigating gender relations in Latin America one can find an abundance of accounts describing bad male behaviour. These tales range from unfaithfulness, drunkenness and violence to irresponsible mismanagement of financial resources (Bachrach Ehlers, 1991:1). While it has to be recognised that Latin America is not the only region in the world where many men behave in this manner, it is there where these descriptions constitute the stereotypical picture of maleness. Broadly speaking, *machismo* can be understood as a cult of exaggerated masculinity. Apart from awarding men *carte blanche* to assert power and control over women and other men, it also posits virility and male sexuality at the centre of the symbolic representation of men<sup>48</sup>. The most

---

<sup>47</sup> Literature about machismo is extensive; see, for example Gutman, 1996, Gonzales López, 2005, Stevens, 1965.

<sup>48</sup> Pegging extreme sexism to one or another culture is not only counterproductive in academic research, it also bears racist connotations. In contemporary Western Europe and the United States the machismo mystique is regularly employed to imply that somehow Hispanic men, and particularly Hispanic heterosexual men, are more prone than men from other cultural backgrounds to sexist language, actions, and relationships. This is in large part a result of scholarship by 'western' academics, who have gone to Latin America to study questions of family, kinship, and gender/sexuality and through this research have developed interpretations and paradigms consistent with hegemonic notions of studying down—that is,

publicly visible proof of a man's virility is becoming a father. Despite the differences between men, their duty to provide for their offspring can be seen as a unifying element of fatherhood. This obligation transcends differences of ethnicity and class and defines a man's characteristics: his manliness, his gender, as is supported by appropriate legislation; the continuity of his place in society throughout history approved by the majority. The position of man as the provider and maintainer of the household has been synonymous with maturity, respectability, and masculinity. These perceptions are closely associated with the way men see themselves. For them, their children represent responsibility, an investment in the future, an obligation, and also hope; they are the greatest contribution by men to the world and a justification for their existence.

The pressure on men to get involved in productive activities in order to maintain their families must therefore not be underestimated when looking at the working-class movement in Argentina and elsewhere. While it is clear that men took part in these movements as workers in order to gain political recognition for their contributions to the economy, the satisfaction of their demands for better pay and working conditions also has to be understood as an enhanced ability to fulfil their role as fathers and providers - a role prescribed to them by society, the Church, and the state.

Argentina in the late nineteenth century, as described above, was a place where women's activities were widening - in terms of participation in the labour market as well as in terms of demands for civil and political rights; but although this growing

---

looking at populations that have been marginalized and oppressed (as opposed to "studying up"; that is, examining the ruling classes)—and finding political, social, and cultural fault with oppressed others. If a Mexican man, for instance, is abusive and aggressive, he will be labeled a macho. If a Mexican woman quietly endures such an abusive relationship, her behaviour is automatically examined within the *marianismo* paradigm. But if a white man and a white woman display similar behaviour, they are seldom analyzed in so simplistic and generalizing a fashion. I use both terms here (machismo and marianismo) because of their widespread recognition but would like to maintain that not all men, regardless of their culture, behave in this way and that behaviour associated with the terms is not inherent to a particular culture.



visibility of women in the public sphere undoubtedly had positive effects on women with respect to their increased independence and personal empowerment, in most cases it also meant a much heavier burden in the form of 'double' and often 'triple' shifts. One reason for men's unwillingness to participate in reproductive tasks can be found in their desire to protect their masculine identity since women were obviously invading their 'masculine sphere'. Moreover, as families increasingly came to rely on women's income in order to make ends meet, men's traditional role as provider, head of household and therefore masculinity itself became threatened.

One of the most significant debates in Argentine social politics in the twentieth century has been the debate about the maintenance and modification of the concept of *patria potestad*. There are few examples of Latin American countries that have engaged in a discussion of this topic as early as the Río de la Plata region. In fact, it was the only region where the term was legally employed and where records show early efforts by different tribunals to revoke *patria potestad* in cases of irresponsible fathers or mothers, in accordance with the state's perspective. Furthermore, the Río de la Plata region was the only place where fathers could be forced to appear before a tribunal in order to explain their points of view with respect to the upbringing of their daughters (Guy, 1996).

In Argentina, the basic structure of patriarchy is rooted in the legal term known in Latin as *patria potestad*. Naturally, every culture has its own definition as to 'what is a father or a mother' but for those adhering to the Roman code of law the term derives from that code and also from other legal traditions. The ideal Argentine family in the second half of the nineteenth century was based on marriage and all the children born within it had the right to inherit from both parents. In return, it was the

children's duty to obey their parents and, eventually, to help in the household without receiving financial compensation for their work. This is important because orphans who were placed in a family had the right to receive 'wages', a custom which distinguished an adopted child from a biological one. The parents were expected to provide maintenance as well as education for their children, with the right to exert control over them until they married, in the case of girls, or until they reached adulthood. The father was the head of the family, so that only fathers or single mothers could be called to court if they failed to meet their obligations.

In those cases where families were formed outside wedlock, the situation was more complicated. Children of such families were seen as either the product of natural, illegitimate, incestuous, sacrilegious, or adulterous union and were not recognized before the law as equal to children born within marriage<sup>49</sup>. In turn, in many cases their parents did not have the control over them and were not allowed by law to leave any inheritance to them, even if they wanted to.

Children born within such relationships were literally at the mercy of their parents. They could be recognized or rejected by their mother or father which deprived them of any possible inheritance. Single mothers experienced additional impediments since they could not claim any recognition of paternity from the child's father, only the child him/herself could do so. In these cases fathers assumed this role only if they opted in favour of it. However, once they admitted fatherhood, they were expected to provide for their, so-called, natural children. This was the basic content of the civil law. Reality was often very different: Did men really rightfully control their children? Were these 'natural' rights, inherent to all men, or were they subject to the interpretation of individual cases? To the dismay of lawyers and fathers alike, the

---

<sup>49</sup> This law was not changed until 1948.

Argentine law was never very clear about how far paternal authority was allowed to reach. Unlike in other countries<sup>50</sup>, the Argentine civil code applied male prerogatives in a more moderate way. Men were not allowed to display violent behaviour and they could be called before a tribunal if they did not meet their obligations. The Argentine Civil Code reserved the right of the state to revoke a father's authority over his children if he abused them, abandoned the family, or lacked in moral behaviour. The concept of *patria potestad* was included in the Civil Code as a privilege rather than a biological right, even though it was not totally accepted as such by all men, of course.

In order to illustrate how the Civil Code in relation to the *patria potestad* law worked in reality, I will follow with a few case studies brilliantly provided by Donna Guy (1996):

Paternity, as already mentioned, was intimately associated with the right to inheritance and therefore some children legally had no parents. Blanca Gontrán and her ex-lover Miguel Laní discovered this unpleasant truth in 1897. Blanca appeared in court in order to claim custody for her daughter Julia Artemisa. Blanca argued that she never knew that Miguel was married, maintaining that she had been cheated, and that Miguel had taken her daughter from her when the child was only five years old - an age when children heavily depend on their mother's care.

Miguel presented a very different point of view, explaining that Blanca knew he was married and that she had abandoned him and the little girl. He reinforced his argument saying: "A loving and affectionate father cannot be deprived of his child in order to be handed over to a mother who has not shown any affection towards it, who instead has treated the child badly from the first moment; a father of impeccable

---

<sup>50</sup> The Brazilian interpretation of *patria potestad*, for example, endowed men with extreme power over their families - they even could kill an unfaithful wife with impunity.

conduct who holds all the necessary resources to provide adequately for his daughter, who has given her his name and who works hard to make sure she is comfortable cannot be deprived of his child in order to be given to the mother”. In his statement, Miguel underlines his affectionate and emotional bonds with his daughter as well as his ability to look after her; unfortunately for the child, he also had to admit to an adulterous relationship and the judge argued that neither of the parents had a right to *patria potestad* over the child and decided to award custody of Julia Artemisa to a third person who was not related to either of the parents.

Not all men expressed the desire to care for their children, an attitude that was also often considered part of their rights by men. Some of them simply refused to take on the role of fatherhood. If a single woman became pregnant by a single man, the law did not oblige him to admit paternity or to be a father to the child. In 1880, Servilana Alegre claimed alimony from her father, Pedro. Although Pedro admitted to having had a child with Servilana’s mother, the child in question had died and that he was not related in any way to Servilana. The judge decided in Pedro’s favour concluding that: “Paternity is a matter of nature which is a mystery”. For this judge, the freedom to recognize or reject a ‘natural child’ was a central aspect of masculinity; if the man denied responsibility, nobody could force him to. It was not until the 1940s that such children gained certain rights.

Women hardly ever won *patria potestad* disputes before a tribunal against their husbands. In the following case, therefore, the plaintiff was very lucky to at least retain custody of her children: In 1899, Estela Spraggon D’Amico went to court in order for paternal rights to be revoked from her husband Santiago. The husband had not

contributed to the household in any way since 1891, disappeared for five to six months at the time after which he returned for a short while, mostly in a drunken state. He usually threatened to kill her before leaving again. All in all, he had never been interested in the welfare or education of his children. In his defence, Santiago maintained, that his wife had been antagonizing the children against him, even though he was the person who had legal authority over them. Nevertheless, according to Estela's lawyer, Santiago had agreed to leave his family in peace, if his wife paid him the sum of 4,000 Pesos.

As in many instances, this case reappeared in court over some years. In 1903, the judge came to a decision: even though he considered the fact that Santiago had practically tried to sell his children deplorable, he was of the strict opinion that neither *patria potestad* nor marriage were negotiable. He declined Estela's petition despite the evidence she presented. The judge admitted that the breakdown of the D'Amico's marriage was not Estela's fault, but he also considered it inappropriate that a wife should go to court accusing her husband. He said: "...and having demonstrated that she is not a good wife, how can she be a good mother?" On these grounds he decided that Santiago should retain his rights as a father.

It would be excessive here to cite all the cases addressed in Guy's paper, let alone all those stored in the Argentine National Archive. Suffice it to say that thousands of cases with similar content appeared before the Argentine family courts every year and despite the fact that joint *patria potestad* was established in 1985 (Guy, 2000:189), certain legal practices dealing with the issue remain in force until today. However, as early as 1894 supporters for the legal reform of children's rights defined *patria potestad* as an already obsolete juridical principle. They pointed out that the law

protected abusive fathers rather than the children under their care. One of these reformers, the physician Dr. Benjamín Dupont declared that *patria potestad* was ...”a sort of feudal right which in our epoch of equality is one of the last vestiges of autocratic times” (in Guy, 1996, <http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/agn/guy.pdf>, 05/08/2004). Fathers should be able to enjoy these rights only as long as they are good fathers, said Dupont, but in the case of bad fathers, the indifferent ones and the criminals, “in their hands, this law presents a grave social danger.”<sup>51</sup>

In conclusion it can be said that many Argentine men, most probably the majority, conceived of *patria potestad* as something far beyond the mere maintenance of their children, sacrificing much of their own comfort in order to add to that of their families. Others in contrast, refused to share their income and property with any of their children or their wives. Many believed that *patria potestad* awarded them complete control over any minors who lived under their roof and others again gave preference to their own personal welfare above the financial duties towards their families.

Although women contributed actively to the establishment of the republic and the construction of the nation they remained, by and large, a group at the periphery in terms of civil rights and citizenship. The degree of their marginalization depended on

---

<sup>51</sup> As laudable as Dupont’s efforts to protect children might have been, it has to be pointed out that his principal work was rather more dubious since he was concerned with the scientific analysis of the inferior condition of the native people of the Pampa and Patagonia. Dupont and other physicians, like Paolo Mantegazza, José Franceschi and Lucio Meléndez, supported a typical positivist ideology in mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Argentina, connected with the elaboration and application of a biological theory for the elimination of native people (see DiLiscia, 2002:183-200, <http://asclepio.revistas.csic.es/index.php/asclepio/article/viewFile/125/124> , 05/08/2004). One is tempted, therefore, to assume that with ‘indifferent’ and ‘criminal’ he mainly meant fathers belonging to social and ethnic minorities.

class, race, and location and determined the desirability of their children as Argentine citizens.

The manipulation of women's role as mothers by the state established Argentine feminism as a movement that politicized motherhood and merged practical and strategic gender interests in order to position maternity on an equal level with men's contributions to society. The reforms implemented by the Liberal State with respect to women's civil rights facilitated an increased economic and social exploitation and marginalization of women rather than their liberation and inclusion.

In the next chapter it will be demonstrated that this attitude persisted well into the twentieth century and will explain why women presented an easy target in the Peronist strategy to gain female electoral support.

## Chapter 3

### Peronism

*Lo que movilizó las masas hacia Perón no fue el resentimiento, fue la esperanza. Recuerde usted aquellas multitudes de octubre del '45, dueñas de la ciudad durante dos días, que no rompieron una vidriera y cuyo mayor crimen fue lavarse los pies en la Plaza de Mayo, provocando la indignación de la señora de Oyuela, rodeada de artefactos sanitarios. Recuerde esas multitudes, aún en circunstancias trágicas y las recordará siempre cantando en coro –cosa absolutamente inusitada entre nosotros– y tan cantores todavía, que les han tenido que prohibir el canto por decreto-ley. No eran resentidos. Eran criollos alegres porque podían tirar las alpargatas para comprar zapatos y hasta libros, discos fonográficos, veranear, concurrir a los restaurantes, tener seguro el pan y el techo y asomar siquiera a formas de vida "occidentales" que hasta entonces les habían sido negadas.*

(Jauretche, 1968, *Los profetas del odio*)

The political parties emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century were marked by a clear differentiation as to their supporters. However, all of them represented a masculine image and relegated women to the domestic sphere. The persistence of this division legitimated a political culture that was characterized by the exclusion of female participation (Maffia & Kuschnir, 1994:124). Nevertheless, it was not until the appearance of Eva Perón that women gained a relevant role in national politics. Law 13010 of 1947 which implemented women's right to vote inaugurated an era of political rights for Argentine women (Feijoó , Nari, & Fierro 1996:9).



Whether the Peronist state is to be perceived as a fascist, repressive regime or a progressive nationalist movement has been the subject of debates ever since it came into existence. What can hardly be denied is the extent to which its ideology stressed the equality and dignity of the working classes and Peronism's ability to politically mobilize women.

This chapter will first explore the political circumstances that allowed Perón's rise to power in order to establish the historical setting. It will then focus on the strategies he employed in order to gain a large number of supporters, the same strategies that mobilized an equally vast number of opponents. Part two will address the reforms Peronism effected in terms of legislation in relation to women. It then moves to explore the role of Eva Perón in Argentine politics at the time. Since Eva remains a controversial figure till today, research about her is often contradictory and despite the vast quantity of material available it still remains incomplete; in order to broaden existing knowledge the final section of this chapter will focus on Eva's powerful political influence which, it will be argued, was at least as decisive for the phenomenon of Peronism as the figure of Perón himself.

### **Radical Argentina**

Argentina in the 1930s responded to the worldwide recession by implementing the policy of Import Substitution Industry to encourage the growth of domestic industrial output of manufactured goods that had previously been imported. High tariff barriers and state loans to home-grown industries supplemented this programme. As a result industrial production more than doubled in the period from 1930 to 1949. World War II had deprived the country of a great number of essential imports and practically forced

Argentine inventiveness to replace manufactured goods, to build machinery, to substitute fuel: the result was an expensive industry of dismal quality; but *per se* it was a positive development not only towards the diversification of the national economy but also towards the creation of an economic base (Luna, 1972:24, Ranis, 1979:314).

As in other countries which are moving from traditional to modern ways of life, Argentine society experienced an overall process of change which happened to substantial parts of the population. Economic growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had already led to the appearance of a large and disparate middle class, many of whose members joined with other groups to form the *Unión Cívica Radical*. The advent of the Radical government marked a revolutionary change in the style of Argentine politics. The staid, closeted atmosphere of the oligarchy was swiftly swept away in a wave of popular euphoria. Through his dependence on novel methods of leadership and through his control over a mass party with ramifications throughout the country, President Yrigoyen (1916 - 22 and 1928 - 30) came to occupy a very different position from that of his predecessors. Although there had been previous tendencies to personalize policies and issues, in particular in relation to General Rosas, with Yrigoyen this became one of the central stylistic elements of Argentine politics (Rock, in *The Argentina Reader*, 2002:235). Yrigoyen represented an opposing trend to the pre-1916 political leadership - an oligarchy whose liberalism was strictly elitist and increasingly authoritarian. Yrigoyen's movement democratized this liberalism and tentatively welded it to a populist ethos (Winston, 1983:309).

The Radicals' emphasis on contact with and welfare for the people indicates that they were aiming to achieve political integration and a state of class harmony. They

intended to maintain the existing socioeconomic framework but promote institutionalized political participation outside the ruling class. These objectives involved the government with two key groups, the “dependent” professional middle class<sup>52</sup>, which already had become an important component of Radicalism before 1916, and, second, with the urban working class (Rock, 1975:67 - 9). During Yrigoyen’s first presidency, the most important sphere of conflict was the government’s manipulating of the working-class movement, that is to say, its efforts to gain the workers’ electoral support while simultaneously undermining the influence of the Socialist Party by favouring the negotiating position of the syndicates during strike action (Agozino, 1997:12). At the same time, the Radical Party never presented a threat to the interests of the conservative elite. In fact, the Radical administration took over a number of policies from the conservative government before them; and while it is true that social changes at the time brought effective political participation to some segments of the middle classes, the lower class was virtually excluded from politics (Smith, 1969:34). The main friction that persisted between the Radicals and the Conservatives lay in their different perceptions of the new democracy which the Saenz Peña Law (universal suffrage) had initiated. While the conservatives envisaged a government under a multi-party framework, the Radicals aimed for the active support by all sectors of the population for one single party. This was one of the most salient strategies later adopted by Perón (Rock, 1975:70 - 4).

In other words, the advent of Radicalism drastically widened political participation by incorporating the middle classes into the political process; nevertheless, it was still

---

<sup>52</sup> A considerable number of urban middle-class members were active in fields strongly related to the commodity producing economy, i.e. in overseas commerce and services. In other words, their livelihood depended directly on the success of the oligarchy. Statistics of the time show that this sector of the middle-class was as large as industrial proprietors and private employees. This suggests that the Radicals in Argentina emerged out of the joint interests of the elite and large parts of the middle-classes (Rock, 1975:67-9).

a far cry from being 'universal', particularly because women and foreigners, for example, were completely marginalized from political activities since they did not have the right to vote (Agozino, 1997:17).

Important changes in legislation in favour of the working classes and women's civil rights took place during Marcelo T. de Alvear's presidency (Yrigoyen's successor in 1922). So for example, night shifts in bakeries were newly regulated; pensions were extended to include employees of commerce and industry as well as journalists and graphic designers. Furthermore, in 1926<sup>53</sup> de Alvear appointed a commission to draft a reform of the Civil Code, particularly Article 190 of the 1869 Civil Code, regulating women's civil rights. Juan Antonio Bibiloni, head of the commission, mentions in his notes that women's entry into the paid workforce had become an irreversible reality; however, he maintained that it was appropriate to retain the clause of mandatory authorization of the husband if a married woman wished to seek employment. Bibiloni justified this position on the basis that sooner or later after getting married, women would become mothers and the damage that the neglect of the home was causing was, after all, common knowledge (Queirolo, 2006). Once 'maternalized',<sup>54</sup> female waged work turned from a civil rights issue into a situation that seriously threatened an important conjugal obligation: "The duty of personally attending the common household" (Article 605, Civil Code of 1869, in Queirolo, 2006). In short, Bibiloni recommended that women's traditional gender roles be kept for the common good. However, despite his report, the reform was approved and married women were granted equal rights with adult men; unwed mothers were granted parental rights over

---

<sup>53</sup> One year earlier, law 11.317 was passed, effectively limiting women's working hours to 48 hours a week. It also outlawed night-work for women (except for domestics and entertainers). Furthermore, women and children could no longer be hired for dangerous or unhealthy jobs. The law also included limited maternity protection. Encouraged by this success, feminists joined with some Radicals, Socialists and Conservatives to attempt a reform of the Civil Code and a coalition of congressmen were willing to push such legislation through both houses (Carlson, 1988:166).

<sup>54</sup> Marcela Nari's expression: 'maternalizadas' (2004).

their children; married women were given the right to exercise the same rights and occupy public functions (for example, being a witness in court), to enter professions and dispose of their earnings without their husbands' consent, and to enter civil contracts. Widows were granted authority over their children and over the estates of minor children, regardless of whether these women remarried or not (Queirolo, 2006). These changes reflected many years of debate and incorporated the essential elements of female juridical emancipation as understood at the time. Although its objective was to free women from legal impediments, it still left significant concessions to the husband<sup>55</sup>.

De Alvear also effected important changes with respect to state support of import-substituting industries by raising tariffs for imports by up to 60%. His objective was to achieve a degree of domestic industrialization that would allow a solution to the balance of payment deficit while at the same time opening new spaces for the social mobility of the middle strata of the population. These measures, according to Agozino, were *ad hoc* decisions and were not part of a Radical economic development strategy, and although Alvear later abandoned protectionist policies, his early actions demonstrated that there was room within Radicalism to extend the transformation of society which had been initiated by the legal reforms of the political system because the country's industrialization would have consolidated the democratization process (1997:14).

Radicalism recognized the dependent character of the Argentine economy, heavily criticized the official patronage system which nurtured an ever growing bureaucracy,

---

<sup>55</sup> Article Six of the new law stipulated that women must demand these civil rights through legal action if they had no prenuptial agreements. Unless the wife demanded her share of conjugal property through the courts, the husband continued to be the legal holder of this property and had no obligation to share it (Queirolo, 2006)). Laws of this kind are particularly hard to enforce, if at all - unless a woman was prepared to risk domestic peace, she would hardly insist on legally asserting her rights.

and suggested that Argentina's economic crisis could be overcome with the expansion of state-induced industry (Hayek, 2003:5-7). This incipient movement represented a new form of nationalist economy - it would later include the nationalization of the oil industry and an attempt to make up necessary quantities by imports from the Soviet Union in order to break dependence from the USA and Great Britain. For the Radicals, industrialization represented the possibility to offer new prospects to the middle classes without seriously threatening the interests of the traditional elite (Agozino, 1997:14-15).

The most significant error the Radicals committed, however, was Yrigoyen's resuming the presidency in 1928. By then 76 years old, his leadership was weak and the government was unable to cope with the economic decline caused by the stock market crash of 1929. Constitutional government, in practice since the fall of General Rosas in 1853, came to an end with the military coup in 1930 (Blanksten, 1953:36-7).

The leader of the uprising, José F. Uriburu, declared himself president of the republic without giving any clues as to the social content of this revolt at first; after three months of uncertainty, however, Uriburu denounced a number of pro-labour legislations, amongst others the minimum wage law, and declared the Saenz Peña law "a pernicious piece of legislation". It became clear that the 1930 coup was supported by the country's landed gentry, the old oligarchy that had been out of power since the Radicals' election in 1916, and by a number of banks (Blanksten, 1953:36-7). The truth is that the liberal elite, which had grudgingly granted the Saenz Peña law, never reconciled itself to democratization and sought to reassert political control.

The following thirteen years became known in Argentina as the 'infamous decade'. In this period, the government was composed of a coalition of Conservatives,

*antipersonalista* Radicals, and independent Socialists, collectively known as *la Concordancia*.

Within the context of the worldwide recession this period was characterized by systematic electoral fraud, repression of the opposition, the proscription of the *Unión Cívica Radical*, corrupt politics, and Argentina's economic dependence on Great Britain became more pronounced.<sup>56</sup> Economic policy in general showed an increased tendency to favour foreign capital and some traditional elite sectors. Within the new social policy, a decree was issued in 1936 which banned immigration of any person considered 'dangerous to public physical or moral health' or who was perceived to 'conspire against institutional stability' (Giordano, 2006:16).

In 1933, married women's rights contained in the Civil Code, once again became the subject of debate in Congress. In 1936 another reform of the Civil Code was proposed: article 333 was aimed at revising the legislative gains made in 1926 by once again reducing the married woman's status to that of a minor (Hollander, 1977:185).

"This proposal was met by a vast female mobilization which found institutional expression in the creation of the *Unión Argentina de Mujeres*<sup>57</sup> in which eventually not only the Socialists but also, and even more intensively, a new crop of militant Communists displaying precisely that enthusiastic and tenacious zeal that so alarmed Franceschi<sup>58</sup> participated" (Halperín Donghi, 2004:209-10).

Middle-class women from a wide range of party associations met in the *Unión*: communists, socialists, Radicals and those without party affiliations. Gradually the UMA increased in size - sub-commissions were created in cities of the interior and

---

<sup>56</sup> Roca-Runciman Pact: Britain guaranteed the purchase of Argentinean meat in exchange for significant economic concessions; amongst others the handing over of the entire public transport system to a British company (Corporación de Transportes).

<sup>57</sup> The writer and journalist Victoria Ocampo was elected president of this organization. She later resigned from this position when the *Unión* became increasingly associated with the Communist Party.

<sup>58</sup> Gustavo Franceschi - prominent member of the Catholic Church and strong advocate of Argentine nationalism; in 1928 he became editor of the right-wing Catholic journal *Criterio*, a post he occupied for 25 years (Metz, 1993:207).

pamphlets publicizing the *Unión's* pursuits were printed; they did not solely concentrate on efforts to avoid the reform of the civil code but also demanded an increase of protective laws for women working in industry, agriculture, and domestic services; protective maternity laws; the legal protection of minors; opportunities for the cultural and spiritual development of women; world peace; and the prevention of prostitution<sup>59</sup>.

The proposed reform of the civil code in 1936 was rejected and married women retained their civil rights as stipulated in the 1926 reform<sup>60</sup>.

The crisis of the 1930s effected a number of changes in the political system which influenced the course of the development of women's civil rights in the long term. The proposal of the reform project of 1936 as well as its rejection and silent demise finds explanation within these changes: According to Ansaldo (1995), the coup of 1930 constituted an 'organic crisis' corresponding to the pattern 'dictatorship-developing-into-fraudulent-democracy'. The changes taking place during the 'infamous decade' opened spaces for structural movements throughout the country. The political class took priority over civil society while the political parties and parliament only occupied a weak mediating position between the two. This generally weakened the conditions for the development of 'real' democracy and favoured a polarized political culture: supporters of the state and pro-coup elements. In effect, the over-evaluation of the state as a space for representation and the negotiation of opposing political objectives through a military coup as the preferred instrument weakened the party system. Fractures in political formations as well as in unions became frequent and coalitions and alliances abounded; and congress was unable to consolidate its mediating role and

---

<sup>59</sup> See history of the Unión Argentina de Mujeres at their website at <http://www.uma.org.ar> (30/03/2009)

<sup>60</sup> In practice, this law (11357) was not very effective, if not to say counterproductive: maintaining the limited freedom of married women and at the same time increasing the number of instances in which they could fully exercise their rights confused the legal community and, more importantly, gave way to anti-emancipatory interpretations with respect to women's role in the home (Giordano, 2006).



reproduced the oligarchic mechanisms (1995:25). A fitting example of this mechanism is the rejection of the divorce law in 1932. Despite fervent opposition from Conservatives and the Church both the bill for legal divorce and women's suffrage were approved by the House of Representatives; but in the Senate, where the Conservatives held the absolute majority, neither of the bills were ever even discussed (Barrancos, 2006:133).

As Smith points out, the growing urban masses - and this also applied for other social movements, one might add - could express their demands through the national Congress, which was appreciated as a relatively open arena for political competition. The Socialist Party in particular<sup>61</sup> had sizeable delegations in Congress and offered articulate and competent mediation for their cause - but were stopped at every turn by the ruling *Concordancia*. The critical point is that socially and politically mobilized groups sought participation in the political process but were not given access to power since the political institutions, particularly Congress, became increasingly discredited and restrained (1969:35, 48).

The pluralistic composition of the leadership of the *Unión Argentina de Mujeres* can be seen as its strength since it maintained relations with the Socialists and the Communists but at the same time also its weakness because later, when communism was increasingly perceived as a threat within the general political climate resulting in reprisals for its followers, these relations unsettled many *Unión* members particularly those from the conservative and Catholic sectors (Giordano, 2006). Once the *Unión Argentina de Mujeres* became more and more associated with the Communist Party it was difficult to maintain relations with sympathizers outside their immediate circle of followers. According to Halperín Donghi, the *Unión* experienced the same fate as many

---

<sup>61</sup> It must be remembered that the Radical Party and important sectors of liberal forces which had been absorbed by it abstained from reappearing in elections for some years in protest against the military coup of 1930.

other organizations that emerged out of an oppositional front in that period. They were composed of individuals from the dominant classes who congregated around limited, short-term objectives which they achieved in the majority of cases but who sooner or later, lost the ability to maintain cohesion (2004:210).

Initially the collective action of the *Unión* successfully responded to the political situation of the infamous decade and efforts to pass the reform bill of the Civil Code were silenced; but the organization itself was short lived and important modification in women's rights like *patria potestad*, legal divorce, or suffrage would take many years to be implemented.

While liberal doctrine had guided the organization of Argentina as a nation and played a key role in politics from the mid-nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth, liberalism had always displayed some conservative characteristics: the participation of the popular sectors presented unknown territory and was therefore viewed with distrust. The immigrant workers from Europe were essential for the country's economy but in all other aspects had proved disappointing and even threatening - rather than the cultivated, nicely dressed Europeans that Sarmiento and Alberdi had envisaged populating Argentine cities, the newcomers brought with them ideas of Socialism and Anarchism and overall displayed cultural traits that did not fit into the Argentine image that nationalists sought to promote. These perceptions restricted the democratic system; liberalism also encouraged moral standards and social conventions that were quite similar to those of the Conservatives - women's status in particular was affected by these politics - while it was recognized that women's participation in the modernizing process was a crucial element, the legal reforms implemented in their favour only moved within boundaries which would

preserve traditional gender roles and did not threaten patriarchal interests. In Argentina, traditional conceptions have prevailed over progressive ideas and although the country underwent a dramatic and rapid modernization process, this must not be confused with its entering modernity (Barrancos, 2006:126). As García Canclini has pointed out, “modernization” refers to technical and technological changes and material transformations, while “modernity” implies changes in subjectivity, attitudes, and behaviours. The persistence of material and symbolic traditional imagery in Argentina, and Latin America for that matter, has been an obstacle to sustaining a broad modernity. Canclini therefore speaks of ‘hybrid cultures’ (1995).

Argentina’s difficulties in achieving political modernity can be traced to the unresolved conflict originating in the nineteenth century between Unitarian modernists and federalist traditionalists. Continuing into the twentieth century, this conflict developed into two mutually exclusive paths to political modernity and contrasting perceptions of cultural identity (Spektorowski, 2000:82). Yrigoyen’s ambitious attempts at political and social reform presented a subversion of established national-cultural norms that radicalized this long standing antagonism between two exclusive images of collective identity and political practice. The military coup in 1930 has to be understood as a culmination of this conflict and as a rebellion which formed the basis for the delegitimization of the liberal version of Argentine nationalism which would turn into a populist version under Perón (Spektorowski, 1994:155).

Peronist nationalism can only be comprehended within the context of the old Unitarian/federalist conflict during the early years of the republic.

## Perón's strategies

Perón took from each Argentine ethos only what suited him and ignored the most divisive and potentially disruptive aspects of both traditions. From the heritage of Rivadavia and Sarmiento he extracted the concepts of freedom, civilization, *conducción* versus *caudillaje* and, most important of all, political legitimacy. From the legacy of Rosas and Martín Fierro he emphasized *Argentinidad*, populism, political authority and the twin pillars of his regime, social justice and economic nationalism (Winston, 1983:315).

While he attempted to pose as heir of both Rosas and Sarmiento, he was careful not to associate himself explicitly with either. For large parts of the population Rosas epitomized crude tyranny and oppression - it would have been very unwise for any leader to emphatically evoke the General's legacy. On the other hand, Perón could not fully embrace Sarmiento - the working classes, particularly the migrants from the interior who believed in nativist values would hardly have supported a leader who associated himself with a man who suggested spreading *gaucho* blood over the *pampas*. Writing during the last years of the first Peronist period, Blanksten states that "Argentines are not quite certain of which of the two Argentinas is Perón's; on some questions it is evident that Perón has attempted to straddle the two" (1953:230).

Neither Rosas nor Sarmiento could be referred to by Perón as a national myth or symbol - preference for one or the other would have alienated either group of supporters of the divisive national dichotomy. This explains why Perón preferred to evoke José de San Martín when referring to Argentina's past - as the hero of the Independence Struggle and Liberator of the Argentine nation he was respected by both camps (Winston, 1983:328).

With a historical lineage to San Martín, Rosas, and Yrigoyen, Peronism represented the “greatest and most complete attempt to realize the national-popular project” in contrast to the “oligarchical project” which would count amongst its predecessors Rivadavia, Sarmiento, Alberdi, Mitre, the *antirosistas*, and conservative liberalism (Buchrucker, 1998:13); but generally it can be said that Perón attempted a daring balancing act of interests across class and demographic boundaries.

It seems important, however, to point to the underlying significance of the two opposing national projects. It is undoubtedly correct that the antagonism between *porteño* liberals and provincial traditionalists had its origins in their different perceptions of national consciousness and national culture; but it is crucial here to understand that these antagonistic concepts of the ‘two Argentinas’ were not as abstract and imagined as they might seem to an outsider; after all, it must not be overlooked that this was a conflict of opposing economic interests - the age-old struggle between the exploiters and the exploited, which made this cultural dichotomy a daily reality. The working class was conscious of that fact and therefore had very real and rational reasons for supporting Perón. As Germani notes, the workers had achieved a sense of “real freedom completely unknown and impossible before the establishment of the nationalist-populist regime” (1978:116-17, 237). After all, apart from the incompatible perceptions of national culture, predominant within the popular tradition were ideas of more equitable distribution of power and improvement in wages, working conditions, and educational opportunities. The oligarchic-project served the preservation of the position of the ruling classes and the protection of their vested interests. It seems feasible therefore, that first and foremost, Perón gained the huge support from the working classes because he took rapid and effective action to improve the workers’ living standards; consequently, because of Perón’s attempt to

reconcile the 'two Argentinas', members of the working class rose in status and were able to assert their rights as citizens and gain inclusion into the national project fundamentally changing the Argentine discourse. In 1977, Alicia Moreau de Justo admitted that she and her colleagues in the Socialist Party never grasped the importance of nationalism to the Argentine people. The Socialists had rallied against the caudillo tradition without understanding the importance of this tradition to the masses, who had historically responded to any strong leader who offered them an escape from the country's rigid class system (Carlson, 1988:197).

Analyzing the political activities of the workers in the Buenos Aires meat packing houses, Smith sheds light on Perón's strategy to gain the support of the workers. Although there were around forty thousand meat packers in the city - and it is not unreasonable to assume that this workforce was composed of 'old' and 'new' proletariat<sup>62</sup> - they possessed neither economic nor political strength in the early 1930s<sup>63</sup> (see Smith, 1969:30-49). There were unions - but for each packinghouse individually, not for the entire industry; and although a Federation of Workers of the Meat Industry was set up by the Communist José Peter - achieving notable but limited improvements - the packing house workers remained relatively disorganized. Until 1943 there were several attempts to pass legislation in Congress in favour of the workers; however, none of the political efforts by socialist deputies or union leaders bore any results because their proposals were turned down in the Senate which was

---

<sup>62</sup> After all, internal migrants constituted 29% of the total Greater Buenos Aires population (Smith, 1969:33)

<sup>63</sup> Packing house managers paid pitiful wages, ignored any existing labour laws, hired and fired at will, blacklisted labour organizers and frequently resorted to violence as their method of reprisal. Working conditions were dismal and constantly put workers at risk of contamination and accidents in the cutting and coping areas.

composed predominantly of members of the meat producing industry and the agro-aristocracy.

After becoming secretary of labour and welfare, Perón put an end to the organizational problems of the meat packers. He created a syndicate - Federation of Labour Unions of the Meat Industry - which included workers at every level of employment and included all the packing houses. After some workers were laid off in 1944, a strike was held at one of the plants. Perón himself proposed a settlement that would have included a wage rise, holiday regulations, a minimum amount of working hours, and cessation of brutality by the foremen. The terms were refused by the management and Perón took decisive action; a government decree put a compulsory end to the strike and the proposed settlement had to be accepted.

This kind of intervention soon became the norm in labour disputes. In 1945, a general strike was called in all packing plants over the suspension of thousands of workers for financial reasons. The government intervened and ordered the managements to take them back; if this proved impossible for lack of funds, the state would pay the workers' wages for as long as three months as a matter of social justice. In the end, this programme cost the Argentine government nearly ten million pesos.

The appeal of the Peronist movement to the masses lay in its power to improve their real economic conditions and to articulate their passionate resentment of the traditional oligarchy which materially exploited them throughout Argentine history. Before Perón, the entrenched futility of constitutional procedures presented an obstacle to any attempt at fruitful representation of workers' interests; once in power, Perón institutionalized the access to and the availability of political power. However, as Ranis points out, Perón elevated the status of organized workers and redistributed the national income in their favour, while at the same time avoiding the

attempt to change the traditional social structures, to modify the benefit system, or to radically redefine the national economic priorities. He extolled the role of the new urban proletariat which, at the same time, would precariously be led by the military and the traditional elite (1975:163-4) and even though he could maintain this uneasy set up for a time, it seems to have been clear, even to Perón himself, that the antagonisms that were simmering beneath sooner or later would surface and erupt. Shortly after coming to power Perón is said to have made a statement which basically sums up his own concerns: “In order to sustain myself in power, I need ‘insurance’ of one million workers to obey me blindly and with whom I will be able to defend myself from whatever action by the military; and ‘reassurance’ of one hundred thousand bayonets to impede excessive advances by the popular masses.” (Goldwert,1972:101).

### **Women and Peronism**

Women’s organizations and their efforts to promote their interests basically had experienced the same obstacles as the workers’ movement before Perón. The political mobilization of women within Peronism was unprecedented in Argentine history. Coming on the heels of long years of struggle by other feminist and female organizations, Peronism distinguished itself from them by its ability to appeal to the masses of Argentine women. It developed partially in response to the integration of women into the paid workforce and built a national women’s movement which not only improved the living standards of working women, but raised the status of all women in Argentina by giving them political equality with men and providing them with the opportunity to organize themselves politically in a women’s party within the Peronist movement (Hollander, 1974:42).



Within the context of Peronism, the women's movement became more nationalistic and popularly based than the previous feminist movement had been. Its ideology continually linked the rights of women with the interests of the masses and maintained that only with Argentina's national liberation would women win the opportunity to real equality (Hollander, 1974:45).

What distinguished the attempts during Peron's presidency to legalize women's suffrage from previous periods was the fact that the President and his followers were vocally in favour of the principle. Equally important was the active campaign waged by Eva Perón in order to enfranchise women. Eva's arguments paralleled those of earlier Argentine feminists who justified women's suffrage in terms of the important role women played within the family and the dominant role they had in socializing each succeeding generation of Argentines. Like many feminists before her, Eva identified the women's struggle with the struggle of the working classes in general and demanded a political voice for women as just retribution for their historic oppression by the ruling class (Hollander, 1974:46-7).

The liberal state, far from representing equality, excluded the popular sectors and women almost in their entirety. During various decades of criticising the limitations of liberalism, women achieved the right to administer their own property, access to universities and public office - as we have seen, significant improvements occurred during the Radical period - but they did not achieve the right to vote until Juan Perón came to power.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Strictly speaking, Perón was not the first Argentine politician who gave women the right to vote. In the province of San Juan, following a change of the constitution in 1927, all women, regardless of social background or level of education, were granted suffrage. The provincial governor, Aldo Cantoni, maintained that "voting Argentine women - native or naturalized - would change the physiognomy of our constitution adapting it to the demands of our era and incorporating a wider spectrum of the population. There is no reason for denying them rights that are only fair to recognize and that they are perfectly capable of exercising." According to the new constitution, women also could be elected to public positions. In April 1928, women of San Juan voted for the first time - 97 percent of women registered casted their vote compared to 90 percent of men. Furthermore, one woman, Emilia Collado, was elected

In 1944<sup>65</sup> Perón created the first special Women's Division of Labour and Assistance. It would be responsible for important legislation affecting working women its main objective being the improvement of working conditions and wages. Subsequently, a number of labour laws were implemented to precisely this end. In 1944, piecework became illegal in all branches of industry. The principle of equal pay for equal work was established, although not implemented. Women who worked from home for employers came under a minimum wage regulation. In 1945, protective legislation contained in the 1926 reform was extended to include women in a wider range of occupations; in the same year fixed minimum wages were introduced for workers in the food industry and gave women a minimum wage 20% below that of male wages<sup>66</sup> (Hollander, 1974:45). In 1949, women textile workers were given the right to equal pay with men. By 1959 Argentine women workers earned on average 7 to 15 percent less than men which, at the time, was one of the lowest differences in the non-socialist world (Hollander, 1974:46).

Women also gained significant civil rights during the Perón years. In 1949 married women were given constitutional guarantees of equality in marriage with their husbands; inheritance rights were given to all children; furthermore, laws were passed that allowed divorce and permitted complete legal adoption (Guy, 2000:189). In 1954 Perón actively supported a law which gave illegitimate children the same rights and

---

public administrator in Calingasta and another, Erna Acosta, her deputy. However, later the same year, president Yrigoyen intervened in the province's politics, Cantoni was imprisoned, and the female vote repealed. The reasons as stated in the subsequent report: Cantoni supported the weaker classes in exchange for the honour of a great number of young women whom it was necessary to isolate because once on the path towards vice their freedom would turn into a permanent danger for public health and morals...the female committees, constituted mostly of administrative employees, regularly held parties and attendance was compulsory under the threat of dismissal. These parties practically degenerated into orgies as a gift for the governor's cronies..." (Fundación Bataller [society for the recuperation of the history of San Juan]).

<sup>65</sup> At the time, Perón occupied the position of Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare.

<sup>66</sup> This might not seem very egalitarian but has to be seen in the context of customary wage strategies at the time whereby women's salaries amounted to about 40% of those of their male counterparts.

dignity as enjoyed by those born in marriage. One of the most important changes for women, however, was the right to vote and to be elected into public office.

On November 11, 1951 women were able to vote for the first time. The majority, throughout the country, voted for Perón; the percentage of female votes going to Perón ranged from 83 to 53 (Hollander, 1974:47). The most widely held opinion, particularly amongst anti-Peronists, as to why such large numbers of women had voted for Peronism was that Perón had given them suffrage. However, this reflects a very superficial view of women's political behaviour. While it is generally the case that women's voting patterns have been more conservative than men's in respect to parties advocating social change, in the Argentine case the progressive populist movement had more support in the national election from women than from men.

Alicia Moreau de Justo, socialist and anti-Peronist, made a study of the voting patterns of women in the capital in order to determine their motivation for casting their votes. She reported that in the working-class districts which she investigated, a very large percentage of women voted in favour of Perón, while in the upper middle-class districts, the majority of both men and women voted for the liberal-Radical ticket. Moreau concluded from her findings that "women voted more from a sense of class than in gratitude for the suffrage law" (1969, cited in Hollander, p. 47).

This is not surprising - it must be remembered that the laws in favour of the working class improved the living standards of a great number of women and their families; but they also had a positive psychological effect since they increased women's self esteem and social status. Peronist ideology emphasized the dignity of working-class women who, through their hard work and love for home and country contributed to Argentina's economic development.

Daniel James points out that the issue of citizenship and the access to full political rights was a potent part of Peronist discourse. Perón's appeal to the working classes was due to a large extent to his ability to redefine the notion of citizenship within a broader, ultimately social context (1988:280). Reading through James' brilliant analysis of Peronism's popularity, however, it becomes clear that it appealed to women for different reasons than to men. It was true for male workers, for example, that Peronism's attraction cannot be explained simply in terms of its capacity to articulate claims to political participation and the full recognition of citizenship because universal suffrage, and equality before the law had existed in Argentina since 1912 (Saenz Peña Law). But this did not apply to women since they were not included in the Saenz Peña Law. Now, Peronism offered to recast the whole issue of citizenship within a new social context that would end exclusionary liberal politics and give women political equality with men. It cannot be denied that Peronist feminist ideology was full of contradictions and pragmatisms that make us suspect that the accusations that the main objective of Perón's policies related to women was to tap into a so far dormant pool of potential votes are not without a grain of truth. Peronist feminism was not radical enough to totally challenge the established role of women, that is to say that it did not entirely threaten men (and women for that matter) who were socialised within the traditional value structure of Argentine society because even while women were urged to take on a more active role in public life, their spiritual role within the family was often defined as their major sphere of influence (Hollander, 1974:55). Thus women were mainly positioned as loyal supporters of Peronist men; they were not given the vote to further their interests as women but in order to render their support for the Peronist Party (Molyneux, 2000:58). And yet, it seems that precisely these contradictions provided Peronism with an even wider range of female

followers. Those women who did not wish to challenge established gender roles, be it within the family environment or in the larger social relations of society, found a space of expression in Peronism. On the other hand, those who wanted to open new possibilities for themselves could do so because of the new, radical ideas that the movement had legitimised (Hollander, 1974:55).

Within the family-politics, the Peronist government also redefined the role of fathers and their relationship to their children. Unlike earlier visions, the new father's part in issues of governance was diminished compared with the mother's (Guy, 2000:188). While fathers were encouraged to spend more time with their children and support them with regards to homework and so forth, mothers were defined as *almas tutelares de la casa* (spiritual guardians of the home). As Guy further points out, the term tutelary implies that married women had custody over a minor, thereby replacing an absent or non-functioning father (Guy, 2000:189).

## **Eva**

Instrumental in the implementation of Peronist social reform was Perón's wife Eva. The active involvement of a woman in politics was, to say the least, very unusual in 1940s Argentina and much criticized by anti-Peronists. The traditional role of the President's wife was limited to appearances at official functions and honorary positions of charity organizations. And yet, Eva's popularity with the lower class and her public support of her President husband was not unprecedented.

As touched upon above, studies about the nature of Peronist political thought often point to the influences of the Rosas era on Perón's own ideology. In the context of this project, however, it is also interesting to point out that there exist quite a few striking

personal similarities between Juan Manuel de Rosas and Juan Perón, not only regarding their style of politics but also the masculine image they both represented and the type of woman they both married (Navarro, 2002, in Poderti, 2005:206).

According to Sáenz Quesada, Rosas' main interest lay in the pursuit of power and dominance to the point of seeking 'omnipotence'. He is said to have been a dashing, handsome man yet he was no womanizer although he enjoyed female company. During his married life to Encarnación Ezcurra he had 'only' one mistress, Eugenia Castro, a relationship that remained unknown to the public until his death (*La Nación*, 20/02/2005). Although Encarnación and Rosas lived separately - he on his *estancia* and she in Buenos Aires, they were very close and she is said to have been a devoted wife, gentle and true. Encarnación became increasingly politically involved and, together with their daughter Manuelita, turned into Rosas' first and best collaborator. She converted her home into 'headquarters' where information amongst followers was exchanged and strategies plotted. She passed all this information to her husband who consequently was always up to date with say, the movement of officers or any possible conspiracies in the making (Calvera, 1994:171). Frequently asking him for 'orders' she became an 'extension' of him - a term later appropriated by Eva Perón. Paintings often show Ezcurra with a fanatical glint in her eyes, a characteristic often attributed to Eva. Encarnación became the '*heroína de la federación*' a title she gained during years of attending the poor, her copious correspondence with the Federalists in the interior and, above all, her fanatical adhesion to her husbands cause (Calvera, 1994:171).

Thanks to Andrew Lloyd Webber, most of us are familiar with Eva Duarte. However, the Hollywood production contains all the elements that have been proven to be

successful in a multitude of similar tales. It tells the story of a street-wise, self-made woman who beds her way up and gains the masses' affection by throwing banknotes at them. Once established at the very top, she indulges in yet another close relationship - that with Christian Dior and Van Cleef and Arpels. Ultimately, however, she must face the end of her good fortune as death closes in<sup>67</sup>. While some aspects of Eva's life, her social background, the hardship during her earlier years, and so forth, are reproduced fairly accurately in the film, the portrayal of her relationship with Perón and the circumstances that led to her powerful position omits far more than it reveals; and so it turned out to be just another piece of mediocre entertainment. Were it not for the music, it would be entirely forgettable.

Eva's personality, as well as Perón's, has been the subject of persistent controversy in Argentina. It is difficult to find convincing disinterested judgements of them or of what they accomplished. Those who are for her see a hard-working woman, the benefactor of the poor; those who hate her, a scheming, power hungry fortune hunter. Writings about Eva often seem contradictory as if describing at least two different persons. In his memoirs, Perón recalls the impression he gained from her on the day they first met: a woman of fragile appearance, her hands reddened with tension, fingers tightly intertwined (Dujovne Ortiz 1997:51-4). And yet, two months later she is said to have hired a truck, packed it with her belongings, gone to Perón's apartment and, after throwing out his current lover, settled in herself (Dujovne Ortiz 1997:34) - an anecdote that is well remembered by those who have seen *Evita*.

It is important, therefore, to examine some evidence that sheds light on the circumstances that made Eva's access to politics possible and to steer away from the gossip that has surrounded her far beyond the period in question.

---

<sup>67</sup> See Savigliano, 1997, for an analysis of the 1996 film *Evita* in relation to the globalization of specifically regional personalities.

Like thousands of Argentines from the interior Eva went to Buenos Aires in search of a better life and if her aim was to find a wealthy and powerful husband, who could have blamed her? But to suggest that she purposefully pursued Perón in order to satisfy her own political ambitions is quite ludicrous - as fantastic as the soap operas she used to broadcast on Radio Belgrano. When Eva met Perón, she could not possibly have known the path his political career would take, let alone that he would become President of the country and that he would give her an active role to play.

Eva's rise from a provincial, small time radio actress to prominent government figurehead and icon of the working classes has to be understood as the result of circumstances and events caused by the political situation at the time.

Although Eva was very young and, as she herself states on numerous occasions, not interested in politics, she could not have remained untouched by the politicization and polarization that divided Argentina from 1943 onwards, the time when she and Perón started living together. Fraser and Navarro describe this period of her life in some detail which allows us to make some deductions about the way she became drawn into politics (1980). There were always people around Perón, assistants from the Labour Secretariat, officers from the Army, civilian politicians from the Radicals with whom the Colonel had contacts. In the evenings, Perón's apartment became a meeting place for his supporters. The visitors were taken into the living room and if Eva was back from her broadcasts, Perón would introduce her to them. She would stay throughout the meeting, making coffee, emptying the ashtrays or watching the guests in silence, listening (Fraser and Navarro, 1980:43-4). Quite ignorant of politics, Eva would not have questioned what was being discussed during these *tertulias*, let alone have stated an opinion of her own; but it is feasible that during these months she became



his most fervent supporter. She was probably grateful for the fact that Perón was not ashamed of her background and for his including her into what he did - few women at the time enjoyed such privilege. It must be remembered that Perón was heavily criticized for his liaison with Eva - the fact that he maintained the relationship, and maintained it publicly, despite this criticism points to the importance her presence had for him. This raises the question 'why did he allow her to listen to these presumably confidential conversations'? Again, a simple explanation is probably the most likely one to be true. Evidence suggests that they were very much in love. Perón was old enough to be Eva's father; it is likely that he felt very flattered by her attention. She never had had a father to speak of; she must have felt a certain degree of security in their relationship. A very tender and affectionate love letter Perón wrote to her later while being imprisoned on the island of Martín García in 1945 corroborates this assumption (see Luna, 1972:337). Eva could easily have left him during this uncertain and dangerous period; but she did not - in fact, she tried to arrange for both of them to leave the country. Neither of the two could have guessed even remotely that on 17 October 1945 thousands of workers would take to the streets of Buenos Aires demanding Perón's release and reinstatement<sup>68</sup>. If Perón's style of politics in terms of contact and communication with the working classes could be described as charismatic before October 17, this open, unprecedented demonstration of admiration for him proved to him that it had been the right strategy to gain mass support - only, after that historic date, his relationship with the workers turned into

---

<sup>68</sup> The crisis started on the 9 October 1945 when Perón was forced to resign his three government posts as secretary of labour, minister of War, and vice-president under the Farrell presidency. His arrest and subsequent imprisonment prompted his labour and military supporters to close ranks and demand and organize his release. They succeeded and on the 17 October, after a day-long demonstration in Buenos Aires, they managed to bring him back to a triumphant welcome (see for example Luna, 1972). On interpretations by Peronists and anti-Peronist of Eva's role during the October Crisis see Navarro, 1980:127-138.

an affectionate, even mystical bond between the leader and the *descamisados*<sup>69</sup>, as the working class became collectively known. Why this public display of mass support? Felix Luna finds that it was related to the process of Argentina's transition from a primary sector economy to an industrialized one which had already been initiated in Argentina. This industry which was growing all around Buenos Aires avidly absorbed all the available workers who arrived from the interior provinces or from the Pampas; men and women who only knew the hard life of the fields and cattle ranches and now, as neighbours of the big city, found high wages, full employment, better living conditions, and protection within the organisation of the syndicates; a hitherto unknown welfare which was automatically translated into the support of Perón, quite obviously the provider of such good fortune. A profound transformation was in the making here (1972:24).

The October crisis had established Perón's relationship with the *descamisados* as the fundamental base of his leadership and power. It was vital for him, therefore, to maintain and nurse this relationship which posited him in direct competition with the Partido Laborista (Labour Party) which was the main representative of the very same sector. The presidency, however, curtailed Perón's freedom of action in relation to the workers; he no longer could engage in social agitation in their favour or lend as much time to the solution of their grievances and complaints. If he was to prevent the deterioration of his liaison with the working class, he needed to employ an efficient minister of labour to replace him in this role. However, this was not without its own pitfalls: it had to be somebody who would not forge their own political power behind

---

<sup>69</sup> The term *descamisado* appeared for the first time during the demonstration on 17 October 1945 and was used pejoratively for Perón's supporters who were, to a large extent, former peasants and rural workers. By December of that year, the Peronists had adopted the name to identify themselves with the working classes (Navarro, 1977:229).

Perón's back (as he himself had done under the Farrell presidency).<sup>70</sup> Eva proved to be the perfect choice for the task, albeit without ever being officially appointed to any government position (Navarro, 1977:237).

Eva's role in the relationship between Peronism and the working classes became an immensely important one. Ironically, various aspects of her life and her person, so much criticized by the upper classes, became invaluable assets when she took up work in the ministry of labour; With respect to her humble background, she never failed to remind the workers and the union leaders that she was a *descamisada* too and that she could genuinely empathize with their problems and concerns. Furthermore, her lowly origins were an essential tool that allowed her to legitimize her actions. It was her condition as a woman "of the people" that authorized her to speak of the people and their needs in order to turn herself into their intermediary between them and the corridors of power (Savio, 2006:9); at a time when radio became an important and powerful medium of communication in Argentina, her talents as a broadcaster could be fully exploited for propaganda purposes. After various years of transmitting soap operas, she felt comfortable in front of a microphone; her condition as a woman and being married to Perón proved to be a huge advantage. Her position in the ministry was an unofficial one since women did not occupy public posts, hence she did not present a threat to Perón, precisely because she was a woman; and being his wife allowed her to reiterate the fact that she was his extension, his shadow, acting on his behalf and subject to his consent; being Perón's wife opened the possibility for her to become a one-woman propaganda machine for Peronism (Navarro, 1977:238). Close to him like nobody else, she could say things about him, he himself or anyone else would

---

<sup>70</sup> The person he appointed to the post at first was José María Freire, a little known labour leader who did not gain the workers' trust and affection like Perón had when he was secretary of labour (Navarro, 1977:236).

not have been able to say without appearing ridiculous;<sup>71</sup> always the actress, Eva continued to dress glamorously and did not believe in moderation with respect to her jewellery.<sup>72</sup> She knew instinctively that her flamboyant appearance would be seen by the masses as proof of her success, proof that under Peronism social mobility had become a reality, regardless of one's background.<sup>73</sup>

In 1948 the Fundación Eva Perón was created which basically replaced the traditional charity organization *Sociedad de Beneficiencia*. The latter had been running since 1823, its members and organizers the *crème de la crème* of Argentine female aristocracy. Subsidised by the state but financed mainly by private donations and initiatives of the ladies, the *Sociedad* was responsible for the building of hospitals, orphanages and shelters for the poor as well as the administration of food and goods for the needy. Traditionally, the First Lady would be given honorary presidency of the *Sociedad*. Not so Eva Perón - she was ostracized by the ladies who did not make a secret of their disapproval of Eva's past as an actress, her unmarried relationship with Perón, or her mingling in politics. Eva was furious and according to María Flores "Eva was determined to destroy the Sociedad and the ladies, and out of this rage she conceived the plan to create her own charity organization... the Eva Perón Foundation (1952:102, in Guy, 2001:253). Furthermore, when the matrons of the Sociedad ignored

---

<sup>71</sup> Addressing female members of the Confederación General del Trabajo, for example, she said: "Sometimes I think that Perón ceased to be an ordinary man and became an ideal incarnate... Perón is the Argentine ideal personified... He is the old ideal of all Argentine hopes come to life... Perón always will remain an ideal, the flag, a guide, like a star in the night leading the way to eternal victory" (Eva Perón, 16/12/1949 available at <http://www.pjmoreno.org.ar/documentos/discursoseva3.aspx>, (10/07/2009).

<sup>72</sup> "Look", she said to an advisor, "they want to see me beautiful. Poor people don't want someone to protect them who is old and dowdy. They all have their dreams about me and I don't want to let them down." (cited in Fraser & Navarro, 1980:82)

<sup>73</sup> Later it seems to have become common practice to parade personal success stories as living proof of class equality. The football megastar Diego Maradona, for example, used to display his wealth in the most ostentatious fashion while his clubs and managers never tired to point to his extremely poor childhood in Villa Fiorito, a shantytown on the southern outskirts of Buenos Aires, son of rural migrants. About the role of football in social change see for example Tamir Bar-On, 1997:1-22; Eduardo Archetti, 1999.

her overtures, Eva's spite was so great that she decided to avenge herself by demanding that the *Sociedad* be taken over by the government and then set up her own charitable organization (Guy, 2001:254-5).<sup>74</sup> According to its statutes the Foundation had the following objectives:

- a) To provide with monetary assistance, or in kind, furnish with working tools, give scholarships to any person who lacks resources and requests them, and who, in the founder's judgment, deserves them;
- b) To build houses for indigent families;
- c) To create and/or build educational establishments, hospitals, homes and/or any other establishments that may best serve the goals of the Foundation;
- d) To construct welfare establishments of any kind which can then be given, with or without charge, to local, provincial or national authorities;
- e) To contribute or collaborate by any possible means to the creation of works tending to satisfy the basic needs for a better life of the less privileged classes.

The organization of the Foundation was to be a very simple but unequivocal process: it should be and should remain in the sole hands of its founder who would exercise this responsibility for life and possess the widest powers afforded by the state and the constitution (see *Fundación Eva Perón* at <http://www.fundacionevaperon.com/historia/fep-hdlf.htm>, 12/07/2009 ).

Eva worked tirelessly in her office in the ministry, receiving the poor, listening to their problems and doling out gifts ranging from money to working tools and summer holidays for children. She saw herself as the 'bridge' between Perón and the people,

---

<sup>74</sup> Eva's role in the take-over of the *Sociedad* by the government is often exaggerated. Guy maintains that the organization had been under investigation since 1939 when complaints about poor working conditions and low salaries of its employees as well as rumours of misappropriations of funds were presented in Congress. As a state financed institution it had already undergone some degree of reorganization in 1943, before Eva met Perón. The request for the government investigation of the *Sociedad* that began in July 1946 was presented at a time when Eva did not have the influence or the power to instigate such a move (2001:254-5).

concentrating her attention on the countless day-to-day problems of the poor that the President, occupied with the greater destinies of the nation, could not be expected to take care of himself.

One of the women who later became a Peronist militant in the early 1970s, one of the few with a working-class background, describes her personal experience of Peronism and of Eva's charity work:

*...Tuve mi infancia en la época de Perón...Viví en un barrio Peronista en una casa que nos dio Evita. Fuimos con mamá... ella le entregó una carta y nos dio una casa hermosa, sin ser, ni mi madre ni mi padre, militantes Peronistas. Ella era obrera en Pirelli y hacía guantes, y para fabricar esos guantes se utilizaba talco. El talco se pegaba en la nariz y en la boca, y nadie, nadie más que Perón les dio la posibilidad de hacer una media hora de pausa para sentarse y tomar un vaso de leche. ("Tina", in Diana, 2006:45)*

It can be said, therefore, that with the creation of the Eva Perón Foundation and Eva as its president her role as a "bridge" between the workers and Perón became extended to intermediary for all those in need of social support which then also included women, children, the elderly, and so forth. In this sense, Eva monopolized social assistance and effectively banned the bourgeoisie from their traditional position as benefactors of the needy.

Eva's role as the spokesperson for women in general had been established after she had become president of the female branch of the Peronist Party and campaigned for women's right to vote linking a moral dimension to the political one. Talking about

female suffrage she said in a speech: “...Tienes el deber de preocuparte por la estructura moral y política de tu Patria. Tienes el derecho de exigirlo.” (Discursos Completos, I, 64, in Savio, 2006:6)... podríamos agregar que toda mujer debe votar conforme su sentido religioso, vale decir, ajustándose a una clara y alta medida de su deber de madre, de esposa, o de hija,...dentro de un cuadro de cristiana equidad,... de limpia aspiración de mejoramiento espiritual...” (I, 57, in Savio, 2006:6).<sup>75</sup>

In this sense, she tacitly proclaimed the continuing influence of Catholic doctrine in the Peronist state (although this can be seen as purely strategic since Peronism, in time, would severely curtail the power of the Church).

Perón’s, but particularly Eva’s, mobilizing of the women’s movement<sup>76</sup> which brought together middle-class and elite women as well as the mobilization of the working classes in general was an undertaking that neither the women’s movement or the traditional worker’s parties had achieved in the previous fifty years (Carlson:186-7).

Followers of the Peronist movement emphatically proclaimed Eva’s loyalty to the Peronist cause (and to Perón himself) in an atmosphere where the two branches of the Peronist Party, Congress, labour unions, the Labour Federation and the most eclectic mix of organizations took every opportunity to display their devotion to her. Streets, towns, subway stations, ships, and even a province were named after her (Navarro, 1980:136). In the months previous to her death, this 'homage' increased at a frantic

---

<sup>75</sup> You have the duty to care about the moral and political structure of your fatherland. You have the right to demand it...we could add that every woman should vote according to her religious belief, that is, seeking in clear and high standard in her duty as a mother, a wife, or a daughter,...within a framework of Christian equality,...of clean aspiration to spiritual improvement.”

<sup>76</sup> The Peronist women’s movement presented a sharp break with previous movements which had worked in opposition to the state, pressuring the government for change. Under Perón, with Eva as the spokesperson for women, the movement became a vehicle for the state to mobilize women for the Peronist cause (Fisher, 2000:323-4).

pace and reached its highest point in July 1952, when Congress voted a law declaring her 'Spiritual Leader of the Nation' (Navarro, 1980:136).

As is often the case, when a public figure dies in the prime of their life, the subsequent mourning becomes an exaggerated spectacle. In Eva's case, the collective grief took on unprecedented dimensions and the mystery surrounding her body not only kept the public's interest and grief alive, it also inflated her achievements out of all proportions. For fear of public riots and in their attempts to erase Peronism from history the authorities, instead of opting for a swift burial, practically kidnapped Eva's body in the belief that the people would forget her.<sup>77</sup>

Not everybody grieved - the oligarchy and cultured Argentines celebrated the disappearance of Eva's body. "Long live cancer" they had written on the walls of buildings while she lay dying. Silvina Ocampo, staunchly anti-Peronist, wrote in the magazine *Sur*: "Que no renazca el sol, que no brille la luna si tiranos como éstos siembran nueva infortuna engañando a la patria. Es tiempo ya que muera esa raza maldita, esa estirpe rastrera"<sup>78</sup> (in Eloy Martínez, 1995:70, in Méndez:68).

According to Tomás Eloy Martínez: "La súbita entrada en escena de Eva Duarte arruinaba el pastel de la Argentina culta. Esa mina barata, esa mierdita - como se llamaba en los remantes de hacienda - era el último pedo de la barbarie. Mientras pasaba había que taparse la nariz."<sup>79</sup> (in Eloy Martínez, 1995:70, in Méndez:68).

The popular classes, however, were determined to achieve sainthood for their idol *Evita*. Between May 1952 and July 1954 the Vatican received forty thousand letters

---

<sup>77</sup> For details relating Eva Perón's body see, for example (Revista siete días, No. 916, enero 1985, Editorial Abril, Buenos Aires; Pablo A. Vázquez EVA DUARTE DE PERÓN: "EVITA"; EVA DUARTE DE PERÓN. HISTORIA DEL SECUESTRO DE SU CADÁVER EMBALSAMADO Planeta Sedna; cementerio La Recoleta: El cadáver de Evita; Soría, 2005:35-78; Kohen, 1996).

<sup>78</sup> "The sun shall not rise, the moon shall not shine if tyrants like these sow misfortune again, cheating the fatherland. It is time that that wretched breed died out, that despicable species."

<sup>79</sup> "The sudden appearance of Eva Duarte on the scene spoiled the cake for the cultured Argentina. That cheap broad that little shit - as she was called by the string-pullers in the treasury - she was the last fart of barbarism. While she passed by one had to cover one's nose."



from Argentines who attributed various miracles to Eva and demanded her canonization - Pius XII, however ignored the petitions.<sup>80</sup>

Depending upon political standpoint, most of the bibliography about Eva Perón addresses either her saint or her sinner image but few suggest that she was, in reality, the power behind the throne, a woman who defied the limitations that had traditionally been imposed on women. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that this was actually the case. Furthermore, it would also explain the exaggerated, almost irrational admiration or hatred towards her. After all, if a woman could exercise this kind of power, then nothing could stand in the way of a more egalitarian system. To the same extent, for the upper classes this meant the complete deterioration of life as they had known it. Seen in this light, Perón's third marriage to María Estela Martínez Cartas ("Isabelita") seems an obvious strategy to recreate the Evita-phenomenon - this is not a new thought; but it could also have been an attempt to disguise his own weakness or his fear of facing the Argentine public on his own when he returned from exile.

Eloy Martínez portrays Perón as somebody whose image and legacy in Argentine politics has been inflated beyond all proportions thanks to the tremendous impact Eva's death had in this process. One of the most salient themes in his *La novela de Perón*,<sup>81</sup> is the contrast he paints between Eva who became even "more beautiful" in death and Perón whose body - "fatter and increasingly disconcerted, became empty of history" (2003). Contrary to Eva's perception of herself as Perón's shadow and extension, a mere tool for him to carry out his political vocation, she was, according to Méndez, much more than that. Without her, Perón might have become president

---

<sup>80</sup> For the cult of Eva's body, alleged miracles performed by her, and super-natural events in relation to her death see Susti Gonzáles, 2002:117-158.

<sup>81</sup> Eloy Martínez based this novel on an extensive interview with the exiled Perón in Madrid (*Las memorias del General*). The above is not an actual quote but reproduces the meaning of Perón's statements to Martínez.

and achieved a place in history as one more *caudillo*; but Peronism as a unique phenomenon and different from all other Latin American populisms would never have existed (63). Perón seems to have resented the fact that Eva's popularity surpassed his own. In his novel, Martínez has him say:

*El destino es injusto. Eva estuvo apenas días en Madrid y la recibieron de honores. Yo me quedé a vivir trece años y sólo he podido dejar la huella de mi nombre en una calle...Fui yo quien la hice pero es ella la que se ha quedado con lo mejor de mi gloria. Infortunios de quien no muere joven.*

Despite her constant claims of being Perón's shadow, his assistant, the "heart" to his "head", Eva increasingly forgot to play her traditional role as the submissive female as she began to outshine her husband in the male-dominated arena of politics. The subordination that she expressed in *La razón de mi vida* had virtually disappeared by the time she dictated *Mi mensaje*. Eva's last image as "*Evita montonera*", the radical militant, assumes a hard masculine edge that somehow erased her previous, typically female softness and femininity (Hughes Davies, 2007:274). Ezequiel Martínez Estrada once commented on Eva's active masculine role:

*Todo lo que le faltaba a Perón o lo que poseía en grado rudimentario para llevar a cabo la conquista del país de arriba abajo, lo consumó ella o se lo hizo consumir a él ...En realidad, él era la mujer y ella el hombre.*

(Eloy Martínez, 2002:184, in Hughes Davies, 2007:274.)

Marysa Navarro seconds these thoughts:

*A pesar de su apariencia femenina, Evita es en verdad un hombre...Los rasgos de su personalidad son mucho más masculinos que los de Perón (1981:336).*

After 1952, Argentina gradually suffered economic decline and Perón's policy of income distribution became increasingly hard to follow. With Eva gone, his "bridge" to the *descamisados* had crumbled and to the working classes it might have looked as if the financial difficulties were directly related to Eva's death. Now, the full extent of the value of her work seemed to be even more apparent - even though, for a time, Perón tried to carry out Eva's previous tasks by himself, he soon found that he did neither have the time, the patience or the popular rapport required (Navarro, 1977:240). The power that had been transferred to her could not be transferred to anyone else after she had gone, least of all to Perón himself (Navarro, 1977:240).

The political crisis that followed Perón's overthrow gave rise to several guerrilla organizations that gained widespread popular approval because they combined the social objectives of the Left with the strong nationalistic consciousness Peronism had propagated. While male participation in these groups is well documented, the involvement of women has only recently been recognized. The following chapter will explore female revolutionary activities, the positions they occupied within these organizations, and the impact of that experience on their lives.

## Chapter 4

### *Muchachas de mirada clara*<sup>82</sup>

#### **Women and the militant revolutionary movements in the 1970s**

The shifts and trends that emerged in a particular country can not be analysed in an isolated way but have to be seen in a global context. Equally, the changes experienced by a particular social group depend on those that take place within the political, economic, social and cultural spheres on a national level. It is therefore important to remember the global situation in the 1960s and its effects on Argentina before we can look at its women's movements during that period.

The 1960s presented a 'landmark' decade in the history of the world. The students' and workers' May Protest in Paris with its repercussions in the whole of Western Europe, the Vietnam War and the opposition movement against it, The Prague Spring, the non-conformist Hippy Movement, the experience of the Cuban Revolution, the transformation of the Catholic Church laid down by the Second Vatican Council and its adaptation in Latin America at the Second Bishops Conference in Medellin, Colombia (1968), and later, the Chilean experience of socialism under Salvador Allende (1970 - 73) amongst others, are salient points of a global trend which sought a radical transformation of society.

At the beginning of the 1960s, improvements in the standard of living not only seemed to be limitless but also had become a vital objective for the quest for

---

<sup>82</sup> Bright eyed girls - taken from the song *Muchacha* by Daniel Viglietti which circulated widely within the revolutionaries capturing the image of the female militant. This is its first verse: La muchacha de mirada clara/cabello corto/la que sali3 en los diarios/no s3 su nombre, no s3 su nombre/pero la nombro: primavera/pero la veo: compa1era/pero yo digo: mujer entera/pero yo grito: guerrillera.

individual happiness, a trend that was reflected in the spectacular increase of consumption that had started in the previous decade. It was within this background that so-called 'youth culture' emerged (Avila, 2000:27-45, in Gil Lozano).

An uninvolved observer would have perceived conformity amongst the young generation in the 1950s and would only have gradually noticed that something was stirring underneath the calm surface. Society was characterised by consumerism that lived side by side with the threat of nuclear annihilation and a new spirit of rebelliousness started to gestate. By the end of the decade, the young ones began attempts to assert their own space in traditional and conservative societies (Gil Lozano).<sup>83</sup>

The economy directed towards consumerism needed new markets and the young generation presented a privileged group because they had their own money to spend and also displayed patterns of group behaviour reflected in fashion, music, literature, 'in'-places to meet, a new way of travelling and a new jargon; all these elements together presented the typical 'young' model which related to and identified a whole generation (Gil Lozano).

The sixties were also a period when workers and students demanded the recognition of their rights by the prevailing system. Protest movements emerged on a global scale as a response to military interventions in a number of countries, amongst others the Dominican Republic, Algeria, the Congo. But most of all it was the United States' invasion of Vietnam that unleashed a vast social and political movement which exposed, at home and abroad, the truly horrific nature of this intervention. The napalm, the massive bombardments, the torture and killings, and not to forget, the never ceasing arrivals of body bags containing US soldiers, in short, the horror inflicted

---

<sup>83</sup> Paper presented at: I Jornadas de Reflexión Historia, Género y Política en los 70 Instituto Interdisciplinario de estudios de Género. (UBA). Available at <http://www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar/index2.php?id=3&nota=771> (05/09/2008)

finally turned on those responsible in the form of incensed citizens in the States as well as elsewhere (Castro, 2005).

Insurgencies in Latin America, strangled and resuscitated many times, challenged US hegemony in the region and reinforced anti-imperialistic currents. Thus, in 1961, John F. Kennedy launched the Alliance for Progress Policy, meant to assuage the conflicts<sup>84</sup> and ensure stable, independent governments in Latin America, and, most of all, to prevent a 'second Cuba'.

Parallel to anti-war-campaigns, the rise of civil right movements demanding the recognition of diverse identities within society, new discourses of gender, race, sexuality, and so forth, presented a serious threat to the establishment which, in turn, often responded with the forces of governments.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore women's participation in left-wing militant movements, the particular characteristics of their activism, their role within the organizations, and their relationships with their male colleagues. However, in order to provide a context in which these women pursued their political activism, the environment in which the militant movements emerged will be explained first. The

---

<sup>84</sup> United States foreign policy towards Latin America was one of the main contributors to social unrest across the region. It is important to remember that Kennedy's approach, instead of quelling unrest, resulted in increased revolutionary activities in Latin America, not least because it was implemented under the assumption that economic prosperity could be achieved without effecting major political and social changes and continued to support the mostly oppressive governments of the ruling elites and their army henchmen (see Pearce, 1981:41). A decade later, under Nixon (who described Latin Americans collectively as "a bunch of kooks" [in LaFeber, 1984:197]) foreign policy continued along the same lines - this time under the title 'Mature Partnership'. For Nixon, Latin America's ailing economies were a direct result of not enough private investment in the region (Rockefeller-Report, in Baily, 1976:119); this, in turn, was due to the political instability in the South causing the reluctance of foreign investors to stake their cash. However, the US government blamed Latin American societies as a whole for the lack of democracy; they were incapable of getting along in an 'orderly' way, therefore, they traditionally tended towards authoritarian rule and their inherent economic and social backwardness made it difficult for them to consistently support democracy; these conditions were a breeding ground for covert communist forces and it was the United States' duty to support those in a position to guarantee stability (Rockefeller-Report, in Baily, 1976:120). It was therefore recommended to Nixon (by Rockefeller) to increase spending on military assistance and enhanced training and equipment for police forces in Latin America since the essential force for constructive social and economic changes was the military (LaFeber, 1984:202). The Latin American governments would henceforth be "permitted" to purchase the necessary equipment from the US (Baily, 1976:120).

following section will focus on *Montoneros* in particular and will then move on the most important female and feminist movements active at the time.

The section dealing with the *montoneras* is mostly based on interviews with women who participated in that organization and will include aspects of their position within the organizational hierarchy, the changes they experienced as the boundary between their private and public lives became increasingly blurred, and how they made their roles as mothers compatible with their militancy.

### **Gestation of urban guerrilla organizations**

In Argentina, at the beginning of the 1950s the peronist regime, despite its strong electoral support, went through a severe crisis, partly caused by its attempts to redefine the social-economic structure, a policy implemented since the inauguration of the regime, and the political-economic alliances that maintained it. An inherent characteristic of Peronist populism was its representation of a coalition of classes whose antagonistic contradictions uneasily coexisted for a short period but ultimately resulted in Perón's overthrow (Hollander, 1977:190). It has been argued that this redefinition required the introduction of notable transformations within the power system, and that these transformations, should they be successful, demanded increased authoritarianism by the political classes, which had already emerged at the time in relation to other problems, and the development of policies that would capture vast layers of the civil society, including the practice of intensified coercion by the state (Villarruel, 1988:436-7).

This reinforcement of coercive methods clearly became visible in the official attitude with respect to the cultural space and its institutions. It was then - just to

mention some symptomatic examples - that the government imposed the creation of a likeminded student organization (CGU) in order to present an opposition to the reformist *Federación Universitaria*, exerted a tight control over the *Academias Nacionales* by modifying their statutes, allocated increased space in the confiscated daily *La Prensa* to sympathizing authors, warmly supported a split within the Association of Argentine Writers (*Sociedad Argentina de Escritores*), and even temporarily incarcerated a group of anti-peronist intellectuals<sup>85</sup> in 1953 (Cernada, estudio preliminary de Contorno:2, edición digital). Erro even goes as far as to say that Perón's government surpassed all precedents regarding political repression of dissidents and adversaries; workers who did not offer allegiance to the government were frequently 'roughed up' and fired; oppositional newspapers fell under censorship and were forced to publish rosy political propaganda instead of critical articles (1992:15).

To the same extent as Perón's popularity declined, his methods to mobilize support became increasingly radical. He also greatly antagonised the Church<sup>86</sup>. Furthermore, after Eva's death in 1952, a vital source of sympathy and support was eliminated. From 1954 onwards Perón's lavish spending - even surpassing other populist experiences elsewhere - effected a heavy strain on the economy. With all the profits from the lucrative war-time agricultural sales now gone, Perón implemented austerity measures that were sponsored by the IMF. According to Erro, this was the first time the government knowingly implemented bad economic policy in order to maintain

---

<sup>85</sup> Amongst them, Victoria Ocampo, editor of the Magazine Sur, who ever after referred to this episode as a clear symbol of the depreciation of intelligence by the regime.

<sup>86</sup> The alliance between Juan Perón and the Roman Catholic Church was primarily political. During the initial stages of his regime, Perón gained considerable popular support by having the Church as an ally. Later, he miscalculated the strength of the Church and his aggressive anti-Catholic campaign since it aroused much more widespread opposition than he had expected. Towards the end of Perón's second term, religious intolerance by the government took violent forms against the Roman Catholic Church. In 1954, the Catholic Church, incensed over Perón's legalization of divorce, allied with conservative military factions to bomb Buenos Aires in a failed *coup d'état* (see D'Amico, 1977:490-503).



support (Erro, 1992:15). Like successive governments, the attempt to mobilize widespread support while the government's legitimacy seemed to wane, only precipitated and exacerbated the crisis.

The growing oppression by the state undoubtedly contributed profoundly to the unification of the opposition which had been in existence ever since the start of the regime and which most intellectual circles subscribed to, reinforcing the notion that Peronism was but a *criollo* version of fascism which had been defeated on a worldwide scale in 1945. This interpretation had achieved more weight during the critical years of the emergence and rise of Peronism; it nurtured itself in key political ideologies elaborated since the mid 1930s and persisted clandestinely until Perón's overthrow. Afterwards it flourished with renewed vigour (Cernada, in Contorno).

The overthrow of Perón in 1955 was the start of a period of almost 20 years of political crisis in which Peronism, the political convictions of the majority of Argentineans, was banned from the political stage; this, in turn, opened the path for violent political action. Perón left a radically altered country behind: the working masses were almost unanimously organized into the union structure while the national bourgeoisie's position in the economy and as a political agent had been solidified. However, this structure was not stable; by the time of the austerity measures, the old middle classes had grown disenchanted with the recessionary economic policy and the associated increase in foreign penetration of the national economy. This also alienated the working classes who responded with frequent unauthorized strikes (Erro, 1992:16). Amongst intellectuals within the liberal camp a split started to become visible which Oscar Terán describes as a generational fracture and from this situation a clear conscience emerged which expressed itself in the fact that the younger ones perceived

themselves as a generation without role models (1993:97); they adopted this belief not out of sheer negativity but because of the fact that “in our country the dominant classes have lost, a long time ago, the ability to culturally attract young people while the working class and its organized consciousness has not yet achieved a hegemony which might translate into a coherent intellectual and moral direction” (José Aricó, *pasado y presente*, cited in Terán, 1993:97). This was, without a doubt, an ideologically orientated way to describe a situation which also was recognized by other observers from different cultural spaces. A note published in *Sur* in 1960 stated that “los ‘angry young men’, los ‘tricheurs’, los ‘rebels without a cause’, los inconformes ‘teenagers’, inundan el teatro y el cine” (Coldaroli, 1960, in Terán, 1997:97) while the sociologist and historian Juan José Sebreli confirmed that the porteño youth was turning youth itself into a value in its own right (1964, in Terán, 1997:97) and became a relatively autonomous segment within society. In this sense, the younger generation gained ‘importance’ in as much as it became recognized as a social actor (Freytes, 2007:3).

At the same time and despite modernisation of the labour market, surveys revealed a surprisingly high number of young people losing their confidence not only in the possibility to achieve professional employment but also to reach a consensus between generations; these juvenile sectors searched for satisfaction in their non-conformity and a new enthusiasm for politics (*El Grillo de Papel*, in Terán, 1993:98).

On the other hand, within an opinion that outgrew intellectual circles and which was penetrated by anti-colonialist sentiments, ‘Europeanism’ turned into a disqualifying category for those who were partial to this influence which had blurred the perception of their own national uniqueness. The new leftists favoured an articulation of

Argentina with Latin America and displayed mistrust in the prevailing European cultural elements. “Nos habíamos empeñado reiteradamente en creernos europeos, en sentirnos fuera de América, sin advertir que estábamos enclavados tercamente en el destino común de los pueblos de América”, wrote Agosti in 1955. (in Terán, 1997:98).

But it was not only the negative colonial penetration that was meant to be criticized with such statements; it was also a way of responding to the mounting incomprehension by the left parties of the peronist movement in which, after all, the entire working class collected; precisely that stratum of society of which the Left was supposed to be the natural spokes media (Terán, 1997:98).

It could be argued then, that if the re-composition of the working class was not noticed by the traditional left - used to taking the European labour aristocracy as a model - this was due to their mistaking the ‘*cabecita negra*’ (the ‘shirtless’) for the *Lumpenproletariat* and consequently Peronism for fascism. From this characterization the entire history of the working-class movement was to be put into question, with particular mistrust towards its origins which showed a working class that was predominantly composed of and clearly politically marked by European elements (Terán, 1997:99).<sup>87</sup>

Towards the end of Perón’s second term, the political landscape was in complete disarray. The Peronist coalition was splitting apart and the alliances of political groupings became fluid and even contradictory. Opposing ideologies - those belonging to the Left as well as those on the Right - united in opposition to the government. Divisions among traditional parties occurred who realigned their ideological

---

<sup>87</sup> The origins of the immigrant working class of the time also contributed to the incomprehension of the specific Argentine reality and of the mechanical transplantation of class schemes from countries with advanced capitalism from where they came, totally inadequate for a pre-capitalist country where the struggle for social demands cannot be separated from the national anti-imperialist struggle (J. J. Sebrelli, 163).

convictions to the point where they no longer represented those values and interests they had originally subscribed to (Katra, 1988:23).

The fact that Perón was ousted in a military coup rather than through democratic election and the subsequent proscription of Peronism, the country's principal political force, left the successively weak military and civilian governments<sup>88</sup> lacking the legitimacy they would have needed to withstand the opposition of other political actors and stay in power. Moreover, none of these governments was capable of dealing with ever recurring cycles of economic crises which affected the working classes more than any other social sector (Gillespie, 1982:28-29). Furthermore, all those belonging to the Peronist Party, predominantly the working class - a key political actor under Perón - now occupied an outlaw position and were forced to take their activities underground. It was during this period that a Peronist Left emerged within Peronism as a response to the growing acceptance by other sectors of the movement of the consensus within the new system that excluded Peronism from the political scene and which continually attacked the gains of the working class. This 'Left' emerged as an anti-capitalist strain of Peronism that perceived itself as defenders of the working class; but rather than developing an alternative ideology, politically it remained firmly within the Peronist/anti-Peronist dichotomy and was based mainly on total opposition to the military government (James, 1976:273-5). Society was increasingly divided in its outlook and political practices between *peronista-antiperonista*, a polarization that undermined political dialogue and compromise through normal constitutional means. This not only increasingly radicalized the Peronist working class, it also justified direct action and labour militancy.

---

<sup>88</sup> During the eighteen year proscription of Peronism, Argentina knew eight different presidents, of whom three were civilians (Frondizi, Guido, Illia) and five were generals (Lonardi, Aramburu, Onganía, Levingston, and Lanusse) (Gillespie, 1982:29).

If Argentina's political history could hardly be described as democratic, the military coup in 1966 initiated the hitherto most authoritarian regime. Baptized 'The Argentine Revolution' by General Juan Carlos Onganía, the dictatorship proclaimed its intentions to rid the political scene of corrupt and inefficient civilian politicians, a fate they shared with a great number of their counterparts across Latin America. To this end, nearly all political participation was suppressed (Brennan&Gordillo, 1994:478).

A 'Law against Communism' was implemented, affecting all people and institutions that protested or engaged in any action to protect their rights. This law empowered the Argentine Information Service to determine which people, for 'ideological communist motivations', might be a danger to the government. A punishment of up to nine years in prison was added for those who qualified as enemies of the state (Tosco, 2002:367, *The Argentina Reader*).

From 1960 onwards - throughout Latin America - the effects of the Cuban Revolution could be felt, which was perceived as a typical uprising in favour of democracy against a corrupt and repressive dictatorship, but which in these years declared its intention to constitute a socialist republic, 90 miles from the coast of the United States. The Cuban Revolution seemed to be an alternative to the ailing traditional left-wing governments which did not attract the younger generation; this favoured the emergence of a new Latin American Left.

Particularly in Argentina, this movement kept growing under the surface until 1969 when a workers and students uprising in the country's second city Córdoba<sup>89</sup>, openly

---

<sup>89</sup> The *cordobazo* is widely believed to have initiated the political violence that would mark the decade of the 70s. It can be seen as a catalyst for a hitherto latent urban militancy which would erupt and establish itself as a fixture of Argentine politics for many years to come. Popular discontent with the government's repressive measures came to a head in May 1969 during a workers' protest. The spontaneous revolt, initially led by car, power, and transport workers, was joined by student organizations, liberal clerics, and the population at large. The independent nature and democratic structure of the workers unions in the province of Cordoba made this city a more likely stage for organized protest than Buenos Aires. Although most of the participating workers belonged to the Peronist Party, in its aftermath, the complexity of the *Cordobazo* and the confusion that surrounded it provided a number of left-wing groups with the

and furiously criticised the conservative and retrograde dictatorship of Juan Carlos Onganía (see Stival & Iturburu, 2005, Brennan & Gordillo, 1994). The 'onganiato' particularly incensed young people and leading artists who suffered discrimination and harassment for wearing long hair or eccentric dress. The atmosphere of cultural repression reached unprecedented levels - even operas were banned for their 'indecent' content, so for example the opera 'Bomarzo'<sup>90</sup> by the Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera was taken off the programme in the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (Costa, *El Clarín*, 27/04/2002).

With Perón deceased and under the presidency of his third wife Isabel, all the political and economic alliances he had managed to forge suffered a total break down. The government initiated a dirty war against revolutionary forces waged by the Triple A under the command of José López Rega<sup>91</sup> against the urban terrorism by the *Montoneros*.

### **Montoneros<sup>92</sup> *et al.***

Several guerrilla organizations came into existence during the 1960s who considered the increased oppression by the state as the failure of democracy - not only in

---

opportunity to interpret the event according to the specific ideologies they supported. Whether they were Marxists, Maoists, or Trotskyists - *ad hoc* mobilization on such a vast scale confirmed for them the need to establish a revolutionary strategy and army that would promote popular insurrection as the only way to socialism. For the Peronist working class, the riots were proof of the Party's inherent militancy and revolutionary essence (see Brennan & Gordillo, 1994: 477-498, Stival & Iturburu, 2005). To an extent, it filled the ideological void of the Peronist Left who, apart from loyalty to its exiled and vilified leader, had not been able to define its political strategy (James, 1976:276).

<sup>90</sup> For a brief description of the opera's content see appendix a.

<sup>91</sup> Both, the Triple A and López Rega will be addressed in a later chapter; suffice it to say at this point that Rega's reign of state-terror together with a deteriorating economy can be seen as directly leading to the coup of 1976 and the ensuing military dictatorship.

<sup>92</sup> The founders of this organization decided to adopt the name 'Montoneros' in order to underline the historical continuity between the nineteenth century caudillos of the Argentine interior and the original 'montoneras' (Spanish: peasant militias), establishing a nationalist, anti-imperialist, and federal political line that ideologically links San Martín, Rosas, and Perón (on the original montoneras see Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*, 2000).

Argentina but across Latin America. In the late sixties and early seventies the main discrepancies within Argentine society were analyzed exclusively as pertaining to class, dependency, and imperialism, in which all political actors defined themselves around the polarization between capitalism or socialist revolution; the latter being understood and delineated in a variety of different ways according to either the Marxist or Peronist origins of the different organizations (even though there also existed revolutionary leftist groups with Maoist or Trotskyite inclination).<sup>93</sup>

Democracy was seen as inadequate to combat the ever recurring cycles of economic stagnation, the power of entrenched, privileged elites, or to challenge the dominance of economic imperialism from the outside. Revolutionary left groups in the 1960s found little space for democratic alternatives that could solve the region's problems (Barros, 1986:53, in Chinchilla, 1991:298). It is no surprise that these revolutionaries should have felt that way; while in Europe and North America capitalism and democracy were associated with a high standard of living and an open society, in the South it was linked with a brutal oligarchy-military complex, underdevelopment, and widespread poverty (LaFeber, 1984:14). Democratic reformist movements were therefore perceived as non applicable to Latin America and the only path to socialism was through revolution (the enormous influence of the Cuban case on the Latin American Left in general has to be taken into account here).<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Oscar Terán maintains that it would be correct in this sense to characterize this New Left in Argentina as left nationalist or, maybe more precisely, as nationalist Marxist. However, within this cultural-political horizon, the space occupied by orthodox Marxism was markedly reduced, not least because Marxism was embodied mainly by the thinning communist and Trotskyite contingents who experienced a turbulent period of their development because of the ups and downs of their international development based on the decisions made by the Communist Party in the Soviet Union (1993:100).

<sup>94</sup> It is important to note here that many Latin American and Caribbean revolutions derived their programmes for social change from native, nationalist revolutionaries such as José Martí (Cuba), José Carlos Mariátegui (Peru), and Augusto Cesar Sandino (Nicaragua) amongst others, and not from Karl Marx. These revolutions were initially of a nationalist, reformist character and not an explicitly communist one. The fact that Marxist theory could be applied to their theory and methods is linked to the negative perceptions of capitalism mentioned above.

Arguably the most documented of the urban militant groups went under the name of Montoneros who drew on an eclectic mix of ideologies pertaining to a variety of movements - radical Catholicism, Peronism, nationalism - and amalgamated it into a populist expression of socialism that appealed to civilians of various political denominations (Gillespie in Nouzeilles and Montaldo, 2002:377). Many had entered the ambit of Peronism through the student struggles around the CGT (*Confederación General del Trabajo*) against the repression and crudity of the Onganía government (James, 1976:283).

The Montoneros engaged in armed combat between 1970 and 1979, although their activities started to decline after 1976. Their main objectives were the destabilization of the de-facto government of Onganía, Levingston, and Lanusse (1966-73), the return of Juan Perón, and the instauration of a political system in Argentina which they defined as 'Socialismo Nacional' and which they considered the natural historical evolution of Peronism.<sup>95</sup>

While the Montoneros were supported by Perón and the Peronist Movement by and large during their first few years, their existence as a group gradually became isolated and was forced into clandestinity after their strategies had failed and provoked rejection by Perón himself<sup>96</sup> as well as by the unions and political sectors in general.

---

<sup>95</sup> Less radical than, for example, ERP (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*) or the MRP (*Movimiento Revolucionario Peronista*), the Montoneros came to lead the most numerous Peronist Left; their faith in Perón's revolutionism was absolutely sincere, rooted in his sanction of armed struggle, their own youthful lack of political experience and, sometimes, their guilty reaction against their own anti-Peronist backgrounds. Their majority was middle-class and more inclined to class alliances than to class struggle (Gillespie, 1982:45-6, James, 1976:282).

<sup>96</sup> After Perón's return to Argentina after an eighteen-year exile, he gained 61.9 percent of the vote in the elections of 1973, his third wife, Isabel, occupying the post of vice-president. Most Argentines still believed that he had the answers to the country's problem - class antagonism, high inflation, unemployment, and guerrilla activity amongst many more. Displaying his old pragmatism, Perón's reformist policies steered clear of radical solutions to these issues in order to avoid alienation of different social sectors. Perón's failure to resolve the growing economic crisis, however, earned him the criticism of the most radical political organizations, amongst them the Montoneros. In response, Perón began to



Classed as a terrorist group, the Montoneros were annihilated by the military dictatorship that took power in 1976.

After 1973, not only montonero militants but also members of other revolutionary organizations as well as any citizen suspected of supporting a leftist ideology became subject to violent reprisals by the AAA (*'Triple A' - Alianza Anticomunista Argentina*), who frequently received the collaboration of the military intelligence service to carry out their operations (Gillespie, 1982:153-5).

### **'Political women' and feminism**

During Onganía's presidency, a government that propagated traditional cultural norms, women were relegated once more to either their homes or to activities in institutions approved by the reactionary consensus. Against this background the first feminist organisations appeared.

Influences and theories that reached these organisations from Europe and the USA merged with their own necessities and interests. The participants were looking for common links in their experiences as women, whether they were housewives or professionals, artists or political activists, or a combination of all. The idea was to create a new consciousness, that is to say, to find unifying elements beyond ideological differences, class, age, and so on (Gil Lozano). They organised self-awareness groups that raised a number of issues: women's economic dependency, insecurity, motherhood, and sexuality. To start with, the women compared individual experiences and at the same time read, translated, and analysed related works that came from the core countries and circulated copies. Various groups with these

---

attack the revolutionary Left and sought to define Peronism more within traditional conservative parameters (see James, 1976:286).

characteristics were formed and became relatively widespread amongst the middle classes. During the 1960s the women's meetings took place within the framework of the *Movimiento de Liberación de Mujeres (MLM)*. Many participants of MLM later went on to form other women's organisations. During the 1970s, an important number of organizations and groups emerged (*Movimiento de Liberación Feminina, Nueva Mujer, Organización Feminista Argentina, Frente de Lucha por la Mujer*, to name just a few), that often regrouped or split, within or outside political organizations. After the dissolution of the MLM, the *Unión Feminista Argentina (UFA)*<sup>97</sup> was founded by a group of women who later would be the protagonists in the formation of yet other movements: Nelly Bugallo, Leonor Calvera, Gabrielle Christeller, and the film maker María Luisa Bemberg, amongst others (see Vasallo, 2005:61-88).

All these groups, influenced by second-wave feminism in Western Europe and the US, signalled a revival of Argentine feminism after it had been in a state of suspension from the late 1940s - with the right to vote - until the end of the 1960s (Nari, 2002:529).

This new kind of feminist struggle found a space within the new social movements and was characterized, unlike the feminism at the beginning of the century, by the rejection of power which was identified with the masculine, historically monopolized by men and associated with domination and violence (Archetti, 1994:19). The new feminism continued to struggle for civil and political rights but at the same time started to question women's position in every-day-life allowing for the first time public discussion of 'private' matters like love, marital relationships, sexuality, and so forth. Feminism in Argentina finally became more firmly established on political agendas and strove to articulate its own struggle with that of anti-imperialism in dependent

---

<sup>97</sup> Both, MLM and UFA were short-lived due to the military coup in 1976 and the subsequent dictatorship.

countries (DiTella et al., 2001:179, in Guzzetti and Fraschini, 2005). The use of feminist language, clearly radical and subversive was a common characteristic of most groups active during this turbulent period. Nevertheless, it was still not an organized and articulated movement with concrete objectives; rather, the vast number of women's movements had as a central characteristic their heterogeneity and a tentative recognition as feminists.

Despite the constant social and cultural turmoil in which participation in politics seemed to be unavoidable, second-wave feminism did not have the explosive impact it had elsewhere in the developed world. According to Nari, the changes experienced by women in the 1940s, the amplification of citizenship, greater access to higher education, and paid work, the impact this had on gender relations, did not lead women to feminism. Even more, they denied its existence, rejected it, or simply were not aware of it. The political radicalization and social dispute either concealed or offered alternative ways (1996:15). The process of social and political conflict between 1966 and 1976 encouraged the development of social networks which, in the case of many women, facilitated their entry into militant circles (1996:15).

The peak of political militancy that took place in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s motivated the emergence of women's groups who tried to construct their own space within their respective political organizations (Guzzetti & Fraschini, 2005).

The emergence of feminist organizations in Argentina took place within the context of intense political activity and social mobilization that characterized the country as well as most of the rest of the world in that era. The Argentinean women's groups came into existence at a time when the Women's Liberation Movement - predominantly in the USA and Western Europe - engaged in fierce struggles for women's rights. This context is important since Argentine historiography has been

reluctant to include the political experience of women amongst the different anti-establishment manifestations of the period (Grammático, 2005:20).<sup>98</sup>

Investigation of female militancy during the 1960s and 1970s requires an analysis of the relationship between women in social or revolutionary movements and the re-emerging feminist movements at the time. It is important to clarify this aspect, not only in order to assess women's participation in the revolutionary struggle, but also in order to reconstruct and understand their uneasy coexistence with feminism in Argentina (Grammático, 2005:20).

One of the characteristics that defined the feminist movement at the beginning of the 1970s was the exercise of 'double militancy' practised by many of its followers. Even though this fact could be assessed by some feminists as a way of 'entry' into political organizations of the Left, many of the 'double' militants finally opted for feminism (Grammático, 2005:20).

Amongst those who practised it, this parallel activism not only generated tensions on a personal level, creating a conflict of loyalties to their respective parties and the feminist group they subscribed to; it also caused controversy with the 'pure' feminists within their feminist organizations (Vassallo, 2005:76).<sup>99</sup> For feminists, the leftist

---

<sup>98</sup> As is well remembered, the Women's Liberation Movement experienced a particularly dynamic development in Great Britain, France, and the United States where it reached significant achievements; legalization of abortion (1967 in Great Britain, 1974 in France), Equal Pay Act (1975 in Great Britain [unfortunately still to be implemented in parts]), constitutional amendment for the equality of rights (1972 in the USA).

<sup>99</sup> Nari remembers that 1973 was a crucial year for feminism because it posited the double militants at a crossroads marked by the end of the dictatorship and the resulting election campaign. For many of the women, the new political situation forced them to choose between persisting in their feminist activism or putting it on hold and dedicating themselves to the demands and needs of their political parties (2002:529)

parties were only interested in ‘women’s rights’ just before elections; and looking at the timing of the creation of *Agrupación Evita*, this suspicion seems reasonable.<sup>100</sup>

The most dramatic early examples of women’s contribution to a redefinition of what constitutes political activity in Latin America emerged from the resistance and protest movements against military dictatorships, not only because of the human rights abuses they committed but also because of the increased poverty that derived from their policies.<sup>101</sup> Women’s participation in these protests and movements for change, more often than not, were motivated by the wish to fulfil rather than subvert traditional gender roles. Literature on women’s activism has shown that women are mobilised not only as women but also as mothers, workers, peasants, and citizens. At first, scholars focused on interests, specifically whether such a thing as “women’s interests” could be identified. More recently, the focus has been on identities, specifically how identities mobilise women (Ray & Kortweg, 1999:48 - 9). Molyneux, as one of the most influential writers on the question of interests, dismissed the concept of “women’s interests” claiming that women as a group have many interests (1985:230

---

<sup>100</sup> In 1973, both the PRT-ERP and Montoneros decided to create female branches of their organizations - the *Frente de Mujeres* and *Agrupación Evita* respectively (Grammático, 2005:26). The former was supposed to be present in all the regional cadres and was promised the support of the main party in all its activities; nevertheless, none of these promises materialized and by 1975 the ‘women-project’ was abandoned (Pozzi, 2001:239, in Grammático, 2005:27). The latter provided an organized opportunity for leftist female activists to reach women in the factories, slums, and poor neighbourhoods of Argentina in order to politicize them regarding the oppression they suffered based on their class and their sex (Hollander, 1974:56). However, Vassallo points out that AE cannot be seen as a reflection on gender by Montoneros and even less as encouraged by feminist influences (2002, in Grammático, p. 26). Rather, it was created as a response to the conservative politics of the traditional women’s branch of the Peronist Movement in order to emphasize Montonero interpretation of Peronism and to gain control of the movement. Although the political clout of AE was negligible and the group never engaged in any important decision making, Montoneros were well aware of the importance the Peronist Female Party and its founder Eva Perón held in popular imagery (Grammático, 2005:28). It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that AE was but a façade.

<sup>101</sup> In Nicaragua, approximately 30% of the combatants in the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) were women; in El Salvador, women made up 40% of the membership of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN), 30% of the combatants and 20% of the military leaders; in Chiapas (Mexico), women were about one third of the combatants of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) (Kampwirth, 2002, Introduction). In Peru in the early 1980s, women were at the vanguard of grass roots survival struggles that increasingly challenged the social and economic policies of the conservative Belaúnde Terry administration. Similarly, in the 1970s in the military ruled Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay women enlisted massively in the opposition’s struggle for democracy and became internationally known for their human rights struggles (Sternbach, Navarro-Aranguren, Chuchryk, and Alvarez, 1992:399).

- 1). Nevertheless, she did specify that women have “gender interests” which can be strategic or practical. The central knot of feminist practice, particularly for those who aspire to create a feminist current within popular movements, is how to link practical (female) women’s interests derived from the existing gender division of labour and strategic (feminist)<sup>102</sup> gender interests derived from a critique of the existing gender hierarchy. Chilean feminists attempted to when they linked authoritarianism in the family to authoritarianism in society and Nicaraguan feminists did when they linked women’s demands to the success of the revolution (Chinchilla, 1991:302).<sup>103</sup>

### **Guerilleras**

It is difficult to find an official ‘female’ history of the *guerilleras*, whatever organization they may have associated with. Despite the significant implications a female history could bear on historiography and on the relationship it should have with history in general where men and women have a space, most of the studies about *guerilla* activity deal with its male participants, revealing only part of the picture. In this sense, Joan Scott’s contribution is crucial; gender, she states, is a necessary category for historical analysis since by opening new perspectives it makes women visible and allows a revision of the constructed conceptions of gender; not only is it a constitutive element of those social relations which are based on gender differences, gender is also a primary form of power relations (1986:1073).

---

<sup>102</sup> Sonia Alvarez preferred the adjectives ‘female’ and ‘feminist’ to ‘practical’ and ‘strategic’ in her analysis of Brazil’s transition to democracy (cited in Ray & Kortweg, 2002:49).

<sup>103</sup> Whereas male analysts stressed the cultural or economic determinants of the militarization of civilian rule and the entrenchment of modern military dictatorships in the 1970s, feminists argued that such politics are also rooted in the authoritarian foundations of patriarchal relations in the private sphere: the family, the male-female relations, and the sexual oppression of women. Authoritarianism, they proclaimed, represented “the highest” form of patriarchal oppression. The dictatorship which institutionalises social inequality, Chilean women argued, is founded on inequality in the family (Sternbach, Navarro-Aranguren, Chuchryk, and Alvarez, 1992:398).

Investigation of women's armed struggle in 1970s Argentina presents an interesting challenge since those who actively participated did so in a clandestine manner. From the very beginning, this imposes certain limits - lack of documentation, the inexistence of, say, lists of associates, and the extreme repression of the militants by the state. Furthermore, women did not participate in equal numbers as men within the leadership of the various organizations; therefore, if the conditions in which the armed struggle took place indicate the difficulty in reconstructing male militants' lives, those of female combatants are even more elusive.

In order to gain insight, to establish the new perspectives Scott talks about, one relies heavily on the personal experiences, memories, and emotions lived by women who were involved and who are willing to tell their stories. Stanley points out the importance of including 'the personal' of female militants since its omission not only would be inimical to the future of women as political agents but would also distort history (in Pasquali, 2005:123).<sup>104</sup> Until recently, however, 'the personal' was considered as exclusively belonging to the private sphere and not until the history of private life stopped being theoretically opposed to the history of the public sphere was it possible to identify a series of elements previously relegated to factual historiography, chronicles, journalism, biography or other types of historiography regarded as being 'lesser' (García, 1999:463). Analyzing the personal accounts of female militants not only allows a reconstruction of their lives but also a re-consideration of the public/private relationships, thereby giving a greater complexity to political historiography, including that centred on the analysis of revolutionary processes and organizations.

---

<sup>104</sup> Stanley also states that the absence of personal experiences of lesbians and gays encourages future generations to believe that the Left in its entirety was exclusively heterosexual (in Pasquali, 2005:123).

## The Left and the 'Woman-Question'

The political Left supposedly supported women's struggle for equality but clearly was male-dominated. In an interview by Pasquali, the attitude of men in the organization towards the female participants demonstrates the views on gender relations within the group and the perceptions of differences in relation to achieving decision-making positions. Active within Frente de Mujeres (see footnote 20), one woman, Mónica, states:

*El tema de mujeres era tomado muy a la ligera yo creo. Primero porque no se hacía un análisis de la mujer dentro de la organización o dentro de la clase. Era una cuestión de hombres y mujeres...las mujeres tenemos algunos problemas para poder ocupar cargos, somos discriminadas en algunos aspectos, tenemos muchos problemas para poder avanzar en ciertas carreras, incluso dentro de las organizaciones teníamos problemas para avanzar. Siempre las compañeras éramos relevadas de algunas tareas...los varones tenían un discurso: "Si, las compañeras mujeres, que se integran a la lucha, todo bien, pero la mía no, que me acompañe ma non troppo. (in Pasquali, 2005:131)*

Although some women did occupy higher positions in the organizations, their number was by no means proportionate to the number of women participants. It is difficult to establish how many female militants were active within the revolutionary Left given the mostly clandestine nature of their operations. Interviewed by Marta Diana, Roberto Perdiá attempts an approximate calculation: "The political force the



Montoneros represented, that is to say, those who were mobilized around the organized members of the group, can be measured by the participation in public actions. Given the fact that actions took place across the country, the total number of participants can be estimated at around one hundred and twenty thousand,<sup>105</sup> counting sympathizers as well as organized and non-organized members". Perdía estimates the number of active militants belonging to the various groups at ten thousand; however, the militant core, organized into revolutionary cells, counted around five thousand members of all the groupings. Estimating the number of women participating in militant actions within all the revolutionary organizations, one can probably talk of about three thousand (in Diana, 2006:380). However, while during the 1960s female participation in revolutionary movements only represented a small percentage and was linked predominantly to the activism within the student movement, during the following decade, and particularly from 1973 onwards, a noticeable increase of female militants can be observed (Pasquali, 2005:126). In the case of PRT-ERP, Pozzi points out that the number of female members increased markedly from 1970 onwards and reached around 40% in 1975. It is all the more astonishing therefore, that only two women came to hold a position in the Comité Central.<sup>106</sup> For Jutta Marx, the fact that women do not occupy decision-making positions is not related to the number of female participants nor to the efforts they have made, but is a consequence of the prevailing hegemonic conception according to which women and their different ways of participation, different from those of men, are de-valued (1994:123-35).

---

<sup>105</sup> This number includes militants of all the revolutionary groups who associated publicly with the Montoneros; amongst them *Juventud Peronista*, *Agrupación Evita*, *Juventud Trabajadora Peronista*, *Unión Estudiantes Secundarios*, *Juventud Universitaria Peronista* as well as members of political party structures like *Partido Justicialista* and *Partido Peronista Auténtico*.

<sup>106</sup> Emilia Susana Gaggero de Pujals - active within PRT-ERP for fifteen years before being made a member of the Central Committee and killed during a raid while attending her first Committee meeting in 1976 (*Página12*, Lunes, 15 de Mayo de 2006); and Liliana Delfino de Santucho - arrested during a raid and subsequently was disappeared (1976) as was almost the entire Santucho family (Diana, 2006:310 ff.)

In their struggle for social change, the revolutionary organizations became both agents and conveyors of the relation of power and ended up reproducing hierarchical gender relations. MacKinnon points out that everything that includes power is political; thus, relations between men and women - historically marked by the asymmetric exercise of power, are political. Therefore, gender is a political issue, because from historical processes it can be observed that women - purely because they are women - are more exploited, oppressed, and discriminated against, economically, as well as socially and politically; and men have traditionally been the ones who have occupied spaces of power, have written and executed laws, as well as being the beneficiaries of economic production.<sup>107</sup> The hegemonic masculine subject establishes relationships of subordination; this imbalance demonstrates that the inequality between the sexes becomes a political issue (1989:3-12).

Furthermore, historically, political action by women has been limited to tasks linked to social care and assistance, to help out where need be, determining that women themselves reinforce the stereotype of their 'female qualities' and excluding themselves from the reputedly masculine spaces where decisions are made. This situation has historically impeded the development of women as political subjects and made them invisible in the public arena (Garrido & Schwartz, 2005:69-70).

Given our condition, we weren't heard; generally, the person who spoke was the husband. I would say that I was the wife of so-and-so. ("H", militant of the Revolutionary Peronist Movement, interviewed by Feijóo et al, 1996:22)

---

<sup>107</sup> Except those who 'suffer' from certain conditions that qualify them as objects of discrimination like women; this is the case for black men and homosexuals.

As a current within radical thought and as a social movement, feminism had a close association with socialism; but it was one that was often antagonistic and became more so with time, mostly because a clear analytical and political distinction divided them. This was evident as much in their analysis of inequality and exploitation as in the measures needed to overcome them (Molyneux, 2001:106). Neither the traditional Left nor the New Left was opposed to feminism but perceived it as inadequate because it posited gender inequality above inequalities of class; this subverted the basis for class struggle which was perceived as the prime force for social transformation (Melhuus & Stølen, 1996:10). In other words, socialist or Marxist feminist theory was not connected to the daily life of the revolutionary groups or to the couple relationship between their militants (Feijoó, Nari & Fierro, 1996:20). In both cases there was a sexual division of labour that relegated women to second-class positions at the same time that it encumbered them with all the chores of domestic organization and maternity (Feijoó, Nari & Fierro, 1996:20).

*De todos modos, y esto lo sabe muy bien cualquier mujer que trabaja, a nosotras siempre nos toca desempeñar un doble o triple rol. Todo implica un mayor esfuerzo. Las organizaciones no fueron una excepción (a pesar de estar luchando por una sociedad distinta). Había un ritmo abrumador de reuniones y actividades que no dejaban espacio para la vida personal...cuando uno se tiene que levantar a las cinco de la mañana, estar reunidos hasta las dos era un sacrificio desmedido e inútil. Desgraciadamente, no se consideraban esas cosas... de seguir así, la revolución nos iba a pasar por encima. (Alejandra, in Diana, 2006:33)*

## The private and the public

The militancy of the 1970s was much more than a political practice; in the majority of cases it meant a life-style choice. Considering that the movement, the party or organization filtered through every personal aspect of each of their members, it is not surprising that they became friends, couples, family or, at least very close and the organization as a central axis in all these lives blurred the boundaries between the private and the public sphere or, even more significantly, between a personal and a collective project. In this sense, this vague demarcation constitutes one of the central aspects in tackling female militancy during this period (Freytes, 2007:7). The world of militancy has been likened to a microcosm subject to specific rules and codes which may suggest the idea that the party is a 'countersociety'. This allusion is particularly fitting for revolutionary organizations which made armed struggle the centre of their activity, having to survive most of the time in clandestinity. The need to hide and the need to trust accentuated the closed nature of groups and therefore brought closer and linked the public and the private spheres, providing a privileged view of this complex relationship (García, 1999:463). It is also important to point out that most activists, male and female, had ceased contact with their 'real' families which were replaced by the *compañeros*.

*Nuestra casa era también nuestra base. Eso imponía inevitablemente, un estado de movilización permanente para todos que vivían con nosotros. Cada casa era un miniejército, con normas de seguridad e instrucciones precisas a cumplir cotidianamente, y más aún cuando se sospechaba que la casa había sido identificada, o podía sufrir un allanamiento (Roberto Perdía recuerda a las mujeres montoneras, in Diana, 2006:379).*

Despite the arduous daily schedule and constant need for alertness, an idealized, romantic image of the militant couple prevailed within the organizations - lovers struggling side by side for a better future (Sapriza, 2005:42)<sup>108</sup>. The love poem<sup>109</sup> by the Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti pays homage to the female militants and was well known amongst the revolutionaries; and it is possible that for some of the women it reflected their relationship with their *compañeros*; but it is more likely that statements like the following, on the one hand, present the desperate attempt to carve out a space for romantic love in an environment marked by danger and uncertainty and, on the other hand, an insistence to re-establish at least some sort of boundary between the private/personal and the public/political in a setting where the two had merged into one.

*¿Recordás el poema de Benedetti?...Eso era entre nosotros el amor, la pareja. La entrega a la militancia hacía que la entrega del uno al otro fuera sublime, que la identificación fuera máxima. Esa especie de sacerdocio, de sacrificio permanente al que estábamos entregados, se intensificó en las épocas de mayor represión, en las que el hoy era lo único que existía. (Mariana, en Diana, p. 155)*

*Yo creo que la mujer debe estar al lado del hombre, como las que lucharon al lado de nuestros patriotas en el siglo pasado. Esto se dio plenamente con mi “cumpa”, que era un tipo adorable... Como él conocí muchos otros que no eran machistas. (Tina, en Diana, 2006:54)<sup>110</sup>*

---

<sup>108</sup> See also: “Alicia Eguren de Cooke: la voz contestaria del peronismo” (Bellucci, M., [http://www.elortiba.org/cooke.html#Alicia\\_Eguren\\_de\\_Cooke](http://www.elortiba.org/cooke.html#Alicia_Eguren_de_Cooke) (12/11/2008)

<sup>109</sup> This is the poem’s last verse: Si te quiero es por que sos/ mi amor, mi cómplice y todo/en la calle codo a codo/somos mucho más que dos.

<sup>110</sup> It seems important to point out that both women’s relationships with their partners were cut short by arrest and imprisonment at the moment when they were happiest.

For many others, however, reality deviated considerably from the disseminated discourse of equality and liberation that the militant couple-companionship should facilitate. This is not meant to be a criticism of the male group members but the recognition of the cultural barriers that inhibited the translation of theory into practice. After all, as García rightly states, militancy is not the action of robots, of isolated individuals who act mechanically according to their ‘class conscience’ or of the political guidelines which emanate from their party, all within a given national and international context. Militants are specific people, men and women, bearers of ethical values, political convictions and religious influences who reflect, in their daily life, their cultural education, their family background and a set of ‘orders’ which affect the way in which they will ‘apply’ the party ‘line’ in society, (1999:462) or in their personal lives, one might add. If the Left held that “everything was political”, for the women within the movements, feminists or not, “everything” included the personal. The discrepancy between these two recognitions caused considerable tension within the organizations - while women questioned issues of daily life as a source of their subordination, the men saw this questioning as a dangerous deviation from the correct course of the struggle.

*...gradualmente, es que, inevitablemente, la militancia incidió en nuestra pareja. Llegó el momento en que dejamos de hablar de nosotros. Todo estaba relacionado con lo que teníamos que hacer, o los temas que teníamos que estudiar...Cuando reflexiono ahora sobre nosotros, siento que éramos una especie de pareja “platónica”, donde la unión no estaba sellada por nuestro mutuo amor, sino por el amor a la revolución. (Alejandra, in Diana, p. 29)*

Every time we fought amongst ourselves, we would have to read Erich Fromm". ("L", Member in Montoneros, interviewed by Feijoó et al, 1996:20)

*Así como la recuerdo, la pelea ahora me parece cómica. Los términos en discusión no eran el amor ni el odio. Como si se hubiera tratado de una situación política, él recurrió a los clásico del marxismo para justificar su actitud y criticar la mía. (Alejandra, in Diana, p. 41)*

These women clearly resented the encroachment of the political/public on their personal lives. Later, in his *Genealogy of Ethics*, Foucault would express a similar disillusionment with the public realm which he understood as composed of a network of controlling, disciplinary discourses. Instead of conceiving of the private realm as that which contains the affective and emotional aspects of existence and of that which is necessarily excluded from the public, Foucault defined the private as those aspects of individual's lives and activities that they have a right to exclude others from (1984:362, in McNay, 1992:177). In the case of the women in question it was always going to be difficult to exclude the public from their affective relationships given the commune-style living arrangements and the fact that their collective political project was the reason for these measures in the first place - this does not seem to have been the root of the problem. Rather, the women clearly conceived of the couple as one unit (the self) and of the collective project (the revolution) the 'other' which they felt they had a right to exclude. In other words, the women did not resent the lack of privacy or the collective struggle but the institutional regulation of 'the private'. To stay with Foucault's 'where there is power there is resistance', women in the revolutionary movement clearly had to act upon a twofold oppression - that by the

state and that by the male-dominated structures within the groups. However, unlike the feminist organizations at the time that had started to study feminist theory emerging in Europe and the United States, the 'political' women had virtually no theoretical foundation for the processes they were involved in.

*Mi práctica era muy profunda, pero no meditada...yo vivía de esa manera, sin reflexionar. Ahora pienso que eso no era positivo porque si bien mi dedicación y mi entrega eran totales, mi aporte a la construcción teórica era prácticamente nulo. No hacía críticas y consideraba que todo lo que se decía y todo lo que se escribía era correcto. Y lo asumía plenamente. (Tina, in Diana, 2006:48)*

With women's acceptance of everything that was said and written as correct and the expectance by the party ideologues of collective consent, the common error of confusing equality with sameness was committed. Conflicts within the groups and couples drifting apart, therefore, were inevitable in the long term. As Benhabib points out, community and commonality arise and develop between us not, as Marx would have it, because we are thrust into objectively similar life conditions. A common, shared perspective is one that we create insofar as in acting with others we discover our own difference and identity, our distinctiveness from, and unity with others (1986:348).

One particular aspect of female presence in the political struggle is the unintentional temptation which many female militants posed to the rank and file which ended up creating situations of conflict with their wives (García, 1999:466), or with their



*compañeras* even when they also belonged to the organization. ‘Alejandra’ remembers:

*Se daban casos que para los celos tradicionales serían insoportables.  
El típico era pasar la noche con un compañero que no era “tu”  
compañero, en un albergue transitorio, para salir de madrugada a  
‘volantear’ en las fábricas. A mí me tocaron las dos posibilidades. En  
una, yo con otro compañero...Dormimos vestidos...otra vez tuve que ir...a  
encontrarme con el que era mi pareja que salía de pasar la noche con otra  
compañera, porque ella no podía salir tan temprano de su casa....  
(in Diana, 2006:32)*

In relation to conventional emotions like jealousy it has to be remembered that the generation in question - born between 1940/50 could not effect a total and sudden break from the established stereotypes of its society. The impact of the ‘sexual revolution’ which took place in the 1960s and 70s, therefore presented another source for tensions within the organizations. Constituting a significant social change it should have been positively received by the Left since it contributed considerably to women’s liberation and equality;<sup>111</sup> and for some activists, a socio-political revolution clearly demanded sexual liberation (Rapisardi, 2001). However, the responses of vast sectors of the Left to these changes were as reactionary as those of the ultra-right - a discourse of monogamy, orthodox politics and customs, and a ‘new’ sexual morality<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> It has to be noted here, that the impact of the ‘sexual revolution’ on women was highly ambiguous. On the one hand, changing popular attitudes to sex along with improvements in contraceptive technology definitely gave women more sexual freedom. On the other, breaking the links between marriage and legitimate sex brought an equally dramatic loss of security, especially for older women and those with children. Furthermore, it did not defy the patriarchal order (see for example Bouchier, 1983:115).

<sup>112</sup> According to Alicia Stolkiner, the various organizations had different guidelines about couples and sexual relationships. The PRT produced a manual for revolutionary morals, marked by severe asceticism and monogamy, which indicated what was ‘correct’ even in relation to child-raising. In contrast to this,

- more critical of the 'bourgeois hypocrisy' of the old morality, as Feijóo et al point out, than of its forms (1996:21-22).<sup>113</sup>

*En cuanto a la pareja, había normas que eran sagradas, como las relacionadas con la infidelidad que, no en nuestra organización, pero sí en otras, se sancionaba, y podía implicar la pérdida de una categoría alcanzada. (Alejandra, in Diana, 2006:29)*

### **Female militants and motherhood**

From maternalist feminism, which converted motherhood into political feminist action, particularly notable in some expressions of the anarchist-feminism of the nineteenth century, to motherhood in the 70s within the temporary framework of the revolutionary project, leading to the motherhood of women who were arrested and disappeared, to motherhood as a legitimization of the demand for human rights during the transition to democracy in the 1980s; there is a historical process that marks, selects, and excludes signifiers in the construction of motherhood in the collective and subjective imaginary (Ferro, 2005:200-1).

The historical period in question displays sufficient elements to back up the idea of the existence of a complex paternalist/maternalist alliance represented by the complementary Perón/Evita formula. Eva Perón frequently spoke of female complicity

---

some independent groups that emerged from the student movement proclaimed 'free love'. Those of Peronist origins were, perhaps, the most 'conservative' ones, even maintaining the tradition of getting married in religious ceremonies (2005, Revista Los '70, No. 5).

<sup>113</sup> What clearly demonstrates the macho-attitude and petty morals of the revolutionary leaders is their homophobia. Héctor Anabitarte, activist of the Argentine Communist Party, was demoted for 'confessing' his homosexuality. Rapisardi claims that the demands by women or minorities presented no more than an afterthought in the programmes of the 'Popular Forces', if they were not excluded altogether from their 'new moral codes'; after all, infidelity, *putos* (male prostitutes), or *faloperos* (drug addicts) threatened one's condition as a soldier of FAR or Montoneros, as they proclaimed more than once on the *Plaza de Mayo* (2001, *Página12*).

in the maintenance of the patriarchal system which undeniably held some rewards for women but ultimately they remained excluded. Eva's speeches to women about their political function are one of the best examples of maternalist ideology: a mere modernization of women's role - the kind of change that ensures continuity (Luna, *Mujeres en red*).

Eva Perón had been proclaimed the patron of the revolutionary movements, first and foremost because of her tireless efforts for the poor. In terms of her maternalist ideology, it is not surprising that the revolutionary organizations, particularly Montoneros with the creation of *Agrupación Evita*, adopted it in order to uphold claims of reform for equality; but also to ensure new generations of dedicated revolutionaries. Indeed, the Left, by and large, insisted on heterosexuality and motherhood even in situations with the looming threat of imprisonment and an overall air of an uncertain future. The 'girl with the bright look in her eyes', the one that marched 'side by side' was transformed into the symbol of 'new woman' who was also expected to have 'children for a new beginning' (to stay with another song by Viglietti [Sapriza, 2005:42]).<sup>114</sup> Motherhood and revolutionary activism were therefore not contradictory. For the women in the movements there was no 'option' or delimitation between private and public spheres, between a personal and collective project - everything was part of the same decision (Ferro, 2005:200). In this sense, their *leitmotif* 'everything for the political project' led to the concept of motherhood being moulded by the predominant political discourse.

The Chilean writer Diamela Eltit defined the context of the insertion of women in the revolutionary process as the scenario "where the perception of the female body

---

<sup>114</sup> This is the last verse from the song *Gurisito*: Y aunque nazcas pobre/te traigo también/se precisan niños/para amanecer (Gurisito is the diminutive (hispanicized) of the Guaraní word 'guri' meaning 'child')

experienced a break with the prolonged cultural norms of physical inferiority in order to become identical to men, all in the name of the construction of a collective, egalitarian future”, where the “parodistic exhibition of masculinity postponed ‘the intimate/private’ in favour of the paramount ‘collective/public’” (in Sapriza, 2005:42).

It follows that their condition as women not only limited their activities within the organizations as militant activists but also the domestic aspects of their lives. As Valero puts it, apart from hardly ever advancing to positions of leadership, they had to relegate love and motherhood in favour of the political project. By and large, this was accepted by the women themselves as indicative of the system they were immersed in (2005:146). One woman (‘urban, clandestine militant’) interviewed by Sapriza states:

*Es cierto que en las condiciones en que vivíamos no era conveniente tener un hijo, pero teníamos muchísimo deseo de tenerlo. Y en esa lucha loca entre la vida y la muerte, sabíamos el peligro que corríamos, pero a su vez queríamos que viviera y fuera feliz con nosotros. (43)*

Western feminists at the time engaged in lively debates about what it was that made women want to be mothers; but while they had realized that the personal is political, they also displayed a readiness to consider women’s desire for children without attributing it exclusively to external pressures. It was innovatory then, as Duchon points out, for a political movement to embark on exploration of experiences and feelings in an area that defies political analysis (1986:61, in Rowbotham, 1989:85). However, to explain the desire to become mothers in the case of the female revolutionaries, Breen’s study of pregnancy, presenting an interaction between growth and development of the mother and maternity, seems to fit; particularly in relation to

Sapriza's interviewee above: "Pregnancy", Breen contends, "stimulates in the woman ideas of life and death, mortality and immortality, purposefulness and futility, ideas connected with her own infancy, mothering and fathering, about the ability to nurture, to be relied upon, about dependency, about her own capacity to be intimately and bodily involved with a newborn baby and later a child while at the same time able to retain a sense of individuality" (1978:18, in Rowbotham, 1989:89).

Motherhood in relation to involuntary separation from their children is a recurring theme in the statements of the women interviewed. Their often fragmented historical accounts are frequently interspersed with attempts to justify their participation in armed struggle, looking for their children's understanding, trying to ease their guilt.

*Es increíble lo que éramos capaces de hacer con la vida de los hijos. Nos íbamos a un operativo y los dejábamos en manos de la mujer de cualquier compañero. Podíamos regresar o no, ¿y los niños? A veces nos acompañaban mientras íbamos armados, estaban presentes en las reuniones. ('Vásquez', in Salazar, 2002, in Valero<sup>115</sup>, 2005:147)*

*Éramos una gran familia...ese sentimiento de pertenencia me decía que cualquiera de mis compañeros podía ser buen padre para ellos, si yo faltaba. Éramos una familia, y no iban a quedar huérfanos. (Celeste Zerpa in Sapriza, 2005:43)*

---

<sup>115</sup> Silvia Valero investigates female militants in the Colombian revolutionary movement M-19, Graciela Sapriza those in Uruguayan guerrilla organization during the last dictatorship. In both cases, women's experiences seem to be virtually identical to those in Argentina and do therefore have a place here.

*...no es buena madre solamente la que se queda en casa con los hijos. También es buena madre la que sale a luchar por algo que va a ser para ellos y para todos. Transformar una sociedad tan cruel, donde muchos de esos hijos no tienen ninguna posibilidad de subsistencia, es el mejor regalo que una madre podría tratar de brindarles. ('Gringa', in Diana, p. 189)*

Women's militancy in revolutionary organizations during the 1960s and 1970s is regarded generally as a dual transgression. This is firstly because enlistment in these organizations, most of which were devoted to carrying out armed actions against the government, meant placing oneself 'outside the law'. The high price paid by female militants - death, torture, prison, exile - and the effects on their private life - family, emotional, and professional - clearly demonstrate this. The second transgression was that 'the conduct of female militants also challenged the gender code of their time', in other words, the participation of women in politics was not socially acceptable (García, 1999:464), let alone, one might add, in violent political action.

Gillespie maintains that Montoneros, by and large, engaged in psychological warfare rather than in armed confrontations with police or military units. They cultivated sympathetic popular response by minimal use of offensive violence and extreme discrimination in the selection of targets, as opposed to random terrorism. Property,<sup>116</sup> not people were the prime targets of Montonero violence, however, shoot-outs,

---

<sup>116</sup> Luxurious country clubs, Jockey Clubs, golf course buildings, business buildings and factories owned by foreign corporations (Gillespie, 2002:381).

explosive devices, and kidnappings occasionally claimed deaths on both sides (2002:380-2).<sup>117</sup>

The growing state violence therefore, at least before the military *coup* in 1976, was not so much a response to Montonero terrorism, as it was a preventative measure to dissuade the working classes from joining the ranks of opposition movements (Gillespie, 2002:383). From 1976 onwards, however, state repression took on an unprecedented magnitude; by the end of July 1976, one hundred ‘subversive delinquents’ had been killed in the previous six weeks - the same number as in the seven years from 1966-73 (Marini, 1977:114-5). Of the former, about a third was women who, in general, were specifically targeted by the state as the embodiment of moral subversion. Both government and Church upheld their portrayal of the traditional family as the basic cell of society and the foundation of its stability - a long established responsibility of women. According to Marini, media coverage at the time, of speeches by government and Church officials, had one common theme: the praise of the family as the most important vehicle for the transmission and control of the observance of Christian and patriotic values (1977:116). This sort of propaganda was not only directed against the young women militants but also against the mothers of ‘subversive’ sons and daughters, as well as against ‘working’ women since they all had evidently failed (or were failing) in their task to convey these values to their offspring. Tacitly, this rhetoric blamed women for the dismal situation the whole country was enveloped in.

This intensified ideological campaign by government and Church to redefine once more the role of women in Argentine society clearly is yet another confirmation of the fluid meaning of motherhood.

---

<sup>117</sup> Please note that I categorically reject all forms of violence, regardless on which side it is committed. I also firmly believe that no number of deaths, however small it might be, resulting from violent action, can be categorized as collateral damage in a struggle for political change.

So far, in part one of this thesis, it has been shown that all aspects of women's position in society have been manipulated by the patriarchal system; as workers, citizens, and particularly as mothers and reproducers of the nation. Female political activism, it has been demonstrated, primarily took place because women felt that cultural and political institutions obstructed rather than furthered the adequate accomplishment of any of their pursuits.

Part two will demonstrate that the work of female writers mirrored and corroborated the same dissatisfaction felt by those women active in political protest. The following chapter will look at some of the first Argentine women writers during the Liberal State.



## Chapter 5

### Women Writers in Nineteenth Century Argentina

Women's entry into the public sphere was not always the result of active struggle. It also happened that the very persons who lived comfortably within the stereotype ended up breaking the rules of the game through activities which they themselves considered 'normal'. The appearance of women in the public sphere took centuries to come and was due to the work, the struggle, and often to the sacrifices of many women. But these were not the only reasons. According to the literary critic Lea Fletcher (2005), it has been clearly demonstrated that a number of women writers in the nineteenth century set the antecedents of 'the thinking woman', dedicated to literature or journalism not as a mere pastime but professionally. In an era when the image of a 'contributing' woman did not exist - at least not among the middle and upper classes - it is still possible to rescue the names and works of some women who did write (and think) and who did not feel distressed about it. As if for a few years the prevailing national machismo had fallen into hibernation, these women moved freely and carved out their own spaces where it was possible to associate with likeminded women who pursued the same goal. The emergence of wider available public education opened the path to literature for them, although it is also true that they wrote predominantly for women and mostly language appropriate for the time and circumstances. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a great number of economic and cultural changes took place all over Latin America which initiated a series of reforms and laws that provided access for women to education. Primary education had been available for women since the mid eighteenth century but now

colleges and other forms of secondary education for 'señoritas' were added. The curriculum though, was basic since apart from instructions to become accomplished in traditional female activities like embroidery, sewing, and so forth, the education system hardly reached beyond teaching girls to read and write and this lack of academic emphasis practically placed women at the same educational level as their male children. Nevertheless, it was because of these new opportunities that these pioneers of female literature first appeared on the literary scene. Teaching positions, increasingly occupied by women at the time, were often the key for many women to become aware of their writing ambitions. A good example of this is the development of the career of the first female medical doctor in Argentina, Cecilia Grierson, which had started in a traditional way: in 1878, at nineteen years of age, she graduated from the *Escuela Normal de Maestras de Buenos Aires* and immediately was offered a position in a boys' school by no other than Sarmiento himself. Grierson however, had other plans and viewed this post as a springboard to greater things. She enrolled at the medical faculty at the University of Buenos Aires and those who tried to stop her had to realize that it was too late. The question arises 'how was this possible in a time when women had to ask permission for virtually everything they wanted to do?' What was it that they had in common and what differentiated them? In order to answer these questions, we have to look at female writers across Spanish America rather than solely in Argentina in order to get a fuller picture and maybe a pattern that shows similarities within cultural diversity. The following selection of nineteenth-century Spanish American writers only presents an overview of female writing during this period; but it is supposed to illustrate how these writers complemented and deviated from the male literary tradition. Frederick (1998) argues that Argentine women writers in the nineteenth century engaged in political writing and social criticism, citing

themes of domesticity, gender relations, motherhood, and national progress. She also suggests that these writers contradict the stereotype of women intellectuals as being sentimental, humourless, and prudish. Rather, their works illustrate that they were rational, jocular, passionate, and contentious. I would like to contend, however, that this was the case across the region rather than country-specific.

The following chapter analyzes the works of Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892) and Juana Manso (1819-1875). Both these women achieved fame for their writing, albeit for different reasons - while Gorriti moved within the acceptable, Manso was often attacked for her transgressions. Both authors' works, however, clearly display social criticism either in relation to women's submissive role in society, their exclusion from the public sphere, or racial and religious prejudices. The last section of this chapter looks at an example of how women used a traditionally female literary genre in order to break with tradition and make their voices heard: a recipe book.

### **Early Latin American Women Writers**

The extraordinary boom of fictional literature written by women from the second half of the twentieth century onwards constitutes a phenomenon in Spanish American literature, surprising in its diversity, its richness, and its success with the public. Even more surprising, however, is the fact that when trying to trace the origins of this phenomenon or to insert it into a literary history of the region through canonical texts dedicated to its study, it seems that it emerges suddenly, without a tradition to support it (Mataix, 2003; Batticuore, 2005). The majority of textbooks on the literature in question, including some recent studies of female literature, spring from

the extraordinary Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz<sup>118</sup> (1651-1695) who, for several years held the position of Poet Laureate at the Mexican vice regal court. By and large, however, information about early female writers is limited to a superficial treatment of the women who, nevertheless, inaugurated the tradition of Spanish American fiction in their respective countries. Nevertheless, in recent years, some more profound investigation of women's writings in nineteenth-century Spanish America has been undertaken. Their work represents nineteenth-century Spanish American female culture through the lens of women writers, pointing to women's needs and grievances, and clearly differentiating it from male culture at the time.

The following is merely a short selection of women writers and, while by no means exhaustive, is supposed to give an idea about the widespread emergence of female writers across the region.

Examples include Juana Manuela Gorriti and Juana Manso, whose works will be analyzed in some detail below; their compatriot Eduarda Mansilla (1834-1892); the Chilean, Rosario Orrego (1834-1879); the Bolivian Adela Zamudio (1854-1928); the Honduran Lucila Gamero (1873-1964); the Uruguayan Lola Larrosa de Ansaldo (1859-1895); and last but not least, the Peruvian Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909).<sup>119</sup>

It is important to remember that these women, perhaps with the exception of Juana Manso, were not feminists. It never occurred to them that women could abandon their role as housewives and mothers. On the contrary, they struggled and worked to educate other women through articles in magazines and newspapers, which they themselves created and directed, because they wanted to contribute precisely in their

---

<sup>118</sup> Sor Juana found opportunity for education only as a nun. However, she abandoned intellectual pursuits after years of harassment by the Inquisition for criticizing colonial social inequalities, the low moral standards of the upper classes, and the insensitivity of the Church to the spiritual and material needs of the poor (Carlson, 1988:197)

<sup>119</sup> See appendix b for more details on these writers.

role as mothers. Their intention was not to get other women out of their houses but to teach them how to better educate their own children. Furthermore, they did not perceive any contradiction in the fact that they were writers and housewives. They all had primary education, almost all of them were teachers, they recognized their writing skills and that was what they wanted to do. They did break rules because they became professional women who supported their household with the fruits of their labour; none of them had a husband to 'keep' them none of them had a husband to 'keep' them but regardless of their individual economic imperatives they all related writing to financial gain.

According to Lea Fletcher, these women, who wrote stories and newspaper articles, were not perceived as scandalous by society at the time, because their kind of writing (poems, romantic novels, articles on fashion and music, and so forth) was seen as an activity on a par with cooking, embroidery or playing the piano. They were not engaging in anything inappropriate for women (2005). However, Fletcher's assertion seems to be somewhat flawed since most of the early women writers, at least the ones mentioned in this work, wrote under a pseudonym which suggests that they were reluctant to disclose their real identity, the most obvious reason for this being fear of possible repercussions. Neither is it quite true that they had no additional sources of income. Apart from Lola Larrosa, perhaps, of whom we know few details, these women all came from a relatively privileged background; and although many of them were divorced, they, more often than not, were well connected and moved within the kind of social environment where they were able to meet another affluent husband (literary circles, upper-class family connections, and so on). Furthermore, Clorinda Matto de Turner (see footnote 7) and Juana Manso, as we will see later, became the targets of public protest and violent verbal, and to an extent physical abuse. The

prevailing machismo Fletcher speaks about might have been temporarily hibernating with regards to women's writing *per se* but it quickly surfaced again when some of these writings' contents became known.

Women's access to public education took place around seven or eight years after that of men. There are no great differences in this sense and at the time in question between the sexes. The women who had access to a public school settled in a profession which was then appropriate for *señoritas*, namely teaching; but it was a badly paid job and the transition from teacher to writer was a common strategy to increase their income.

The cultural panorama of the era undoubtedly provided a fertile background for the emergence of women writers. The Buenos Aires of the nineteenth century provided unprecedented opportunities for them considering the efforts by the government to educate the population. Female writers were not an isolated phenomenon; this was the century of anarchists, socialists and the first female university graduates; more so than the female writers, these latter normally enjoyed favourable connections. Alicia Moreau de Justo, for example, was a physician and her husband had founded the Socialist Party. The more educated women became, the more they also became visible in public life.

It is no coincidence, for example, that Eduarda Mansilla was the most prominent of the female writers of that generation. Her surname was fundamental in the dissemination of her writings, regardless of her talent. Prejudices against women who work for women have always existed. A good example is Ricardo Rojas' comments talking about Juana Manso: he stated that she was as mannish as Sarmiento himself (1925, cited in Pierini, 2002:458). The traditional perception of women, then as well

as now, is well known; if she is pretty she is not clever; and if she is unattractive she can be clever but then she is ‘not a real a woman’.

The first pages in the novel *Amalia* by José Mármol (1851), today a classic of Argentine literature, draws a picture of a young woman, alone at home and hoping for love to arrive in her life soon. She is reading a book of poems by the famous French writer Alphonse de Lamartine. The scene in question defines the figure of the female Romantic reader that emerged at the time who, far from representing a purely sentimental woman, points to the appearance of a female reader who is educated and committed to the national project. Most of the intellectuals during this era dreamt of this ‘ideal female reader’: Sarmiento, Frías, Cané, Gutiérrez, Mármol himself, and even Alberdi (Batticuore, *El Clarín*, 02/09/2006).

The ideologues who sought to define Argentine nationality according to non-transferable patterns of European civilization imported an exotic institutional model, a cultural product which was meant to adjust itself to the New World but simultaneously retained its original meaning in some areas; consequently, the nascent nation tried to mould itself to the ideological and cultural background of the Old Continent (Poderti, 1999:108). This historical process also contained women’s visions of the nation. It is in this sense that the works of Juana Manuela Gorriti<sup>120</sup> and Juana Manso<sup>121</sup> will be

---

<sup>120</sup> Gorriti came from a privileged background. Her father was a hero of the Independence War and an officer in the Unitarian Army. Most of the family, including Juana Manuela was forced into exile to Bolivia after the defeat of the Unitarians in 1831. At fifteen, she married Isidoro Belzú who later became president of Bolivia. They had two daughters, but the marriage was not a happy one and Gorriti left her husband to live in Lima with her children. Separated from Belzú but not divorced she started a new life with the businessman Julián Sandoval who was a relative of General Orbegoso who would become president of Peru; with Sandoval she had a son and a daughter. She did not return to Argentina permanently until 1875. Even then she travelled back and forth to Bolivia and Peru settling in Buenos Aires only in the final years of her life.

<sup>121</sup> Manso’s father also participated actively in the Independence struggles. The Mansos were Unitarians and went into exile, first to Montevideo in 1840 and a year later to Rio de Janeiro where Juana married the violinist Fransisco de Saá Noronha whom she accompanied to the United States on an artistic tour. They had two daughters but Juana regularly wrote to her parents of the maltreatment she suffered by her husband. In 1852 Noronha abandoned her and the children and left them in a state of financial hardship.

analyzed. Gorriti, although her stories and style of writing were clearly critical of the female condition and that of other marginalized groups, was not a feminist and she moved within the parameters of what was considered acceptable. Juana Manso on the other hand, unlike Gorriti, transgressed these boundaries. She has recently been named a pioneer of Argentine feminism. Because of her brusque style and hitherto taboo themes she and her work were rejected by the public during all her life. Both writers, together with a number of other female authors, constitute a generation of key importance in the development of Argentine literature which at that point was still at its infant stages (Poderti, 1999:109).

In reality, the women (and men) who were literate<sup>122</sup> at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Argentina and the rest of Latin America represented only a limited part of the population which portrayed the 'state of barbarism' which these regions had to face. Therefore, when women found entrance into journalism as editors and publishers (the first female newspaper was *La Aljaba* in 1830, but a more pronounced surge of weeklies for women started around 1870), they systematically hid behind the much repeated slogan "The degree of civilization of a people can be measured by the extent of education afforded to women" (Batticuore, 2006).

---

In 1853 she settled permanently in Buenos Aires. Unlike Gorriti, Manso was forced to work for a living. Far ahead of her time, Manso wrote the first course book on Argentine History and historical novels in which she criticized the neglect by the state of the most vulnerable members of society - women and children; she was an accomplished public speaker condemning oppression and racial discrimination. Manso was extremely knowledgeable in Argentine law; she published didactic works as well as theatrical plays and poetry. Apart from organizing conferences, she edited newspaper articles and campaigned for the provision of libraries and cultural centres. Juana dedicated her entire life to public education; as a teacher, she was a precursor of scientific and social pedagogy. Representing the principles of Pestalozzi and Froebel, she believed in child activities in accordance with individual interests and spontaneity. Manso was a fervent opponent of corporal punishment and initiated a reward system for good behaviour; she also introduced English Language classes. During Sarmiento's presidency, Manso became the first spokeswoman of the Department for Education and implemented her teaching methods in thirty four institutions. In 1871 she became the first female member of the *Comisión Nacional de Escuelas* for which she suffered brutal verbal abuse in order to force her resignation.

<sup>122</sup>The first school for boys was opened in 1817, the first girls school in 1823. In mid century, 1855, the literate population in Buenos Aires had reached 48% (51% men, 44% women), (Fletcher, 2007:12).



Sarmiento defended this belief more fervently than any of his contemporaries. Even before writing *Facundo* (1845) he published in *El Progreso de Chile* a supplement dedicated 'exclusively' to female readers. In a jocular, often provocative, but always conspiratorial tone, he tried to enlighten them and mould their republican sensitivities. But Sarmiento was less preoccupied with educated women than with those of the lower classes who hardly could read and who were especially predisposed to sentimentalism (Batticuore, 2006).

As the century wore on, this ever increasing number of women readers motivated the efforts of other writers who sought fame and popularity, and inspired commercial strategies amongst publishers. "When I write I always think of a woman", Lucio Mansilla confessed in 1890, pinpointing the key to his success with the public. Then and now, women readers have moulded the prose of male writers who employ a language and themes which they presumed to suit female tastes. Almost as Sarmiento would have wished for, from the time of their first appearance until now, the romantic novel has succeeded in establishing the habit of reading.



Juana Manuela Gorriti<sup>123</sup>

Juana Manuela almost saw the arrival of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She died in 1892. Immediately, the government declared that it would carry the cost of 2000 Pesos of her funeral. Her burial became an important social event - 'everybody' attended. More than twenty articles about her life, her suffering, and her death as well as many biographies appeared during the following months, remembering her life and work. (Zucotti, 2005:96)

During her lifetime, Gorriti was the most widely read woman writer in Latin America, although her work subsequently slipped into oblivion. Only in the last ten years or so has it been rediscovered by feminist critics. Francine Masiello's study of women, nation, and literary culture in Argentina (1997) navigates the area between the binary oppositions that have traditionally divided Argentine culture and society to find the spaces occupied by women that do not fit into the dichotomies of civilization and barbarism, public and private, federalist and Unitarian, city and interior.

The presence of an ever growing number of educated women also led to the entry of more women into the field of literature, with respect to fictional writing, only a few years later than their male counterparts.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Pictures of both women have been inserted here because one of the reasons for Juana Manso's life long rejection was her physical appearance which was deemed to be 'manly', unattractive, and sometimes even ugly. The pictures are meant to give an idea of what a woman at the time should or should not look like. While Manso's beauty, or the lack of it is, of course, of no importance, I notice that on all her published photographs she is at least twenty years older than all the other famous female writers whose photos were taken when they were at their prime. This surely is no coincidence.

<sup>124</sup> Esteban Echeverría wrote *El matadero* in 1838 (published in Argentina in 1871) and is considered the first Argentine fictional narrative. Seven years later, in 1845, *La quena* by Juana Manuela Gorriti appeared serialized in a newspaper in Lima (Fletcher, 2007:13).

Juana Manuela Gorriti is one of the few women writers of the period to have earned a significant place in Argentine literary history among the many writers participating in the attempt to define a national self which shaped national politics at the time (Urraca, 1999:152).

Although they could never forget their lack of opportunities, legal rights, or social status, the women of the Generation of 1880 nonetheless were convinced that they were witnessing the birth of a marvellous new era: the age of progress. The impact of the idea of progress on Argentine women's thinking can hardly be overstated; in fact, it is difficult to find a contemporary article about women's issues that does *not* mention progress or evolution. Rarely has a society had such a clear awareness of living between the end of one era and the beginning of a new one, but a survey of Argentine writing from 1870-1914 reveals that the belief in a new age of progress was accepted across boundaries of class, gender, and ideology (Frederick, 1997:1).<sup>125</sup> Martínez and other women viewed their century as revolutionary as well as evolutionary. Progress, they believed, would cure the ills of the past: tyranny, ignorance, poverty, and, significantly, the oppression of women.

In her short story, "*La quena*",<sup>126</sup> Gorriti clearly expresses this belief. Set in Lima, shortly after the conquest, Hernán, a mestizo, speaks to his Spanish lover, Rosa, about hidden Inca treasures and says:

---

<sup>125</sup> In 1897, Elia Martínez summed up the exuberance of the times by describing the 1800s as "el siglo de la libertad, del progreso, de la gloria, de la electricidad." (1897:217, in Frederick 1997). Electric lighting thus became more than a technological feat: it was a metaphor for the arrival of spiritual light.

<sup>126</sup> All of Gorriti's stories analyzed in this section have only been available to me in their English translation and are from the collection "*Dreams and Realities*"; their translation from the Spanish is by Sergio Waisman.

Hernán, son of an Inca princess and a Spanish aristocrat, and Rosa, also the daughter of a Spanish nobleman, are lovers; but their love is doomed since she has been promised in marriage to the wealthy and powerful Judge Ramírez. Unbeknown to the lovers, they are betrayed by a black servant and Rosa is married off to the judge thinking that Hernán is dead. Hernán becomes a priest and takes his mission abroad. After his return to Lima, the two see each other by coincidence in church and realize the betrayal. Rosa is finally killed by Ramírez and her body taken by Hernán to a paradise-like Inca valley

A day shall come in which man's science will discover those treasures; but by then men will be free and equal, and they shall use the wealth to serve humanity! The reign of worries and despotism will have ended, and only man's genius will rule the world, whether it reside upon the head of a European, or upon that of an Indian. (2003:7)

Relating the story of his childhood to Rosa, Hernán tells about a conversation between him and his mother, María, who is guilt ridden for appropriating a piece of Inca gold from the treasure in order to finance her journey to Spain where her son had been taken by his father against her wishes. She says to him:

Hernán, my beloved son, promise me that my crime will not have been fruitless.... Our prophecies speak of a liberator who will live a long time among our enemies, learn the conqueror's science, and return to break the chains enslaving our homeland, leading it to a greater glory and happiness. Promise me that you shall be that liberator, but that to liberate our brothers you will not use the hatred that demands the blood of our masters, but rather the enlightenment that shall make us their equals - enlightenment, the most sublime and certain means of liberation. (19)

One of the most effective female definers of Argentine national identity, she was concerned with finding ways of expressing and resolving the fraught relationship between the country's past and its turbulent present<sup>127</sup> as it affected their gender (Urraca, 1999:152) and other marginalized groups. It is not that relevant that *La quena*

---

where he guards and mourns her ever after, playing *the quena*, a reed flute played by indigenous groups in Andean tradition.

<sup>127</sup> The national turmoil and political instability of the Rosas dictatorship and its aftermath.

is set in Peru during early colonial rule while Gorriti wrote this story during the Rosas dictatorship - hostility toward the 'other' and violent struggle were present in both settings. She laments and criticizes these attitudes and events across time and space. For Gorriti and her protagonists, the basis of identity can ultimately not be found in present space and time, nor in a projected future but in the recognition and articulation of memories of foundational events in the past (Berg, 1994:70). Travels and exile provided Gorriti with clear perceptions of the junctures where past and present met - "mirajes encantados", as she called them, that lent an exceptional optimism to her stories.

In "*La quena*", the story moves within a triangle of displaced people: an Inca prince who belongs to a kingdom now officially annihilated; his Spanish lover, alienated from her homeland and everything she knows well; and a black female slave who betrays the couple in exchange for the promise of being sent back to Africa in order to be reunited with her children. The convergence of these three exiles, with all their corresponding anxieties and insecurities, is explosive; the resolution of their situation seems impossible. Because of their non-belonging to any nationality or core identity, the three of them are incapable of resolving their personal relationships. They do not have a national space.

Gorriti particularly highlights the suffering of women and, even more so mothers, caused by such conflicts. Because of insufficient legislation for women's protection, men can destroy home life, take away the children, and leave women with nothing but their grief (particularly if they were not legally married, as is the case in this story). Demanding an explanation of Hernán's father for not keeping his promises, he says to her:

“María,” the Count answered, “the promises a man makes to a woman, especially to the mother of his son, are not like those that bind him to other men. They are rather like those we make to ourselves: subject to change with unexpected circumstances. If you love me, and if you love your son, you must understand that neither he nor I can confine our future to the small circle of a country lost among deserts just because I made a stupid promise to you one day. In any case, he added in a resolved tone, “my son - and you, if you wish - is leaving with me tomorrow. Good-bye!” (8)

Here, the Count clearly represents the patriarchal state and the ruling class if one superimposes the story on the civil war during the Rosas era. Independence was meant to bring new beginnings marked by enlightened thought, peace, and equality - changes that the new republican states had promised. And yet, none of it had become true.

Gorriti often uses elements of this conflict between Civilization and Barbarism that was central to the nineteenth-century in order to display other traits of the same dichotomy. In her work she frequently uses the conventional image of the family as a model for political stability. “*La quena*” initiated a Romantic discourse that seemed to reject those intellectual trends which sought to consolidate an ideology that elevated the city, the white ‘race’, and Euro-centrism as the ideal model for republican civilization (Mataix, 2003:36).

This is not to say, however, that Gorriti was free of racial prejudices. As already mentioned, Francisca, the black slave in *La quena*, is portrayed as a traitor; and later on, a mysterious man providing a potion to poison the beautiful Rosa is described as “...old and had a repugnant appearance; his vulturelike eyes, curved nose, and thin lips revealed that he belonged to the degenerate race of Jacob”. (27)

In *El ángel caído* the black slaves end up as evil criminals motivated by a violent desire for vengeance that ultimately triumphed over any noble characteristics they might have had (in Mataix, p. 110). It can be said, therefore, that although Gorriti suggested an alternative, more integrated vision of “the nation” by introducing the cultural and social vindication of the “Indian” into her stories, she moved clearly within the established canon when it came to black people, mulattoes, and the Jewish “race”. According to Luis Miguel Glavé (1996), “black characters in these narratives occupied a threatening and corrupt role; they were carriers of those values which the ideology of the modernizers sought to eradicate. The narrative’s protagonists - the *criollo* elite, including women, seemed to feel threatened by members of a different, ‘other’, subordinated, and popular culture... Blacks seemed to be possessed by destructive sexual desires; the *low* sexual becomes yet another *low* with the racial fixation of the repression”. The ‘others’, those from below, were socially peripheral but symbolically central in the romantic fiction written by women.

Apart from “*La quena*”, Gorriti’s stories “*If You Do Wrong, Expect No Good*” and “*Treasure Of The Incas*” were also part of this contradictory structure of race, class and gender relations which reveal different criteria within the indigenous and female discourse of the time that can be discovered in her work. Rape as a form of direct oppression of the indigenous by whites, of women by men; disrupted childhood and displaced persons appear in this discourse - a discourse corroborated by the most cruel reality of the time (Denegri in Glavé, 1996).

In Buenos Aires, as well as in Lima and Mexico, the publication of women's magazines became very frequent during the first decades of the new republics.<sup>128</sup> Male writers, producers of new ideologies in the lively discourse of nationhood which dominated the era, were preoccupied with the role of women in this 'imagined community'. Articles by women were a daily feature in these magazines and the common message was to afford women the role of 'the angel of the home'. Female writers demanded respect for this role within the home which they made into a sanctuary against tyranny but also stressed the need for female education, which they did not perceive as in conflict with their domestic duties.

The prevailing discourse of republican motherhood was used by female writers to defend their female rights, carve out a space for women in the formation of the nation, reflect upon their rights and develop female education. This middle-class discourse of motherhood in which these women engaged has to be viewed as a step towards confrontation, consciousness-raising, and female struggle at the birth of the nation (Masiello, 1989a, in Glavé). This was not only the case in Buenos Aires but also in Lima, where Juana Manuela Gorriti edited *La Alborada* and also held *tertulias* on a regular basis.

Gorriti's commitment to women's issues sparked the interest of both men and women. Abel Delgado, for example, author of an essay entitled 'La educación social de la mujer', not only addressed the perspective of separate male and female spheres but also lamented the resulting fragmentation of society. While maintaining the view that

---

<sup>128</sup> The first female edited paper, *La Aljaba*, appeared as early as 1830, after Rosas came to power. *La Aljaba* focused mainly on domestic issues. In their opening prospectus, the editors stated since *La Aljaba* belonged to its female readers, it would present a female discourse, and say "nothing that will offend your delicate nature." The paper would be in favour of topics "fitting to the orbit of female duty, showing you the pillars of religion, the August temple of morality, and all of the paths that will lead you therein" (Shumway, 2005:129).



the domestic sphere was an exclusively female domain, he also justified the participation of women in law and politics: “La política interesa a las mujeres lo mismo que nos interesa a los hombres, y sería un grave error asegurar lo contrario..., y conviene a la sociedad entera que la mujer ponga en ello sus muy delicadas manos y su agudo entendimiento” (1892).<sup>129</sup> The use of expressions like “sus muy delicadas manos” suggests that even progressive thinkers like Delgado were trapped in the prevailing perceptions of what constitutes the masculine and the feminine (although the expression could also be understood in the sense that Delgado perceived women as particularly sensitive). He did recognize, however, that women’s separate sphere was affected by what men did and that activities defined by women in their own sphere influenced and even set constraints and limitations on what men might choose to do because he also wrote: “El hombre puede estar siempre donde la mujer está, prestarla un inmenso apoyo, dispensarla sus consejos; mientras que la mujer no puede estar siempre donde está el hombre ni ayudarlo, siquiera en su opinión ilustrada, en las diversas tareas y cuestiones de la vida.”<sup>130</sup> This statement clearly demonstrates that men like Delgado experienced the exclusion of women from issues like politics and culture as an aspect in gender relations that afforded a certain isolation, indeed, even a certain loneliness to men as well as to women which defeated the very object of having a wife (husband, partner) in the first place.

National consolidation, until that time, had mainly been debated in literary gatherings hosted by women for male and female participants (Carlson, 1988:49). The already mentioned *tertulias* hosted by Mariquita Sánchez had been a particularly

---

<sup>129</sup> Politics are interesting to women just as they are to men and it would be a grave mistake to claim the opposite... and it benefits the whole of society that woman should put her delicate hands and her astute understanding to these matters.

<sup>130</sup> “A man can always be where his wife is and lend her immense support, give her his advice; but a woman cannot always be where her husband is, nor help him, even with her enlightened opinion, in the diverse tasks and questions of life.”

notorious meeting venue for heated discussions of literature, culture, and patriotism during the independence struggles and were as significant a space for the exchange of ideas as they became again later in the 1940s (Urraca, 1999:153) when Victoria Ocampo became the most celebrated hostess of such gatherings.

Although Gorriti's female protagonists belong to either the Federal or the Unitarian camp, they do so only through their background and male family ties. Their loyalty is not directed towards either one or the other political ideology but to individuals to whom they are linked emotionally. They criticize and, at the same time, sympathize with both factions' causes - not because they were politically inept but because they perceived the magnitude of the bloodshed and personal loss as far greater evils than political victory or defeat.

In this sense Gorriti's female characters are frequently torn between love and loyalty and ultimately mourn the dead on both sides. In "The Dead Man's Fiancée" (*La novia del muerto*), Vital, daughter of a Federalist learns of the time and date of an attack on Unitarian troops by the Federalists. In love with a Unitarian officer, Horacio Ravelo, she finds her conscience in turmoil: "If I do not speak, I lose him; if I speak, I betray my father...." (77). 'Lover becomes soldier' (80) and follows the bugle call into battle. Unbeknown to Vital, Horacio is executed by a Federalist firing squad. The battle in full swing, the narrator states:

The unfortunate women whose dear ones were in the defeated army did not know of their fate; those mothers, sisters, and wives had to spend the entire night in their houses tormented by the unbearable uncertainty of not knowing whether they lived or not. (82)

The battlefield teeming with Unitarian bodies, Vital's chaperone informs her of a gruesome task which unites women from both sides across political differences:

Vital! Vital!" the good lady shouted as she came in. "Come with me, my daughter; your father has given permission for you to carry out an act of charity. Do you know what it is? It is to bury the unfortunate Unitarians who were executed by firing squad yesterday afternoon in the plaza. Quiroga has said that they may be buried, but under the condition that it be their mothers and their wives who escort them to their graves. Mother of God! Poor children! All of my hatred has turned to pity. Let us go, my daughter, let us go help carry out this painful duty. (83)

In "*The Mazorquero's Daughter*" (*La hija del mazorquero*),<sup>131</sup> the theme is similar. Night after night, Roque Black-Soul carries out his duty of finding and killing opponents of the regime. His daughter, Clemencia, is very distressed about her father's violent pursuits. Unbeknown to him, she seeks out his victims' families and tries to ease their pain and hardship by taking money, food, and clothes; because "...if it was not possible for her to take him away from it, at least to offer God a life of suffering and atonement on his behalf." (87)<sup>132</sup> Torn between the love to her father and her conscience, she informs a victim to be when she learns of the time and place of a planned assassination. In the end, Clemencia carries out her moral duties when she is

---

<sup>131</sup> The Mazorca referred to Rosas' secret police force created to secure his power in Argentina by seeking out his opponents whom they persecuted with extreme violence and atrocity. The Mazorca took its name from the corn husk that appeared on the emblem of this organisation.

<sup>132</sup> The idea of women's suffering for the redemption of men's sins clearly points to the marianismo ideal that even progressive women like Gorriti frequently used in the characterisations of her heroines. Gorriti's choice of name - Clemencia - is no coincidence; Roque always utters her name when he returns home from his killing sprees. Gorriti clearly underlines the double burden this young woman is carrying: to compensate for his sins in this life in order to be treated with clemency in the next.

mistakenly killed by her father who is subsequently reformed by his daughter's sacrifice.

As we can see, Gorriti was particularly concerned about the female victims of the Rosas regime. However, she sometimes also points to the fact that men too become entangled in divided loyalties. In "The Black Glove" (*El guante negro*), it is the male protagonist, Wenceslao, who, given an ultimatum by his Unitarian lover, Isabel, betrays his father, Ramirez, by switching to the enemy's side. Enraged by his son's treason, his father plans to kill him but is found out by the boy's mother, Margarita, who, in turn, stabs her husband to death.

In Gorriti's stories, mothers are never plagued by divided loyalties; their only concern is their children's welfare, the securing of which justifies any means and sacrifices. Fiercely arguing, Ramirez reminds Margarita that it had always been her conviction that it was better to die than break your word and lose your honour. "But" she answers crying, "I was a wife then; now I am a mother!"... I want my son to live", says Wenceslao's mother, "even if it is in a world of ruins" (121), and plunges the knife into her husband's chest.

Similarly, in "*La quena*", Francisca, the slave says as she counts her reward money:

In exchange for a mother's being returned to her children, two lovers have been thrown into immense despair, a father, a wife, and a husband will be dishonored... and who knows what else may happen?... I am saving myself, and taking my vengeance! To save myself and take my vengeance at once! What fortune! Freedom! Vengeance! I salute you. My land! My children! I shall see you soon! (24)

The crimes committed by mothers - María's stealing the Inca gold to see her son again, Margarita's murdering her husband to save her son, and Francisca's treason in order to be reunited with her children - all become justified because these women answer to a 'higher law', so to speak, than that created by man: that of the bond between a mother and her children. Even Gorriti's racial prejudices seem to wane in the case of Francisca as she passionately describes the woman's burning desire to see her children again (and her land, which follows closely in importance).

Another recurring theme is that of ghosts or 'unreal beings'. Vital, in "The Dead Man's Fiancée", after discovering Horacio's body on the battlefield, for ever after roams the scene of death; a never changing figure shrouded in white veils who finds happiness only in madness. Isabel, in "The Black Glove", guilty of Wenceslao's death by making him change his allegiance, regularly appears on the scene of executions by Rosas, also covered in shrouds and singing in a doleful voice. María, in *El lucero del manantial* also becomes a ghost roaming the *pampas* after losing her father, her husband, and her son.

These women, unable to recover from the death of loved ones, remind the reader of individual tragedies and are a metaphor for national tragedy. Their ghostly existence represents an unresolved past that lives on in the present, particularly for women because these tragedies influence their lives even though the location for solving national issues has moved from the battlefield into parliament. Here, Gorriti criticizes the non-acknowledgement of women's contributions and sufferings during the attempts to consolidate the nation.

The ghosts of the past, particularly in her later stories, after she returned to Argentina, also symbolize the persistence of memory of her childhood when the

country's spirit was still drenched with the euphoria of the victory in the independence struggles (Urraca, 1999:166).

According to Masiello, Gorriti's women blurred the boundaries of the Unitarian and Federal discourses as well as the urban and regional conflicts; they identified invariably with the indigenous question, acted as mediators in the confrontation between the dominant and oppressed groups, and undermined the traditional authority of print culture in order to insert a female alternative in the field of knowledge and national history (1997:67).

Coming to terms with the past was essential for Gorriti if the country was to have a viable prospect for the future. She associated herself with the generation of 1837 - Sarmiento, Alberdi, Echeverría, Mármol, and others - but unlike these intellectuals, she understood the past to be an integral part of Argentina's identity and not - as the 'generation' did - as a failure.



**Juana Manso**

Juana Manso died in 1875. Her body had been without burial for two days. She had been denied a tomb in Chacarita and Recoleta (see footnote 13). '*La Manso*', Doña Juanita, Juana *la loca* had been denied the administration of the Last Rites by a Catholic priest. A convert to Protestantism since many years before, she refused to be converted back to Catholicism on her deathbed. Not until 1915, when public education became perceived as an adequate tool to assimilate European immigrants, were her remains moved to the mausoleum for (female) teachers in Chacarita (Zucotti, 2005:96)

As a follower of the Romantic Movement and rational thought that marked her era, Manso understood that humanity never regressed but that progress was its inevitable destiny. In accordance with the ideas of the Enlightenment and Rousseau's reflections on the importance of education, she sought to eradicate slavery and racism and fought

against prejudice and intolerance which, like we have seen in Gorriti, included tensions related to the extermination of the indigenous peoples. She also pointed out the necessity to overcome social conventions in order to achieve happiness. Manso disputed a number of cultural traditions including traditional family life and religious doctrine. She frequently expressed her disagreement with the dominance of the Catholic Church. In her article “Libertad de conciencia”, Manso calls for an end of hostile attitudes among the different religious communities in Buenos Aires:

Jew and Catholic, Christian and Muslim, are all children of God  
and those who forgive here on earth will be forgiven in Heaven.”  
(Manso, 1854c:55, in Southwell, 2005:119).

Manso clearly expressed her disagreement with Catholic domination:

With regard to the Roman Catholic clergy, they have had mankind  
in their hands for eighteen centuries, only to try to annihilate it.  
This city [Buenos Aires] has fallen into the hands of the Jesuits, and  
for the last seven years all the women have been dragooned into secret  
religious associations so that for a heretic like myself there is  
only unremitting hatred and war. (Manso, 1868, p. 398 in Southwell, 2005:118-9)

Manso’s anti-clerical views were only one side of her ideology that earned her rejection and isolation. Of the two novels she wrote, *Los misterios del Plata* is known for its criticism of the Rosas dictatorship - it did not create a stir amongst its readers since it merely suggested a change within the established order. Her second novel,

however, *La familia del Comendador*<sup>133</sup>, proposed a revolutionary overthrow of precisely that order.

The principal themes of this story are racism and slavery, social injustices that most certainly touched Manso during her time in Brazil before the abolition of slavery; and I would like to speculate that in that country the novel might have enjoyed much greater popularity than in Argentina. The story was first published in instalments by Manso herself in her own journal *Álbum de señoritas* whose publication had to cease after only eight issues since it was not as successful as Manso had hoped for. In 1854, she decided to publish *La familia* in book form. Lea Fletcher compares *La familia* with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* - both stories were "appreciated by the intelligent and unknown by the majority of readers" (1994:110).

In *La familia*, the relationship between Gabriela, daughter of a white family, and Alina, her young slave, is one of friendship. When Gabriela has to leave, the narrator says:

...llegadas a la puerta se arrojaron una en los brazos de la  
otra, allí no había esclava ni ama, ni blanca ni negra,  
había dos mujeres afligidas, cuyos corazones nivelaba el  
dolor y la amistad. (83)

---

<sup>133</sup> The protagonist of *El comendador*, Gabriel das Neves, is the rich owner of an enormous sugar plantation in Brazil and of a great number of slaves whom he and his wife and cousin, the devious and greedy Carolina, treat abominably. They have two daughters, Gabriela and Mariquita, and a son, Pedro and the whole family obeys the wishes of Gabriel's mother, Doña María who is very wealthy in her own rights. Her older son, Gabriel's brother, Juan, is mentally fragile since in his youth his mother refused to let him marry an English protestant girl; ever since, he has been living with a mulatto woman, Camila, who had born him two children, Emilia and Mauricio who returns from Paris where he has successfully finished a medical degree. Neither these two grandchildren, nor their mother are recognized as family by Doña María. In order to keep all the wealth in the family, Doña María suggests Gabriela should be married to her uncle Juan. However, the girl is in love with a medical student, Ernesto, of a respectable but far less affluent family. To avoid the marriage, she escapes to a convent with the help of her slave, Alina, who dies from the physical punishment she receives for her refusal to disclose Gabriela's whereabouts. Ernesto rescues Gabriela from the convent at the same time as Doña María falls terminally ill. On her deathbed she repents her cruelties and experiences a complete reformation of character. Finally, everybody is allowed to marry their chosen partners, Mauricio is included in the will, and the slaves are given their freedom.



Later on, Doña María's mulatto grandson, Mauricio, returns from France where he had studied medicine. Now a qualified doctor he declares:

*Le importaba poco lo que la familia le pudiera hacer, había  
llegado el día en que les hablaría de igual, no como esclavo,  
sino como hombre, cuyos derechos no son ilusorios, sino  
verdades, que aunque desconocidas o atropelladas, son siempre  
argumentos irresistibles del lenguaje de la razón y de la  
conciencia. (104)*

As the story progresses, firmly entrenched power relations not only experience a radical change but become practically reversed. At the beginning, Doña María, the tyrannical matriarch of the family, and the devious Carolina, her daughter-in-law, both represent those traditionally in power in terms of class and 'race'. Manso intentionally portrays these two characters as the "villains" of the story. Alina, the slave girl as well as the two younger daughters, Gabriela and Mariquita represent a new generation of women - one without racial or social prejudices.

Here, the readers who occupied the same ideological and social spaces as Doña María and, therefore, identified with her, would have started to feel somewhat uncomfortable; then, Alina dies saving Gabriela's life as a consequence. Now, this would not have bothered anybody since this sort of loyalty would have been expected of a slave and her death would merely have caused an inconvenience; but at the same time Carolina's ignorant and uncouth actions produce precisely the opposite outcome to what she had intended - disclosure of Gabriela's hiding place. Alina stays true to her word and keeps her friend's secret while Carolina not only becomes the author of

her own defeat but also inadvertently reinforces the new, progressive attitude of the younger women.

The slight discomfort felt by the readers so far turn into alarm bells when Doña María, on her death bed, experiences total reformation. She not only allows her two remaining grandchildren, Juan and Mariquita, to marry a black woman and the mulatto grandson respectively, but also leaves her entire fortune to the eventual offspring of these unions.

The profound dislike and mistrust of black people and those of mixed race has to be explained briefly at this point in order to demonstrate the extent of Manso's transgressions committed by publishing *La familia del comendador*.

Juana Manso strongly believed in conceptions identified with 'the Spirit of May' - a movement which, in the Río de la Plata territory, referred to the first steps towards independence from Spain and the creation of the first autonomous government. Many intellectuals shared this 'spirit' and the ideas it gestated - emancipation, republicanism, enlightenment, sovereign nation, abolition of slavery, and progress, amongst others. These ideas did not remain confined to the symbolic sphere as the governing juntas enacted progressive reforms dealing with socio-racial relations. The slave trade was officially abolished in 1812<sup>134</sup> and in 1813, The Law of Free Birth assured that children of slaves would be born free, thus placing the end of slavery within the not so distant future (Shumway, 2001:206).

In the military, black officers were recognized as equal to white officers, and in general the military provided a mechanism for social mobility for Afro-Argentines who

---

<sup>134</sup> This ban was subverted and the slave trade continued under different guises until much later, at least until 1840 (Rosal, 1994, cited in Shumway, 2001:206, footnote 14).

flocked to the army as a way to achieve freedom from slavery or to boost their social position. In 1838, the 15,000 Afro-Argentines (these included all persons of more or less pure African descent, known as *negros* or *morenos*, and those of mixed racial ancestry, known as *pardos*. *Pardos* and *morenos* were collectively termed as 'people of color') accounted for almost a quarter of the city's 63,000 inhabitants. By 1887, the year of the next census recording information on race, the community had declined to 8,000, a mere two percent in a rapidly growing city of 433,000 (Goldberg, cited in Andrews, 1979:21). It can be said, therefore, that Afro-Argentines did not constitute a 'problem' given their small, rapidly declining numbers. Furthermore, they were concentrated in Buenos Aires, the place of civilization and progress as opposed to the backward and barbaric countryside which was the *pampas*. The 1827 census revealed that of all the Afro-Argentines who listed a profession, 94 percent worked as manual labourers, divided fairly evenly between skilled, semi-skilled, and un-skilled professions. Only 52 percent of the white population listed such trades (Andrews, 1979:22) and it can be assumed that black men and women worked in jobs that white people were either too few, too proud, or too lazy to take on. Even tough manual and domestic labour became associated with black people, a small proportion of Afro-Argentines worked in trades higher than that of artisans, several were professionals (military officers, pharmacists, school teachers), others owned small businesses. Obviously, the black community did not present a threat, perceived or real, to the white population and Buenos Aires might well have provided a setting in which black people could be painlessly absorbed into wider society, at least in the first decades of the nineteenth century (Andrews, 1979:22).

Nonetheless, constructors of the Argentine nation always sought to create a 'white' country and they left no stone unturned to achieve this goal. Andrews lists a few

reasons for why the Afro-Argentines virtually disappeared from official statistics: many died in the national and international wars that took place during and after the Independence struggles until the mid nineteenth century; mestizaje; low birth and high death rates; the decline of the slave trade after the Law of Free Birth. Furthermore, the use of the term *trigueño* (wheat-coloured) in the census records, which allowed black people to be reclassified as white. This new terminology presented an escape for many from being labelled black but in a wider sense it also contributed to the 'erasure' of blacks from the national identity in an effort to fulfil the dream of a 'white' Argentina (Shumway, 2001:212).

According to Fletcher, however, all of these reasons observed by Andrews, lack sufficient evidence (1994:211). In reality, she maintains, the 'disappearance' of the black and mulatto population coincided with the fall of Rosas who was supported by the majority of Afro-Argentines (1994:212). Rosas had made a special point of courting the black community. He regularly attended their social functions, invited community leaders to his residence for consultation and social events, and so forth. His wife, Encarnación Ezcurra, maintained contact with different Afro-Argentine groups, and his daughter Manuelita was even known to participate in Afro-Argentine dances. In return, a large number of blacks and mulattoes fought with the Federals as soldiers, domestic spies, and mercenaries in the *mazorca* (Shumway, 2001:206). These activities caused no small stir among the Unitarians - whether in exile or at home. Their racism, combined with their hatred for Rosas and the Federal cause now transformed the black population into a symbol for the savagery and barbarism of the Rosas years.

Coming back to Juana Manso and *La familia del comendador*, the novel was published in 1854 - two years after Rosas' defeat when enthusiasm for the Unitarian victory was

still in full swing. To put it mildly, the timing for Manso's attempts to improve 'race' relations could not have been worse. At the very moment when the Unitarians most fervently persecuted the black population, she positions the mulatto Mauricio<sup>135</sup> as a symbol for the way in which to achieve national unity. This was not just radical, it was revolutionary and, of course, totally unthinkable - the readers were outraged (Fletcher, 1994:116).

It is interesting, at this point, to compare Gorriti's and Manso's different views on 'race'. In Gorriti's work xenophobic attitudes towards black people exist alongside the vindication of the indigenous, while Manso displays no racist tendencies at all. Gorriti also seems to concur with what would become a traditional opinion about slavery in Argentina; namely, that most slaves lived a rather comfortable life as house servants in the peaceful homes of friendly and lenient masters (Schávelzon, 2003 in Cottrol, 2007:3). Gorriti portrays 'her' masters not only as lenient but even loving. In the following extract she describes the despicable runaway slave Andrés and his benevolent mistress:

*Era un negro de dieciocho a veinte años, de atrevido continente y  
modales caballerescos desmentidos con frecuencia por groseros  
arranques, que revelaban la lucha de los salvajes instintos de su raza  
con los blancos hábitos de una educación distinguida.  
La avilantez<sup>136</sup> de su porte, la insolente altanería de sus miradas, la  
inflexión sardónica de su voz, todo hacía adivinar en él uno de esos seres  
fatalmente privilegiados, que la imprevisora bondad de nuestras damas*

---

<sup>135</sup> Mauricio clearly presents a challenge to the established social order: 'despite' being of 'mixed race', he has finished a university career; his birthright is finally respected by his dying and reformed grandmother who leaves him a fortune and a number of slaves whom he subsequently sets free; he then falls in love with his white and wealthy cousin who reciprocates his feelings.

<sup>136</sup> 'Avilantez', according to the electronic dictionary of the Real Academia Española, means 'audacity' or 'insolence'.

*arrancaba del humilde seno de sus esclavas para mecerlos sobre sus rodillas mezclados con sus hijas en la perfumada atmósfera de los salones, y que después, arrojados de aquella dorada región por la inflexible ley de las preocupaciones sociales, volvían henchidos de odio y de rabia al círculo estrecho de su mísera esfera, para llevar allí una existencia desesperada.*  
(El ángel caído)

Manso's antiracist and anti-catholic ideas were not the only challenges she presented to the establishment. With her *Album de señoritas*<sup>137</sup> she sets out to attack patriarchal society and its refusal to allow female political participation.

With her articles Manso consistently attempted to reconcile the apparently unsolvable rifts sustained by the dichotomy public/private spheres with the objective to establish a dialogue with the national project at its centre. She proposed a reconsideration of the debate about civilization and barbarism from the home. By placing the scene of this debate in the environment of the home - by attempting to turn the private into a mirror for the public - she inverted two emblematic poles with the objective of addressing political problems and themes fundamental to the imagery of nineteenth century Latin America: Europe/South America, Civilization/Barbarism, Culture/Nature (Area, 2005:16)

Manso presented her readers with an 'other' version of this era with the objective to reveal an alternative view which was traditionally kept in the shadows by a patriarchal system. In the very first issue she informs the readers in no uncertain terms of what the journal was to stand for:

---

<sup>137</sup> The journal had the subtitle *periódico de literatura, modas, bellas artes y teatro*. Manso had published a Portuguese version with the same concept (*O Jornal das Senhoras*) in 1851 during her exile in Rio de Janeiro. The life of that journal was cut short by Manso's return to Argentina in 1852 after Rosas' defeat. The first issue of *Álbum de señoritas* appeared on 1 January 1854 in Buenos Aires.

*Todos mis esfuerzos serán consagrados á la ilustracion de mis compatriotas, y tenderán á un único propósito—Emanciparlas de las preocupaciones torpes y añejas que les prohibían hasta hoy hacer uso de su inteligencia, enagenando su libertad y hasta su conciencia, á autoridades arbitrarias, en oposicion á la naturaleza misma de las cosas... (La Redaccion, Álbum de Señoritas, N° 1, 1/1/1854). (Manso, 1854, in Area, 2005:18).*

*Dios no es contradictorio en sus obras, y cuando formó el alma humana, no le dió sexo- -La hizo igual en su escencia, y la adornó de facultades idénticas— Si la aplicacion de unas y de otras facultades difiere, eso no abona para que la muger sea condenada, al embrutecimiento, en cuanto que el hombre es dueño de ilustrar y engrandecer su inteligencia; desproporcion fatal que solo contribuye á la infelicidad de ambos y á alejar mas y mas nuestro porvenir. Y no se crea que la familia no es de un gran peso en la balanza de los pueblos, ni que la desmoralizacion y el atraso parcial de los individuos no influye en bien ó en mal de la sociedad colectiva (La Redaccion, Álbum de Señoritas, N° 1, 1/1/1854). (Manso, 1854, in Area, 2005:18-19).*

Manso's view of women's abilities and their role in society and nation-building differed significantly from the official image which designated women to carry out domestic duties and to raise future citizens. Nevertheless, far from improving women's position, she created even more fissures with her extreme, even militant discursive clarity. It has to be remembered that the traditional family unit was the basis for a functional

state and the building block for a viable nation. Furthermore, the intact family not only guaranteed reproduction of national values and the advance of state ideology but was also seen as a stabilizing factor of society in order to face the challenges posed by chaos and anarchism (Area, 2005:17).

In Manso's insistence on creating an identity compatible with dignity we are faced with the configuration of a dichotomy whose poles divide and distribute assets, real or symbolic, that become established in the nascent nation. But the above paragraph is not only about assets, it is also, and more importantly, about the spaces of decision making where it was increasingly necessary to include the presence of women so that their dignity would rise from obscurity. In this sense, Manso underpins with solid arguments a different vision of female presence and ability in mastering life's struggles.

It is not difficult to see why Manso's arguments were received as an open threat to the 'civilized' order the new nation was so eager to diffuse among its citizens. If the number of readers of the *Álbum* was small to start with, it dwindled even more after the nature of its content became clear. After only eight issues, publication of the weekly had to cease on 17 February 1854 due to a lack of subscribers.

Juana Manuela Gorriti and Juana Manso shared many ideas about female emancipation and participation in the public arena; however, they used different methods to convey their thoughts to their readers. Gorriti endorsed a 'rebellion' from her standpoint as an individual while Manso advocated a socio-political 'revolution'.

The women, and other subalterns, in Gorriti's stories represent a variety of marginalized groups who, Gorriti is keen to point out, are not only part of the emerging nation but also underline the nation's diversity and the necessity of the



existence of these groups to the national project. Gorriti provides the reader with an alternative view of society in the sense that rather than placing the central, urban, male spaces where politics take place as the background for her narratives, her protagonists act from a peripheral, provincial, female and, therefore, silent location. Gorriti points to the importance of this space and gives a voice to those who dwell in it.

Manso, on the other hand, seems to be fascinated by the brusqueness, force, and directness that prose makes possible; and yet, these words, hard and unadorned - from the pen and mouth of a woman - condemned her to failure in the mind of her audience. Her grievances with society were not limited to the fate of individuals - she tried to raise the consciousness of women in general in order for them to join her in her efforts for education and emancipation.

Manso addressed women with two consecutive aims: firstly, she encouraged intellectual and moral emancipation, linked to popular education, art, freedom from Catholic dogma, and other restricting mechanisms; and secondly, once women had achieved emancipation, their integration into those public positions that would allow them to reform the country and change the pattern by which families and the State functioned (Fletcher, 1994:109).

Manso frequently engaged in public lectures. That alone was a transgression of acceptable female activity since public speaking was associated with power, with the state, and, not least, with the pulpit; but the style and vocabulary that she employed to deliver her lectures often provoked violent (verbal) attacks. So, for example, a letter she received from Enrique M. de Santa Olalla, a teacher become civil servant, in the *Departamento de Escuelas*:

A la Sra. Juana Manso, Da. Juana

Hace algún tiempo que inspiran temores entre sus amigos las muestras visibles de desorganización cerebral que tan gravemente afectan sus facultades intelectuales, y parece que ha llegado el caso de poner algún remedio a tan triste dolencia.

Créame, Da. Juanita, sería muy sensible para las personas que la estiman el ver un día en la Residencia á la «mas preciosa joya» de la Nación Argentina -Tome señora, tome por Dios algunos calmantes.... (in Zucotti, 2005:105)

Even Sarmiento himself, who worked closely with Manso in all questions relating to the education system and the characteristics a modern nation should have, wrote to her from New York:

“Baje U., pues la voz en sus discursos y en sus escritos a fin de que no llegue hasta aquí el sordo rumor de la displicente turba”. (New York, 1867, in Zucotti, 2005:107)

Far from the gentle, whispering voice in which a woman was supposed to express herself, Manso shouts, her style shouts and alienates nineteenth-century Buenos Aires society to the extent of perceiving her as freak (Zucotti, 2005:107). Because her voice became masculine, even those who praised her questioned her femininity, even Sarmiento himself:

Manso, whom I barely knew<sup>138</sup>, was the only man out of three or four million inhabitants of Chile and Argentina who understood my educational work and who, inspired by my thinking, set her shoulder against the edifice she saw was crumbling. Was she a woman? (Sarmiento, 1944 in Southwell, 2005:127)<sup>139</sup>.

We can see that that these women were not extraordinary from a purely artistic aspect - their writings often only hesitantly and sometimes clumsily try to convey the ills of the time to their readers - but they certainly deserve to occupy a place in the historical records of Spanish American literature; not only as founders of a feminist discourse but also as portrayers of reality how they perceived it and as spokeswomen for the image of the 'other' in the nineteenth century. The work of these early women writers presents the foundations, the first steps into a rich tradition of Latin American fiction. Furthermore, the writings of these women hold the additional value of being produced under crucial historical circumstances with scarce previous models to build on, during a time when society and the political environment was decidedly unfavourable and often hostile to women active in the public sphere who, after all, invaded an exclusively male domain. There was a big difference between writing romantic poems, a 'pastime' that could easily be a part of the traditional concept of femininity, and writing stories and novels with critical socio-political content.

According to the psycholinguist, Jerome Bruner (1991), writing has to be situated within the parameters of a constant process of creation and recreation in which

---

<sup>138</sup> It seems significant that Sarmiento, who must actually have known Manso quite well (after all she occupied a relatively important position within the government and had worked with Sarmiento on a number of education-related issues) should say here, that he barely knew her. Could it have been a strategic remark because of her increasingly subversive attitude?

<sup>139</sup> Southwell's translation

culture thrives and grows. Focusing on the problem of literature in the frameworks of writings dedicated to change the state of knowledge or attitudes of society confronts the writer with new problems, like communicating with social groups, social institutions, or mass communication. Here, writing becomes an instrument for saying something to somebody in order to achieve something in the best possible way for a number of existing conditions.

Therefore, writing as a task implies the solution of problems of communication on an individual as well as on a social level. In this sense, a writer's previous knowledge, their disposable resources, their methods of literary production, their experiences, successes and failures in communicating with specific audiences, increase or restrict their possibilities of solving a literal problem with efficiency at any given moment (Bruner, 1991).

Following below is a short analysis of another work, this time compiled by Juana Manuela Gorriti, which also could just be what its title suggests - a collection of recipes - and, therefore, a manual created for female domestic education in order to enhance and refine womanly duties. Like privately written love poems such a book clearly belongs to the essentially female domain; but unlike the poems it presented a vehicle to 'leave' the home and to speak to an audience.

This cookery book is an excellent demonstration for the manner in which nineteenth-century Latin American women could 'legitimately' (not scandalously, like Juana Manso) reach the 'public' as authors, write nations, and build female networks across the region; because, as Pratt suggests, women tend toward international rather than national links in their political and intellectual activities because their exclusion from the nation's politics and culture pushes them toward associations that are gender

based rather than national (1993:55). To some extent, this practice can be compared with the political motherhood movements that have been addressed earlier. Like the mothers who used their traditional role *as* mothers to gain access to the public sphere, the women who participated in writing cookery books in the nineteenth century used their traditional household tasks as a vehicle to public recognition, albeit in a much less spectacular and less contested way.

### Cocina ecléctica

“It is in eating that we first learn something of our power over our own  
life and death, and our capacity to live in company with others”

(Patricia Storace, 1989)

“Si Aristóteles hubiera guisado, mucho más hubiera escrito”.

(Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz cited in Ferré, 1980).

When Gorriti received notice of the imminent publication of a cookery book entitled *La cocina española antigua* by her contemporary, the Countess de Pardo Bazán, she immediately put all her other projects on hold in order to produce her own collection of recipes which she had planned for some time. Iriarte and Torre maintain that Gorriti’s timing was motivated predominantly by the professional desire to thwart competition, demonstrating her professionalism in the publishing business. She also accompanied the book launch with advertising slogans: “Of all my works none is as dear to me as this book which I dedicate to those who appreciate fine cuisine (Gorriti, *Lo íntimo*, p. 89, in Iriarte & Torre, 2005:82).

Cookbooks, which usually belong to the more humble literature of complex civilizations, tell unusual cultural tales. They combine the sturdy pragmatic virtues of all manuals with the vicarious pleasures of the literature of the senses. They reflect shifts in the boundaries of edibility, the proprieties of the culinary process, the logic of meals, the exigencies of the household budget, the vagaries of the market, and the structure of domestic ideologies. The existence of cookbooks presupposes not only some degree of literacy, but often an effort on the part of some variety of specialists to standardize the regime of the kitchen, to transmit culinary lore, and to publicize particular traditions guiding the journey of food from marketplace to kitchen to table. Insofar as cookbooks reflect the kind of technical and cultural elaboration we grace with the term *cuisine*, they are likely, as Jack Goody has argued, to be representations not only of structures of production and distribution and of social and cosmological schemes, but of class and hierarchy (1982 in Appadurai, 1988:3). Their spread is an important sign of what Norbert Elias has called "the civilizing process" (1978)

Latin American male elites have often engaged in efforts to mould women to fit an idealized national image while women have attempted to articulate their own identity. These efforts have often been explored by looking at supposedly deviant forms of behaviour such as prostitution, but it is also possible for women to assert an autonomous voice in traditional domestic spaces such as the kitchen. As Sarmiento, Mármol, and Echeverría repeatedly pointed out, the impulses for inventing the nation emanated from political concepts; society, and culture were linked to gender. Underlining women's obligations in the home and their qualities to cope with almost any situation, the most outstanding intellectuals created an image of the Argentine wife and mother that adapted itself to the projects of the state. As we have noted before, women were considered the reproducing agent for valuable Argentine citizens,

not only in a biological sense but also a cultural one. This thought gave way to the myth of female domesticity which was necessary for the consolidation of the family and also to take advantage of 'female virtues' in public debates. All his life, Sarmiento maintained that "men define the law and women mould our habits and traditions" (see Masiello, 1997).

The women of Argentina utilized the domestic sphere to develop new codes of learning and enhanced their limited opportunities for public circulation by building intra-domestic networks of dialogue (Masiello, 1989b:527). In the prologue to *Cocina ecléctica* Gorriti writes:

El hogar es el santuario doméstico; su ara es el fogón; su sacerdotisa y guardián natural, la mujer.

Ella, sólo ella, sabe inventar esas cosas exquisitas, que hacen de la mesa un encanto, y que dictaron a Brantôme el consejo dado a la princesa, que le preguntaba cómo haría para sujetar a su esposo al lado suyo:

-Asílo por la boca.

Yo, ¡ay! nunca pensé en tamaña verdad.

Avida de otras regiones, arrojéme a los libros, y viví en Homero, en Plutarco, en Virgilio, y en toda esa pléyade de la antigüedad, y después en Corneille, Racine; y más tarde, aún, en Châteaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine; sin pensar que esos ínclitos genios fueron tales, porque -excepción hecha del primerotuvieron todos, a su lado, mujeres hacendosas y abnegadas que los mimaron, y fortificaron su mente con suculentos bocados, fruto de la ciencia más conveniente a la mujer.

Mis amigas, a quienes, arrepentida, me confesaba, no admitieron

mi *mea culpa* , sino a condición de hacerlo público en un libro.  
Y, tan buenas y misericordiosas, como bellas, hanme dado para  
ello preciosos materiales, enriqueciéndolos más, todavía, con la  
gracia encantadora de su palabra. (2)

This statement clearly suggests that it is not Gorriti's intention to subvert women's role as keepers of the home; on the contrary, she points to the importance and merits of the female tasks and obviously feels proud of them. Gorriti's position here might be viewed as extremely reactionary from some progressive feminist perspectives but it can also be viewed as an emphasis on the fact that women can be good cooks and still be active in other fields, as Gorriti herself has demonstrated.

Sociologist Arjun Appadurai has examined the creation of a national cuisine in contemporary India. He found that middle-class women across the subcontinent communicated with one another through the media of cookbooks. In this way they helped dissolve regional, ethnic, and caste boundaries, and thus fostered Indian nationalism (Pilcher, 1996:195). Along those same lines, *Cocina ecléctica* seems to present a collective effort of women to underline unifying elements across Latin American countries in the form of their common love of food and culinary skills; but they also place importance on the cultural differences by introducing national specialities, regional ingredients, and specifically indigenous foods and cooking techniques.

Appadurai points out that in most countries' culinary traditions there is a powerful tendency to emphasize and reproduce the difference between "high" and "low" cuisines, between court food and peasant food, between the diet of urban centres and that of rural peripheries. Imperial cuisines always drew upon regional, provincial, and



folk materials and recipes. Pre-industrial elites often displayed their political power, their commercial reach, and their cosmopolitan tastes by drawing in ingredients, techniques, and even cooks from far and wide. Yet these high cuisines, with their emphasis on spectacle, disguise and display, always seek to distance themselves from their local sources (1988:4). This does not seem to be the case in *Cocina ecléctica*. The range of contributors to this book is as eclectic as the recipes it contains and clearly transcends class, ethnic barriers, and national boundaries.

Gorriti had lived many years in Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia; the women who share their culinary creations come from Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, and the United States. Amongst the Argentine contributors there are a number of European immigrants, amongst them a Polish woman, María Waleiski, who comments on her recipe for 'Polish Salad' that it is a reminder of her fatherland (101). The fact that she uses olives and olive oil suggests that she was not a recent immigrant but had lived in Argentina long enough for her food to become 'fusion' (a term so fashionable these days in the developed West), since neither of the two ingredients is used in traditional Polish cuisine. To be sure, another immigrant was Catalina Pardini who informs us that she is a Neapolitan cook (93).

The social stratification of the contributors to *Cocina ecléctica* is very obvious. Most of them are upper-class, educated and affluent; some are married, others single; they include trained cooks, a nun, and one man. One entry is by a black woman (La negrita Encarnación, cocinera salteña) of whom it can be assumed that she was employed as a cook by a middle-class woman. If that is the case, then credit has to be given to the employer for not appropriating Encarnación's recipe and passing it off as her own; sometimes, a writer admits that the following recipe belongs to her cook but omits his

or her name at the end, signing it with her own name (see, for example 43, *Embozo a la Elvirita*).

Some of the recipes have a national, patriotic theme and seem to emphasize the importance of women's contribution in times of war - a necessity for victory to be achieved. A recipe called *Balas del General* (The General's Bullets) is presented as a dialogue between three women and an officer and takes place on a country estate during the Unitarian/Federal conflict.

-¡Por Dios! General, quédese V. siquiera una hora, para comer  
*un bocado.*

-¡Una hora, General!

-Una hora y nada habrá V. perdido en su jornada.

-¡Oh! bellas señoras mías, no son bocados los que he menester,  
*sino balas.*

-Pues las tendrá V., General. Sí: una hora, una horita, y tendrá  
V. balas: se lo juro.

-¿Verdad?

-¡Verdad! Y todavía, de lo rico.

-¡Ah! ¡Cómo resistir a una promesa hecha con tan dulce voz!

-¡Gracias!

-¡Gracias!

-¡Gracias!- (88)

The recipe for a kind of stuffed, hard boiled eggs follows and when the dish is then put in front of the officer he exclaims:

-¡Exquisitos proyectiles! -clamó el General, saboreando el

*primer bocado -ellos me anuncian la victoria.- (88)*

Other instructions are for typical, national dishes and are described with patriotic pride which is quite obvious because of the enthusiastic, often lyrical prose employed by the writers. The fact that this is often the case not only in describing a certain country's recipe, but highlighting the dishes' indigenous origins, reinforces the notion that these women not only transcended national but also class and racial boundaries with their networking. Edelmira, Gorriti's daughter, writes a recipe for *humintas* (it appears to be a similar dish to the Central American Tamales) and describes in minute detail the preparation and cooking techniques employed by the 'Indians' (27). Carmen de Vela from Buenos Aires (111-2) does the same with a recipe for all kinds of roast meats as well as for the 'correct' preparation of *mate* (158) introducing us to the cooking methods of the gauchos, whom she considers experts in the production of both. Indeed, drink seems to be given the same careful consideration as food, not least because sometimes both merge into one for their particular characteristics. In a recipe for *chicha*, Clorinda Matto de Turner pays homage to this indigenous beer, and this passage is particularly appealing because it not only demonstrates Matto's profound insight into the 'Indians' life but also tells of her tolerant nature. She says about *chicha*:

*Esta bebida hecha de maíz, el más alimenticio de los granos, es el sostén de la vida y de la fuerza en el indio de las sierras de Bolivia y del Perú. Con ella se alimenta; con ella se refresca, y con ella también se embriaga algunas veces, para olvidar sus miserias. (153)*

Other recipes in *Cocina ecléctica* pay homage to the cuisine of a particular country and also point to its ethnic diversity; so, for example, in a recipe for rabbit, a Bolivian writer points out that “serve it to criollos with yellow chillies and with English mustard to foreigners” (99). However, because of the international nature of *Cocina ecléctica* the sharp, nationalist voice from both the linguistic as well as the culinary point of view adopted by the anonymous author of *El cocinero mexicano*<sup>140</sup> is absent.

*Cocina ecléctica*, classed at the time of its publication as a work “without any literary pretensions”, is well worth looking into for a variety of reasons, not least because it demonstrates yet another strategy designed by women to break out of the private and enter into the public discourse while at the same time using their very role as keepers of the house to do so. Furthermore, it must be remembered that publishing long stories or novels was a very expensive undertaking and therefore beyond the reach of writers (male or female) who lacked money or patronage. Most women writers, therefore, usually preferred to write short stories, poetry, travel articles and other short works that could be sold quickly and easily to newspapers (Frederick, 1991:284). Participating in the compilation of a recipe book, published by somebody who was already famous and wealthy, presented a welcome opportunity for many to take a first step into the public sphere without any costs.

*Cocina ecléctica* reveals a profound knowledge of people’s diet and culinary customs and traditions in some of the newly formed Latin American nations; but most of the recipes are not just lists of ingredients, followed by the method of preparation

---

<sup>140</sup> Published in 1831, a decade after independence, this work set the tone for Mexican culinary literature. Possibly the country’s first printed cook book and certainly the most influential, it passed through a dozen editions and served as a model for cooking manuals throughout the nineteenth century. Its author denounced the Spanish Academy and insisted on using words of Mexican origin, even as he praised “truly national” spicy dishes and derided delicate European palates, unaccustomed to chilli peppers (Pilcher, 1996:201)

but contain information about the origins of a dish, where and when it was first tasted by the author, possible rituals at the table and the comments it invited from fellow diners (Cresta de Leguizamón, 2005:67). Often, we also gain information about a dish's nutritional value.

The broad range of contributors to *Cocina ecléctica* mirrors the community of women Gorriti interacted with, a network of friends who, on this occasion, engage in culinary discourse. For Leonardi, this discourse is seriously important, seeing the sharing of recipes as an almost “prototypical female activity” (1989:343) which functions as a mark of women's relationship to each other: “the establishment of a lively narrator with a circle of friends reproduces the social context of recipe sharing - a loose community of women that crosses the social barriers of class, ‘race’, and generation<sup>141</sup>. The giving of a recipe seems to have some interesting relationships to both reading and writing. Like a story, a recipe needs a recommendation, context, a point, a reason to be. A recipe is, then, an embedded discourse, and like other embedded discourses, it can have a variety of relationships with its frame, or its bed. These relationships often reveal the significance of this discourse as a narrative strategy. Like a narrative, a recipe is reproducible, and further, its hearers-readers-receivers are encouraged to reproduce it and, in reproducing it, to revise it and make it their own. Folktales, ghost stories, jokes, and recipes willingly undergo such repetition and revision. Unlike the repetition of a narrative, however, a recipe's reproducibility can have literal results, the dish itself. The literality of human reproducibility, along with the social context of the recipe, contributes to the gendered nature of this form of embedded discourse (Leonardi, 1989:342).

---

<sup>141</sup> Another article by Iriarte and Torre has fittingly been subtitled “Cocina ecléctica o autobiografía de todo el mundo” (*Cocina ecléctica* or autobiography of everybody [1993:45-61]).

The publication of this recipe book was criticized by some of Gorriti's admirers. Her close friend Ricardo Palma told her that writing a cookbook amounts to "prostituting her talent and sullyng the spirit of the pen" (Gorriti in Iriarte & Torre, 2005:81). Here, Palma refers the worst behaviour a nineteenth-century woman writer could display: to prostitute herself, to tarnish herself.

Explaining Palma's disgust, Iriarte and Torre point out that after Gorriti had gained recognition in a space that hitherto had only been open to men they resented her return to this degrading, subaltern place which is the kitchen. Moreover, with her prologue, she appeals to those women who indeed do consider the home their centre of activity and have organized their lives around it. In this sense, Gorriti creates a space for other women to write; they, in turn, now dare to write because they have the "excuse" of the recipe (2005:81). To men like Palma this might have seemed like a conspiracy between all these recipe writers to 'break out' of their homes.

Leonardi maintains that sharing a recipe - both to request and to give one - is, after all an act of trust between women.<sup>142</sup> Trusting the reader of this work to trust me (including male ones) let me share this recipe with you by *Hortensia Gutiérrez de Pinilla* (La Paz-Bolivia) - it seems quite safe:

### **HUEVOS FRITOS (Fried Eggs)**

*Si se quiere hacer de este plato tan común un manjar exquisito,  
dese a la mantequilla con que haya de confeccionarse, la  
siguiente preparación:  
Píquese, muy menudo, una cabeza de cebolla, un tomate y un*

---

<sup>142</sup> She comes to this conclusion after analyzing *Mapp and Lucia* by E. F. Benson in which Lucia is known to make the best lobster recipe ever and is justifiably reluctant at first to share it with anybody in order to retain her privileged position (1989:343ff.)

*diente de ajo, y póngaseles a freír en la mantequilla, hasta que la cebolla torne un ligero color dorado, quítese del fuego y pásese al tamiz. Vuélvase a la sartén y quiébreñse encima los huevos, espolvoreando sobre cada uno, pimienta y sal, y sirviendo desde que las claras hayan blanqueado. No debe olvidarse que este plato tiene por relieve indispensable, tostadas muy delgadas de pan, doradas a la parrilla, que se colocan calientes, formando círculo al centro de la fuente, y, con un huevo, se sirve una en cada plato. (41)*

This recipe represents the fundamental spirit of *Cocina ecléctica*: The dish's sophistication and potential diversity lay in its simplicity. It is inexpensive; anybody could adapt it and make it their own and it would not be out of place on menus around the globe.

In conclusion to this chapter it can be said that in her work, Gorriti unites all the ghosts of the country's past and present: dispossessed Indians, women swept up by conflict, fathers and sons confronted with death, incest, adultery, and many more. Her stories can be understood as a record of the madness of war in nineteenth-century Argentina narrated in a female voice. Gorriti feels deeply disappointed by a political system that has promised to function within a framework of modernity but that repeatedly collapses because the foundations on which it is built are too unstable to support it.

Gorriti's work clearly reflects the political situation at the time from a specifically female standpoint and erases the traditional image of women as private, protected, and preoccupied solely with hearth and home. Throughout her work she describes how

this supposedly tranquil space has been invaded by events happening on the outside and women's inability to control any of these processes; family life, as hitherto known, is no longer possible. Her hope for the future is grounded in the belief that men will realize the detriments of patriarchy and voluntarily will change their attitudes supported by the spirit of modernity that, in the end, will be victorious.

Gorriti's voice is "feminine", soft, and therefore acceptable by society. Manso, on the other hand, has abandoned this "typically" female language. Instead, she has appropriated a language that, so far, had been reserved for men - loud, public, and direct. Unlike Gorriti, she calls upon women to effect changes for themselves by themselves. Manso has realized that men will not willingly give up their privileges inherent in the patriarchal system. She feels that progress and modernity on a national scale will only be possible with the full inclusion of women and other minority sectors in the public, political sphere. In this sense, Manso can clearly be defined as an early feminist.

Today, the recipe and recipe book have become extremely contested and debated means of female communication within feminist theory and practice. Like the concept of motherhood and home-maker, they have been criticized by those who seek to subvert traditional gender-roles. For Latin American women, who agitate in their roles as mothers and house wives they are a vehicle for demanding their rights as such and constitute a powerful tool to justify their claims. Retrospectively, Gorriti's participation in such a publication must be perceived as a highly political statement within her specific cultural parameters



The themes of alienation within the family, the intrusion of the public on the private, and women's efforts to recuperate their own language will also be strongly present in the remaining two chapters of this thesis. The following one will analyze the work of two female authors whose writings reflect the effects of Peronism on women's lives and the traditional class system.

## Chapter 6

### Women's Writing and Peronism

The twentieth century in the history of Argentina has been marked by political and economic turmoil and at the same time by a surge in literary production. As noted by Brooksbank Jones and Davies, crisis and criticism have a common root. The emergence of crisis, however, is followed by the necessity to revise theory; not only to emphasize the often uncomfortable but powerfully productive potential of the crisis but also to re-assess the dominant discourse of culture and its relation to the socio-political conditions that gestated the crisis in the first place (1996:1-2). Goldar attempts to recreate the experiences and atmosphere that prevailed during this period through the texts he analyzes, particularly those written from 1945-55. In doing so, he maintains that “one becomes aware of the enormous power of literature to represent the facts and conflicts of socio-political conditions as they manifest themselves in the spirit and life of real people; while at the same time insisting on its fictitious nature” (1971:13). It can be said then that much of this increased literary output was a reaction to this situation, be it in the form of escapism, partisan expression, or simply a result of writers' determination to make their voices heard.

Despite the abundant works in various fields of social sciences, literary studies addressing the presence of Peronism in the Argentine narrative have been rather scarce. Punte suggests that these isolated attempts of analysis often became trapped in the political question and ended up presenting investigations of the phenomenon of Peronism itself rather than its influence on Argentine literature (2004:1). Consequently, a crucial resource that could have contributed to an understanding of

the historical developments and the political situation at the time remained widely underused. Here, Punte refers to the intense division of Argentine society from 1945 onwards, when Peronism first emerged, and that degenerated into a profound and long lasting rupture between Peronists and anti-Peronists (2004:1).

Ramacciotti and Valobra maintain that the phenomenon that was Peronism can be understood as a space of re-definition of meanings and priorities by those who acted within it, particularly in the period 1946-1955 (in Queirolo, 2004). These authors focus primarily on innovative policies concerned with social services and family law but the same could be said in relation to literary production during the Perón years as well as after his fall from power.

The *peronato* was more than an exclusively political movement. It also produced a number of significant changes in broad areas of popular culture, in matters of dress, speech, and the use of leisure time and its effects tended to produce a feeling of relaxation, a loosening up of formalities and traditional practices (Stabb, 1971:434).

According to Stabb, the relationship between literary activity and the regime may be approached in two ways. First there is the matter of direct actions taken by Perón and his government to influence, encourage, or inhibit literary production.<sup>143</sup> Secondly, there are the more subtle problems of how the *peronato*, the mood and very air of Argentina during what some writers have called *la década absurda*, affected the literary community (1971:435).

During the Perón years, a marked and renewed interest in folklore and regionalism can be observed, although it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this trend was a direct result of government policies - Perón's persistent pursuit of working-class votes,

---

<sup>143</sup>During the early years of the regime, Perón meddled relatively little in literary activity and made few efforts to stifle freedom of expression. By the end of the 1940s, however, the *peronato* began to take an increasingly totalitarian shape. It soon became evident that such matters as the moulding of Argentine reading habits would be a concern of the government (Stabb, 1971:435).

rural or otherwise, is certainly consistent with such strategies (Stabb, 1971:437). However, Winston has observed that Perón was faced with the problem that few truly Argentine myths and symbols existed that could have been revived and used for the nationalist restoration that would have embraced all social classes (1983:328). It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the return to folklore was useful in this sense.<sup>144</sup> However, as Punte points out, it can immediately be observed that works explicitly addressing Peronism and literature emerge at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. This is a somewhat late reaction considering the upheaval this political phenomenon initiated. The commotion Peronism caused in the socio-political terrain was of such magnitude that primary reflections were limited to the discussion of issues in other, more urgent, areas. More time had to pass for these changes to be reflected in literature. Only after Perón's overthrow in 1955 did the development of an intense theoretical confrontation begin marking a new chapter in the history of Peronism. The political movement that had just been ousted stimulated a profound investigation about its nature, causes, and effects (2004:2).

The Peronization of the universities, the seizure of *La Prensa*<sup>145</sup>, and Perón's support of a new association of writers friendly to the regime - ADEA (Asociación de Escritores Argentinos) - had a substantial impact on Argentine cultural life (Stabb, 1971:437).

If Peronist writers united within ADEA, many who opposed the regime could be found in the prestigious *Sociedad Argentina de Escritores* (SADE) (Stabb, 1971:437).

---

<sup>144</sup> Feijóo *et al* also mention this revival of *argentinidad* which resulted in the promotion of folklore. The didactic use of a revised Argentine history was still expressed as a nationalist restoration in the 1960s, inspired by Peronism as well as by nineteenth-century figures such as the caudillos and their militias. A record of significant interest for the reconstruction of this period was *mujeres argentinas* (1968) by Félix Luna and Ariel Ramírez (1996:11). The songs contained in this collection pay homage to pioneering women in the nineteenth century in diverse fields and are a good example for women's role in nation-building.

<sup>145</sup> When *La Prensa* ceased publication after a long period of harassment Perón not only had successfully rid himself of a political enemy but had also deprived an impressive group of writers of access to one of the most widely read literary pages in Latin America (Stabb, 1971:437).

Stabb notes that the younger writers, those born in the decade of the 1920s, most clearly reflected the Argentina of Perón<sup>146</sup>. Most of these authors tended towards the political Left and were essentially committed to probing, defining, and in some cases, to revolutionizing their surroundings. Political themes, therefore, figure prominently in their work (Stabb, 1971:450).

In *Women and Power in Argentine Literature*, Gwendolyn Díaz depicts how in Argentina, and in Latin America in general, the “socio-political landscape becomes the backdrop and often the theme of much of the country's literature” (2007:1). Since the nineteenth century, a number of writers narrated and debated the social, political, and economic dilemmas the Argentine citizens lived, for example, Domingo Sarmiento (*Facundo*, 1845) and José Hernandez (*Martín Fierro*, 1872). Beginning in the 1950s, through the 1970s (a period known as The Boom), authors like Julio Cortázar (*El libro de Manuel*, 1973) and Jorge Luis Borges combined aesthetic experimentation with political engagement. Regarding women writers, Díaz argues that Argentina has been one of the leaders in terms of the numbers of female writers in the twentieth century. In the 1940s, Victoria Ocampo, staunchly anti-Peronist, was the first Argentine woman writer to express political views and admiration for feminism through her literary journal *Sur*. Ocampo believed that “the Latin American woman was doubly alienated, as a woman and as a Latin American (Díaz, 2007:2).<sup>147</sup>

For this chapter two Argentinean female writers, Marta Lynch and Beatriz Guido, have been chosen to demonstrate how the experience of Peronism was translated into female literature; the former, because of her preoccupation with the effects of the

---

<sup>146</sup> Stabb lists a variety of authors, among them essayists and critics like Adolfo Prieto, Juan José Sebrelli, Ismael Viñas, and Noé Jitrik, as well as novelists like David Viñas, Beatriz Guido and Marta Lynch (1971:450).

<sup>147</sup> See appendix c for a short selection of other significant female writers of this period.

regime on a middle-class woman and the similarity of the experiences lived by the protagonist with the author's own life; the latter for her descriptions of how Peronism disrupted the class-system.

Unlike the nineteenth-century writers whom we have met in a previous chapter, in the 1960s and 70s Lynch and Guido were amongst the most influential authors. They frequently appeared on television talk shows where they were asked to state their opinion about anything. They wrote and published during a period of literary boom when books, particularly novels, occupied a central role; even though the public personalities created by them for their audience - the sophisticated upper-class woman displaying transgressive, risqué behaviour seems somewhat naïve today - became more famous than their work as such (*Página12*, 23/04/2004).

Lynch, as well as Guido, is representative of an era in which it was less important to be perceived as feminist than being recognized as participant and contributor to the rich and colourful Argentine literary tradition, particularly the Argentine novel. Nevertheless, Lynch's work frequently touches on issues of inequality, questions gender roles, and the traditional perception of women. In Guido's discourse, various dimensions of gender issues seem to co-exist. On the one hand, repressed or sexually violated women are the protagonists of her literary work; on the other, her personal conviction that women have to be independent, strong, with advanced opinions about marriage; and finally, her own life where she describes herself as a puppet operated by her husband, the filmmaker Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, but conscious of it and enjoying this role (Interview with Cristina Mucci<sup>148</sup> in *Página12*, 17/01/2003).

The discourse that fascinated people in the 90s in Latin American women writers was magic realism, the return to the kitchen, love. In the 60s the discourse was a very

---

<sup>148</sup> Mucci published biographies of Marta Lynch, Beatriz Guido and Silvina Bullrich, *La señora Lynch* (2000), *Divina Beatrice* (2002), and *La gran burguesa* (2003) respectively.

different one: the transgressive woman, the feminist who went against the establishment. However, Lynch, Guido, and many of their contemporaries were more ambitious because they not only spoke about women's problems but about all kinds of uncomfortable issues like the decadence of the landed aristocracy, female sexuality, or the invasion of private life by the public political sphere. By and large, the sociopolitical environment of their stories coexisted with their psychological aspects (*El Clarín*, 12/03/2008). They were not feminists but compared with most women of the time they certainly displayed feminist tendencies (Mucci in *Página12*). However, neither Lynch nor Guido perceived themselves as even 'female writers': "*Las mujeres tenemos éxito aquí porque escribimos admirablemente bien*" Lynch stated in 1965. "*Además, nuestro estilo carece de la suavidad que se le atribuye a la literatura femenina. Los libros de Beatriz Guido, como los míos, podrían haber sido escritos perfectamente por hombres.*" (*El Clarín*, 20/04/2004).<sup>149</sup>

Guido herself corroborates Lynch's statement: "Nunca me sentí mujer escritora; yo no soy escritora, soy escritor". No hago "literatura femenina". Las mujeres me leen con curiosidad porque yo les apporto el mundo del hombre" (in Barcia, 1990:48).<sup>150</sup>

In this sense, Lynch's use of a "virile" voice, as detected by Birkmoe<sup>151</sup> (1982), which might also be applied to Guido, can be understood as an attempt to escape from the confinements of woman's place imposed on her by woman's language as coined by Lakoff (1975).

---

<sup>149</sup>"We women (writers) are successful here because we write admirably well; besides, our style lacks the softness attributed to female literature. Beatriz Guido's books, as well as mine, could perfectly have been written by men". (this and all the following translations are mine, unless stated otherwise)

<sup>150</sup> I have never perceived myself as a woman-writer; I am not a (female) writer, I am a (male) writer. I don't do 'female literature'. Women read me with curiosity because I provide them with (an insight into) the world of man".

<sup>151</sup> Birkmoe confirms Lynch's statement, citing particularly her novel *La alfombra roja* where "the author seems to have captured the spirit of the essentially male world of politics and to have convincingly reproduced the thought process of the protagonist and of several other dominant male characters" (1982:191).

Analyzing female writing, Lucía Guerra Cunningham raises the question whether or not there is a distinct way of writing that belongs exclusively to women and whether one can detect the subordinating cultural and social elements in women's texts (1995, in Dantas, 2008:49). Looking at the two works addressed below, both writers seem to have abandoned the practice of writing in a male voice and in these particular cases the answer to both of Cunningham's questions has to be "yes"; despite their insight into what constitutes male behaviour, their language and style produce clearly female texts.

### **Marta Lynch (1925-1985)**

Marta Lynch's work, particularly her short stories and her novel *La señora Ordóñez* (1968), is frequently cited in feminist writing. Some of Marta Lynch's short stories constitute her best vehicle to express the condition of the Argentine woman in a world dominated by male power and fantasy (Lewald, 1976:24, in Lindstrom, 1978:49). Her work is also significant for those who are interested in the changing attitudes towards the traditional female role in society, particularly the myth surrounding the concept of motherhood (Kaminsky, 1976:77-86).

For the purpose of this work, exploring women's literary responses to political developments, the writings by Marta Lynch present a formidable example. Fictionalizing different political and historical moments in Argentina, she offers her own visions of the different ideological patterns weaving through her country's political history during the best part of the twentieth century. During each of these political phases, Marta Lynch produced novels or short stories that directly relate to



the regimes and their actors, as well as to her personal life at the time. In the 1970s and 80s, Lynch had become a controversial novelist but although she had become famous in her profession as a writer, it was predominantly her life that often made her the centre of intellectual debate. Her constant exploration of different political ideologies, as well as her private ups and downs, indicates that both are inextricably linked and led her to produce literary works corresponding to each phase of this search.

Parallel to her career as a writer, Marta Lynch attempted to occupy an active position on the political stage which, despite her continuous efforts, she never achieved (Mucci, *La Nación* 04/10/2008). In fact, Lynch's desire to gain recognition in the field of national politics led her to frequently, almost erratically, switch alliances to successive regimes.

First, she supported Arturo Frondizi's candidacy for president. She perceived meeting him as a welcome shake-up in her life: "*La política me sacó de mi comodísimo mundo... Era un mundo redondo, blando, perfecto. Y allí lo conocí a Arturo Frondizi, que irrumpió con mi mundo y me sacó de esa blandura*"<sup>152</sup> (Lynch's biography by Cristina Mucci in *El Clarín* 09/10/2000). Between 1956 and 1958 Lynch was active within the *Comité Nacional Radical* supporting the ideas of Frondizi's *Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente* (Intransigent Radical Civic Union) but distanced herself soon afterwards for not achieving the prominent role she aspired to.<sup>153</sup> In 1962, Lynch published *La alfombra roja* analyzing the quest for power and the political disillusion present in the years immediately following Perón's fall. The novel has been identified,

---

<sup>152</sup> Politics pulled me from my very comfortable world... It was a round world, soft and perfect. And there (the *Comité Nacional Radical*) I met Arturo Frondizi who burst into my world and pulled me out of that softness.

<sup>153</sup> The historian Félix Luna whom Lynch met in the *Comité* states that her work there was not important: "Más que nada se ocupaba de trasladar gente porque era una de las pocas que tenían auto. No tenía experiencia, no era disciplinada y carecía de envergadura y de formación política" (*El Clarín* 09/10/2000). ("More than anything, she was in charge of moving people because she was one of the few who had a car. She was inexperienced, undisciplined, and lacked importance and political training".

by critics and the general public alike, as a chronicle of Frondizi's rise from small-town politics to the highest possible position in the country (Birkemoe, 1982:192). *La Señora Ordóñez* (1968)<sup>154</sup> details the decline of Peronism and tells of a woman's erotic experiences as well as her confusion as to existing gender roles (Schwartz, 1972:824).

Next, Lynch proclaimed her support for the Cuban Revolution and fantasized with Che Guevara. In 1970, she travelled to Cuba and was fascinated with what she saw: she compared the experience with that of having a baby (*El Clarín*, 09/10/2000)<sup>155</sup>. Her stay in Cuba influenced a collection of short stories, *Cuentos de colores* (1970, for which she received the *Premio Municipal de Literatura*), most notably *El cruce del río*, a tale about Tania, a *guerillera* who fights and dies alongside Che Guevara in Bolivia.

After her Cuban phase, Marta openly declared her sympathy for the revolutionary Peronist organization *Montoneros*. In 1973, she was a special guest on the plane from Madrid that returned the exiled Juan Perón to Argentina (*El País*, 10/10/1985). After landing at Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires, she witnessed the welcome for Perón turning into a massacre. Lynch described: "Todo el pueblo se quedó en su puesto mientras el tiroteo iba provocando la muerte, reventando cabezas, haciendo estallar trozos de brazos, de huesos, de órganos sexuales. Nadie dio un paso atrás. Ese gran pueblo esperanzado, inteligente, fiel y generoso no dio un solo paso atrás aun amenazado por la carnicería"<sup>156</sup> (Kolesnico in *El Clarín*, 09/10/2000). In 1972 she published the novel *El cruce del río* which strikes the reader because of its similarity in characters, setting, mood, and action to the short story of the same title. The main difference is

---

<sup>154</sup> Almost twenty years later, *La Señora Ordóñez* was shown on Argentine television (teleteatro de la tarde) with particular emphasis on the story's key feature - the convergence of political development and psychological conflict (*El Clarín*, 20/04/2004).

<sup>155</sup> At the time, many intellectuals and writers supported Fidel's Cuba; amongst them, Vargas Llosa, Octavio Paz, Julio Cortázar and Rudolfo Walsh but also there were many of clearly anti-communist convictions like Martínez Estrada, José Bianco, and Marta Lynch (*El Litoral*, 31/12/2008).

<sup>156</sup> "The public remained in their places while the shooting inflicted death, shattered heads, sent parts of arms flying, of bones, of sexual organs. Nobody receded. This great, hopeful people, intelligent and loyal did not step back even when threatened by butchery".

that the revolutionary protagonist is now a male and instead of a comrade of Guevara's he participates in the urban militant movement in Buenos Aires.

After the military coup in 1976 her opinions changed once again and she allied herself with the military government. She said in 1978: "Me equivoqué y conmigo se equivocaron siete millones de argentinos; yo fui una idiota y una zanahoria"<sup>157</sup> (Kolesnico in *El Clarín*, 09/10/2000). Lynch felt that the men who ruled the country with oppression, torture, and murder were of "muy buena voluntad y muy buena fe. Tienen en la cabeza una imagen de la Argentina saneada, importante. Espero que no sea demasiado tarde... No entiendo a algunos argentinos que se exiliaron voluntariamente".<sup>158</sup> In her novel *La penúltima versión de la Colorada Villanueva* (1979) she elaborates on the theme of exile from the point of view of a decent, middle-class woman who is abandoned by her husband and children for a variety of personal and political reasons (Foster, 1995:66, 122-3).

Finally, with the return to democracy, Lynch tried to enter the circles around President Raúl Alfonsín but her former closeness to the dictatorship obstructed her admission. In 1982, Marta publicly apologized for her support of the dictatorship: "*Me equivoqué gravemente a veces, y otras he sido de una intuición y de una sinceridad encomiables. El amor me parece un tormento y la guerra y la tortura una abominación contra la naturaleza*"<sup>159</sup> (Pubill, 2007:5). In this sense, Lynch's last novel, *Informe bajo llave*, (1983) can be understood as a rectification of her errors, particularly her intimate relationship with Emilio Eduardo Massera, Admiral of the Argentine Navy and member of the military junta who initiated the "Process of National Reorganization". This seems to confirm Lynch's obsession with powerful and influential men; rumours

---

<sup>157</sup> "I was wrong and, like me, seven million Argentines were wrong too. I was a stupid idiot".

<sup>158</sup> "...good will and good faith. They have an image in their heads of a sound footed, important Argentina. I hope it is not too late... I do not understand some Argentineans who voluntarily went into exile".

<sup>159</sup> "I have been gravely wrong sometimes and others I have shown laudable intuition and sincerity. Love seems a torment to me and war and torture an abomination against nature".

had emerged repeatedly about her personal relationships with Frondizi amongst many others (Pubill, 2007:4). In *Informe bajo llave*, the protagonist, Adela, is a writer receiving psychotherapy because of her acute personal problems. She enters into a complicated, sexual relationship with the high-ranking officer, Vargas, who is closely tied to the junta. Falling victim to the patriarchal authoritarianism exercised by the dictatorship, Adela herself becomes one of the disappeared at the end of the novel. *Informe bajo llave* was the least read of Lynch's novels; critics and the public were unforgiving of her support of the dictatorship.

In 1985 Lynch published her last work, *No te duermas, no me dejes*, with great success in 1985, however, after a number of failed relationships she committed suicide with a gunshot to her head (Mucci in *La Nación*, 04/10/2008). In an interview with *Página12*, Albino Gómez, personal secretary of Arturo Frondizi during his presidency, comments on Lynch's suicide: "*Marta se suicidó a los 55 años por el temor a la vejez. Esas cirugías estéticas que se hizo terminaron deformándola. No podía aceptar su rostro en el espejo con el paso de los años. Ella decía que la vida se le había hecho muy pesada y que su madre le había contagiado la melancolía, que en ella se había transformado en depresión*"<sup>160</sup> (Frieria, 23/04/2004).

Tragically, even though Martha's persistent attempts to break out of the patriarchal system are reflected in almost all her work, in her private life she obviously failed to sever the ties that compel women to conform to the traditional female image that demands beauty above all other attributes.

---

<sup>160</sup> "Marta committed suicide at 55 because of her fear of old age. All that plastic surgery she had done ended up disfiguring her. She could not accept her face in the mirror as the years went by. She said that life had become very tedious for her and that her mother had passed down melancholy to her that had turned into depression".

## La señora Ordóñez

With *La señora Ordóñez*, Lynch portrays one woman who exemplifies a number of communicational problems related to the female role. Blanca's attempts at self-expression repeatedly fail because she has not acquired the essential linguistic skills to enter a discourse adequately. For her ideas and grievances to be taken seriously by others she would have to speak an eloquent and targeted language; but Blanca seems to be unable to avoid trivial musings and stereotypical preoccupations associated with "female" concerns. Blanca uses what Lakoff terms "woman's language" (1975); therefore, her concerns are perceived as insignificant and her hopes to "really" be heard are dashed.

Immediately noticeable is the novel's divisions into sections of text in which the telling of the story is either entirely undertaken by Blanca herself, narrating in the first person, or by a third person narrator. At first the reader is uncertain why Lynch opted for this unusual system since both voices speak a very similar language, at least initially. Only gradually can it be noticed that while Blanca struggles with expressing her confusion, the narrator eloquently explains its origins. The third-person narrator employs *mimesis* while Blanca uses *diegesis*. This is important in relation to establishing a voice that, belonging exclusively to the narrator, reflects the narrator's specific point of view, a voice that has ceased to be subordinate (Dantas, 2008:42). That is to say that the imitating voice of the narrator reflects reality merely through the characters' lines and therefore only represents a flawed reproduction, a subordinated voice that only reproduces a dominant discourse. In order to challenge and oppose the dominant view the author has to establish an autonomous, dominant voice that clearly and distinctly reflects his/her point of view. If Lynch had written the

entire novel through the voice of the narrator, Blanca's real point of view would elude the reader; had she written it exclusively through Blanca's voice, it would remain unclear what exactly she criticizes. By opting for the use of both voices Lynch familiarizes the reader with the dominant system and, at the same time, a woman's struggle to develop a dialogue with it.

Lynch not only criticizes the political regime but also makes the reader aware of the difficulties particularly faced by women as to finding a way to adapt to the changing political and social order. Blanca's inhibitions as well as her inability to articulate her frustration are clearly rooted in her childhood when her mother, Soledad (named "La Castellana" by Blanca), serves as a role model for traditional, submissive female behaviour as well as a somewhat hysterical, conservative fear of change often attributed to women. Some critics assume that there is a significant difference between male and female writing due to the fact that women's experiences differ from men's in regular and profound ways; recurrent imagery and distinctive content in writing by women, for example, imagery of confinement and unsentimental descriptions of child care are often present (Kegan Gardiner, 1981:348).

In Lynch's novel, the young Blanca's movements and those of her sister Teresa are strictly controlled by their despotic father who insists on confining them to the house most of the time in order to prevent them from having pre-marital sexual experiences; not so much for their own protection but to place their decency above any doubts and to avoid gossip.

*Cualquier circunstancia era buena para que los Maggi decidieran  
poner sus hijas en custodia. (42)*

*...esas dos hijas ferozmente custodiadas - los besos, los pechos, el*

*himen de las chicas...el himen, el himen de las chicas (sirve más que el corazón)...Sólo basta conservar el himen. (p. 32)*

In this sheltered domestic environment there is little in the way of preparation for Blanca and her sister that would allow them to adapt to the changes in society that are taking place; changes that clearly are in the air on the 17 October 1945, one of the most dramatic days in Argentina's political history. With the first mass-action the country had ever known, thousands of rural and urban workers marched into the Buenos Aires city centre and congregated on the Plaza de Mayo in order to demand Perón's release from prison. In the rather sarcastic voice of the narrator, Lynch describes the outrage characteristic of the lower middle classes over the workers' insubordinate behaviour and the social reforms the new system holds in store. Glued to the radio, Blanca's father is annoyed by his wife's fearful reaction and, as usual, dismisses her comments.

*Gente desconocida - la provincia, las afueras, el suburbio - se habían puesto a existir. ¡Qué ocurrencia! La Argentina había sido siempre hermosa para la gente cuerda que se porta con decencia y que da de sí lo que todos esperan...Ahora reventaba una infección, invadía calles...Asomada al balcón abierto sobre la copa de los árboles, la Castellana vio una extraña y desconocida multitud, fea como todas las multitudes, oscura y mal trajeada.*

*- Son descamisados - exclamó muy unida a su marido ante la amenaza indescifrable.*

*- dejame oír - contestó Ernesto bruscamente. (p. 42)*

Here, even though Ernesto is just as worried about the new developments as his wife, he obviously thinks she should be silent; not only in order for him to listen to the radio but as generally appropriate for her as a woman. If the poor have ceased to behave as everybody expects them to, Soledad is guilty of the same crime.

Blanca's first political involvement outside her family comes as part of her first sexual attachment. An ardent Peronist, her husband is a member of a specialized sub-group (*La Alianza*) requiring participation in clandestine and potentially violent pursuits. He occupies a prominent place in the regime. Thus, Blanca gains insight into a wide spectrum of aspects related to Peronism, ranging from underground militancy to a gala performance at the opera, presided over by Eva Perón herself.

Lindstrom notes that the individual woman (Blanca in this case) cannot be expected to enunciate clearly her current status and proximate needs simply by her own striving. The necessary condition for this successful verbalization is the articulation, at a societal level, of problems inherent in the prevailing sex-role arrangement (1989:75). Just like her mother years before, Blanca's condition as a woman prevents her opinions from being taken seriously. When she tries to enter into a political discussion with Priesso, the priest who had married her to Pablo, she is met by a condescending attitude.

*...Se sentía muy pobre para discutir con un hombre que manejaba los Misterios... - La guerra ha terminado - insistió Blanca -, el mismo Papa facilita en Europa la salida de tantos colaboracionistas. La gente tiene que vivir. Pretextando amor por Francia se sigue gobernando para la oligarquía.*

*Priesso se rió a carcajadas.*

*- Divina Blanquita - exclamó sin mucha reticencia -. Es un placer*



*tan grande verte mover los labios que no interesa demasiado lo que dices. (168)*

With this little exchange some underlying reasons for Blanca's confusion become clear: trying to take on the role of the modern woman she engages in activities outside the house albeit not on her own - as is expected from her as a "decent" woman. She accompanies Pablo to his party-meetings but he does not teach her much about politics - her knowledge remains too fragmented and inadequate to enter into a discourse; and, because she is a woman, it is enough for her to be attractive - it does not really matter what she says; or, as the magazine *Primera Plana* wrote in 1963, the ideal wife for the majority of men was "beautiful, an intelligent partner, and home-bound...At the same time, men continued "almost aggressively" exhibiting their promiscuity, their virility, and their depreciation of women" (1963, in Feijoó et al., 1996:17).

*La señora Ordóñez* presents multiple ideologies that all, one way or another, influence Blanca's life: the despotic father who supports the Radical party, the staunchly catholic mother who insists on education in a convent-school, her marriage to Pablo, her short and unsuccessful career as an artist, and her personal sphere forever marred by emotional confrontations with her second husband Raúl, her adulterous affairs. In short, this eclectic mix of influences constantly adds to Blanca's confusion. She is paradigmatic of a woman attempting, in middle life, a massive self-questioning and some means of self-expression. However, Blanca does not learn from the repeated failure of her efforts. At the end of the novel she has not gained any more clarity than she possessed at the beginning (Lindstrom, 1989:75).

The theme of adolescence, along with the frank treatment of sex, were hallmarks of the time and the emphasis of these subjects in the Argentina of Perón and the years immediately following his fall appears quite significant. Describing sexual relationships in a way that would have been considered *risqué* at the time, Lynch posits them as a crucial element of the protagonist's personal problems. Traumatized by witnessing the sexual act between her parents as a child, Blanca's marriage with Pablo is never consummated. Sex with her second husband Raúl is nothing but a chore for her, a repetitive act always ending in her feeling possessed and defeated by him (13-16 and 398-402). With Blanca's attitude to sex Lynch clearly criticizes the ambiguities of the 1960s phenomenon of women's sexual liberation that went alongside the traditional pressure to enter marriage. As one woman states, "the topic of sexual relationships was no longer taboo and had become the object of reflection, and there was a greater acceptance of premarital sex and birth control. At the same time, male adultery was still considerably more tolerable than female adultery, marriage was respected, the possibility of abortion was dismissed, and there was resignation in the face of sexual dissatisfaction (Interviewee "C" in Feijoó et al., 1996:16). In other words, not much had changed since Blanca's mother's day. Female writers, as Keegan Gardiner has noted, often treat marriage and child care as mere social and biological events dictated to them by society because of their sex and therefore lack the emotions generally associated with both concepts (1981:348). Lynch certainly conforms to this observation.

*Como tantas otras, Soledad aceptó el coito sin amor como una dura concesión a su naturaleza fría o a fuerza de fingirse fría terminó por convencerse. Fue cosa de cumplir el decálogo penoso escrito en alguna parte con lágrimas y sangre y deseó la maternidad*

*como un hecho natural, la maravillosa trampa de egoísmo por la cual es lícito obtener un par de seres enteramente a la disposición de sus gestores, hijos que aman a sus padres, y padres que aman a sus hijos, fatalmente, un par de niños que coronen ese estado permanente de los hechos y actitudes, en los mejores cánones de la convivencia humana. (24)*

As Sara Ruddick has observed, “That maternal love, pleasure in reproductive powers, and a sense of maternal competence survive in a patriarchal society where women are routinely derogated, makes one wonder at the further possibilities for maternal happiness in decent societies” (1980:344). Soledad as well as Blanca, maybe even Lynch herself, seem to be immersed in this hopeless and oppressive feeling without experiencing the empowering and satisfying aspects of motherhood that are highlighted in Rudick’s article (1980:342-367).

The societal dimension of individual personal problems is almost always present in the literature of the time; and often, the political background impinges directly upon the main line of narrative. The novels of the period reflect the fact that profound forces of social change had been set in motion, or at least accelerated in Perón’s Argentina (Stabb, 452). According to Feijóo, Nari and Fierro, several key elements emerge for an understanding of the changes in society and in gender roles, especially the middle classes. The role of women with respect to the development of a market in consumer durables<sup>161</sup>, the impact of the mass media on domestic organization, the problematization of “private” issues and the open discussion of them in the public

---

<sup>161</sup> The drastic increase of the availability of modern household appliances was received with mixed feelings by some women. While they made domestic chores much easier they often caused a feeling of uselessness in many women, together with a sudden surplus of free time which many did not know how to use. Parallel to the political crisis that caused a surge in literary production, this increase in leisure time, perceivable as personal crisis, could be an explanation for a growing number of consumers of literature.

sphere, the changes of certain aspects of family life, and the transformation, generally considered more banal, in fashion or aesthetic preferences all provide a political cultural perspective on this period in Argentine history (1996:14).

Throughout the novel, Lynch criticizes the “increasing contradiction between a society geared toward self-gratification and the ideal of maternal sacrifice” (*Primera Plana*, 1967, in Feijóo et al, 1996:18). Blanca’s daughters will soon leave the parental home; Blanca’s desire to take up her artistic work again is met by strong disagreement from her husband - he continuously overlooks her extramarital affairs but is indisposed to see her following an independent career. When she finally exhibits some of her old sculptures they prove much less successful than she has hoped for; they are past their time, not unlike herself - a woman approaching menopause. As Oliver points out, on entering middle age, women who had been “devoted mothers and wives” found that they no longer had a purpose in life. Their children spent much less time at home, a paid housekeeper cooked and cleaned the suburban house or downtown apartment, and the husband continued to come home late from a job that only he seemed to be interested in (1971, in Feijóo et al, 1996:18). Blanca deeply resents the fulfillment her husband experiences in his profession as a dedicated doctor and his inability to understand her own need for a similar self-realization.

*...él visita a sus enfermos, vive, opera y permanece ciego  
con esa maldita adecuación a lo que eligió una vez, con una  
precisión que me lo hace odioso. (76)*

The great majority resigned themselves to their irreparable situation with a disdain that revealed their discontent. Many ran from the hair stylist to the fashion designer and from there to the beauty institute with the illusion that perhaps they could still

find a man who would help them recover the lost time (Oliver, 1971, in Feijóo et al., 1996:18).

*...entonces, incapaz de seguir dentro de su casa, Blanca se vistió...  
Se decidió por fin y pidió al chofer del taxi que la llevara por la  
calle Santa Fe a la diminuta casa de alta costura fuera de su alcance.  
(112-3)*

Blanca quickly consoles herself, not with new creativity but with a new, expensive dress and, later, with a new lover - Rocky. Living in an unused railway station, he represents the subversive, the outsider, new excitement for Blanca. Not unlike all the other men in her life, he tries to teach Blanca “how to speak”. Instead of recognizing his patronizing attitude, Blanca seems to be grateful for this lesson in self-reform.

*...se empeñó en enseñarme a hablar.  
- No hagas teatro.  
O más secamente:  
- No dramáticas.  
Le exasperaba mi apego a tantas palabras que yo usaba.  
- Son cursi - decía burlándose de mi grandilocuencia.  
Como tantas otras cosas, ese aprendizaje quedó en la cuenta  
de mi gratitud. Conforme: no había que hablar de amor, no  
había que usar tantas palabras, no declamar, no gemir, no  
exagerar. (213)*

One explanation for a distinctly female spoken and written voice posits a “female consciousness” that produces styles and structures innately different from those of the

“masculine mind” (Kegan Gardiner, 1981:348). Thus, what Blanca says and how she says it are notions unrecognizable to Rocky (and other men in her life) in a language he does not understand.

According to Schwartz, the novelists born in the 1920s, often known as the “Generation of 1950”, mixed Argentine politics and fantasy in their discussions of alienated people. Most were caught up in political events, but what they had in common, aside from their neo-realism, was a hatred for their literary forebears (1972:824). Frustrated in their desire to criticize the Perón regime, they battled, instead, on literary fronts, becoming what the critic Emir Rodríguez Monegal called a “Generation of parricides” (in Cernada, *Estudio preliminar Contorno*, footnote 18). When Blanca’s promoted husband, Pablo, receives an invitation to meet Perón, the president is described as an extremely restless man behaving as if he were on drugs:

*Ella [Blanca] vio una sonrisa todo dientes y unas grandes manchas violáceas en la mejilla izquierda. Una de las manos se abría y cerraba convulsivamente, como si estuviera bajo los efectos de un narcótico. La otra llevaba un cigarrillo recién encendido hasta los labios. El hombre daba una imagen de inquietud (152).*

This is, of course the opinion of Lynch’s character, Blanca Ordóñez - a middle-class woman who had become a Peronist out of love for her husband, Pablo; just as years later she would become anti-Peronist because of some other lover’s convictions. It is typical for Blanca to subordinate all other aspects of her life - friends, family, societal or political choices - to her current love interest; her rational side tells her to thrive

for independence, her emotional one dictates continuous attachment to a man, even in matters as personal as political belief.

As Gardiner has noted, women's novels are often called biographical, their autobiographies novelistic; because of this continual crossing of self and other women's writing often blurs the public and the private (1981:355). Women's entry into politics often seems to be part of a love affair with a male who is already active in some movement or another. It is particularly interesting that once the romantic relationship turns sour (which, fortunately, is not always the case) many of these women also become disillusioned with the political project. Blanca's behaviour is by no means out of the ordinary, especially when considering that it merely reflects Argentine reality, i.e. the Eva Duarte/Juan Perón union. Here, Lynch establishes a literary link between eroticism, romance, and political activity which would become much more pronounced in political reality, as has been demonstrated in chapter 4, and women's fiction in the decade of the 1970's. With *Ordóñez*, therefore, Lynch makes a direct connection between female experience and the public sphere. Blanca is not only the protagonist of a sentimental story; Lynch places her right in the middle of the political unrest caused by the ideological clashes between the oligarchy and the emerging popular forces of Perón's '*Justicialismo*' (Medeiros-Lichem, 2002:99). The fictional Blanca's erratic change of ideology is not unlike Marta Lynch's own frequent changes in political alliances. This is not the only similarity between the writer and her main character - Blanca's frequent love affairs, her obsession with her appearance, the confusion about what is expected of women all reflect Lynch's experiences.

Goldar's study concerned with Peronism cites *La Señora Ordóñez* for its reflection of the changes in woman's role that occurred in that period and also deals with this

novel as an anti-Peronist work (1971). However, even though the theme of Peronism is woven through the entire novel, the political aspects take second place to the characterization of the protagonist. They are, as Lindstrom notes, a mere factor in the time and setting rather than an essential element (1982:198). Nevertheless, as the background to the unfolding events in Blanca's life politics are important in as much as they allow Lynch to underline the fact that the nature of the regime is irrelevant to Blanca's status and development as a woman. The scene where Blanca is presented to Perón, for example, touches on a number of issues related to gender roles that are interesting here:

*Destumbrada, miró la Casa de Gobierno, asombrándose de estar allí. Por fin su matrimonio con Achino le parecía necesario y ser la señora de, un hecho útil que le permitía esa interminable diversión. (145)*

Here, Lynch clearly criticizes the perception of women as an appendage, an adjunct to the husband. Blanca repeatedly complains about this condition and yet, anticipating the opportunity to rub shoulders with the powerful, she finds it useful to belong (as in property) to somebody. In other words, rather than being an alternative to traditional social conventions, her inner discourse is often a mirror of them; however hard she tries to brake with tradition, her mind-set is practically shackled by it.

According to Lakoff, women are often unable to exercise control in certain circumstances because they lack the necessary verbal strategies. This is not the consequence of overtly oppressing women's speech but has its roots in the insufficient training of female children to develop the verbal ability to participate in dominant discourse (Cook-Gumperz, 2004:197). Women are often unable to take control over a



situation because they are unable to employ adequate discursive strategies. This lack of verbal skill in turn makes women incapable of effecting change and therefore reinforces their pliability (Cook-Gumperz, 2004:197) as seen in Blanca's case, in inability to assert herself in delicate situations. It is significant here that the first time, at the age of fifteen, when Blanca tries to enter into a political debate with her father it all ends in tears. His refusal to even listen to her and his violent verbal outburst is most likely the cause for her subsequent inability to participate in political discourse. When she finally meets Perón it become evident that despite the progressive political changes the government effected in favour of women, they are still expected to perform according to what was deemed acceptable behaviour; Blanca is lost for words, she is dumbfounded.

*Las palabras no salían de su boca. Perón la contempló un instante y todos sonrieron con alivio:*

*- Buenos días - dijo el Presidente, con una voz muy grave de trasmisión radial (como la oímos siempre, pensó ella).*

*Pero Pablo no pudo contenerse y estalló en imprecaciones patrióticas y palabras.*

*- Mi General, la Guardia Restauradora, La Alianza, yo mismo, siempre con usted. El país...*

*- Muy bien, amigo - dijo el Presidente con tranquilidad-. Muy bien.*

*Volvió a saludar y siguió de largo. (152-3)*

It is not that Blanca does not have anything to say, but if she did, as stated by Lakoff, she would probably disappoint the listener's expectations (Lindstrom, 1989:86) - in

this case Perón's and those of his entourage. By remaining silent she conforms to her passive and submissive role and gains approval - everybody is relieved because she did not say anything out of place. Lakoff makes clear that although the social arrangement does not stifle women's expression overtly, the socialization of women subtly inhibits their expression by failing to provide them with support for developing the assertive verbal skills they need for full participation. Moreover, a woman who does succeed in enunciating her point of view finds that her listeners have learned covert ways of trivializing and neutralizing female-uttered statements. The social patterning of verbal transaction tends to place what women say in a less significant light than what men say (1975, in Lindstrom, 1978:50).

As can be observed, Blanca's husband Pablo does not have this problem. Overwhelmed by his admiration for the president he utters the first words that come to his mind; regardless of his ineloquent stammering he feels no inhibitions.

Perón himself is portrayed as a caricature of a politician, nothing short of a fraud; a smug person who does not listen to those who speak with him, leaving them astonished and amazed. Later on, at an opera gala performance Blanca attends with Pablo, she is unreceptive to the glamour and excitement around her and likens Perón to the tango singer Carlos Gardel: "*El Viejo, en cambio, es todo sonrisa de dentista y pelo engominado, abundante y renegrado*" (223).<sup>162</sup>

This notion of falseness appears repeatedly throughout the novel - to Blanca, things, people, attitudes are not what they seem to be; this confirms Stabb's observation that the younger generation of authors, in contrast to the writers born before the First World War, was much more sensitive to the period's ambiguities and deeper

---

<sup>162</sup> Here, Blanca compares Perón to the young and beautiful Evita who is at his side. "The old man, on the other hand, is all dentist-smile and brillantined hair, full and re-touched black".

implications (1971: 455). The replica Chippendale furniture and fake silver plates in her parents' home; the splendor at her wedding ceremony, as faked as her love for her husband; the priest who fondles her knee, all can be interpreted as Lynch's criticism of a regime that turned out to be a fraud.

### **Beatriz Guido (1924-1988)**

Beatriz Guido became famous in Argentina for the successful sales of her novels as well as for her polemical statements. "Soy terriblemente antiperonista", she once said and on a different occasion "soy terriblemente mentirosa"<sup>163</sup>, in order to make it clear that everything she said was to be taken with a pinch of salt (*El Clarín*, 04/03/1998).

The 1960s, marked in Latin America by the Cuban Revolution and in Argentina by the polarization between Peronism/anti-Peronism figures prominently in Guido's literature. Perón himself described her as the '*Grosso chico*'<sup>164</sup> of the *revolución libertadora*;<sup>165</sup> the writer Gabriela Mizraje considered Guido "as one of the authors who most emphasized the problematization of gender roles in her fiction". Either directly in her novels or in collaboration with her husband, the film maker, Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, Guido engaged in a twofold task: the translation of national history into literature and the exploration of the contradictions of bourgeois ethics (Medrano-Pizarro, 2001:251)

---

<sup>163</sup> "I am frightfully anti-peronist"...I am frightfully untruthful".

<sup>164</sup> The nineteenth-century historian Alfredo Grosso published a number of history books that were used well into the middle of the twentieth century in primary and secondary schools throughout Argentina. Amongst them *Nociones de historia Argentina* ('*el Grosso grande*') in 1893 and *Curso de historia nacional* ('*el Grosso chico*') in 1898. The latter, comprising only 125 pages, was considered a 'simplified' history meant to familiarize the younger students with Argentine history.

([http://aportes.educ.ar/historia/nucleo-teorico/tradiciones-de-ensenanza/la-historia-de-ensenar-historia/la\\_historia\\_recreada\\_en\\_los\\_te\\_1.php?page=2](http://aportes.educ.ar/historia/nucleo-teorico/tradiciones-de-ensenanza/la-historia-de-ensenar-historia/la_historia_recreada_en_los_te_1.php?page=2), 15/05/2009)

<sup>165</sup> Military *coup* headed by General Eduardo Lonardi that toppled Perón from power in September 1955.

Guido's first novel, *La casa del ángel*, which received the *Emecé*<sup>166</sup> award, determined the themes and settings for her future narratives: the psychological insight into the trials of adolescence and a critical vision of the traditional class system. However, political reality happens outside, on the streets, or is the topic of hushed conversations in someone's library. The degree to which politics find its way into the lives of Guido's protagonists increases gradually with each work. In *Fin de fiesta* (1958) the reader is thrust into the centre of political power. This novel covers approximately the period from president Yrigoyen's overthrow in 1930 to 17 October 1945 when the masses demanded and achieved the release of Juan Perón from prison. The title, *Fin de Fiesta* refers to the end of adolescence on the one hand and closure of a sociopolitical era through the advent of Peronism on the other (Barcia, 1990:34); however, Perón's name is never mentioned throughout the book. He is only ever referred to as 'that man, a colonel'. In *El incendio y las visperas* there is no room for ambiguities - Perón as well as Eva figure prominently as the novel's background and are frequently named with unmistakable dislike and criticism.

Many of Guido's stories were adapted for film by her husband Leopoldo Torres Nilsson. Guido also wrote the scripts, casted actors, and promoted their films at European film-festivals (*El Clarín*, 12/03/2008).

Like Marta Lynch, Beatriz Guido was motivated by fame and fortune. In 1973 she responded to an attack by Arturo Jauretche<sup>167</sup> who had characterized her as a mediocre writer for the country's mediocre audience. Guido responded during an interview: "Si supiera Jauretche lo que me hace vender cada vez que habla de mí...". (*El Clarín*, 20/04/2004) - "Ojalá Jauretche escriba contra mí. Que sobreviva mucho

---

<sup>166</sup> Publishers founded in 1939 ("MC" [Span. Emecé] for the Initials of its founders). The literary award was created in 1954 for first time authors and was the first one of its kind in Argentina (<http://www.koalaweb.com.ar/emece/corporativo.asp>, 12/12/2008).

<sup>167</sup> Arturo Jauretche (1901-1974), writer, politician, and philosopher, dedicated a chapter in his book *El medio pelo argentino* (Argentine mediocrity) to Beatriz Guido.

tiempo, así se siguen vendiendo mis libros.”<sup>168</sup> (*El Clarín*, 04/03/1998) - we will come back to Jauretche’s criticism later.

Anti-peronist during the 1950s, leftist during the 1960s, and a supporter of Alfonsín in the 80s, Guido received the post of cultural attaché to the Argentine Embassy in Madrid in 1984 (*Página12*, 09/02/2006). She died four years later from a heart attack in Madrid.

To the same extent as Lynch and Guido were famous and successful during their years of writing, they were criticized and soon forgotten after their deaths (*Página12*, 17/01/2003).

### ***El incendio y las visperas***

Guido’s work shows a firm tendency to place her fiction within a clearly defined time and places in which the country’s historical and political events influence or determine people’s lives (Barcia, 1990: 45). Her most famous trilogy recreated periods of Argentine history from the 1920s (*La casa del ángel*, 1954), to the rise of Peronism (*Fin de fiesta*) to its decline (*El incendio y las visperas*, 1964) (*El Clarín*, 20/04/2004). In *Incendio* the action starts on the 17 October 1952 and ends on the 15 April 1953.<sup>169</sup> Her intention is to present an aspect of national reality during a specific period through her narratives that almost always expose a social class.

Internal political tensions had been on the increase since 1952, not least due to the curtailment of the individual freedoms of citizens who were in disagreement with the

---

<sup>168</sup> “If only Jauretche knew how much I sell every time he speaks of me... If only he continued to write against me. I hope he will live a long time; that way my books will continue to sell.”

<sup>169</sup> The former had been declared a national holiday in 1945 (Perón’s release from prison by popular demand). On that day in 1952 fragments of Eva Perón’s last book (*Mi mensaje*) were read during the official festivities on *Plaza de Mayo*. It is considered Eva’s most incendiary and emotional text and is available at <http://www.elortiba.org/pdf/mimensaje.pdf>, 13/12/2008; on the second date fire was set to the Jockey Club amongst other buildings.

peronist government and the polarization of the population - pro and anti-Perón took hold amidst persecution and threats (Barcia, 1990:59).

Central to the novel is the Pradere family. Long established agro-aristocrats they belong to the most distinguished circles of Buenos Aires', and indeed the country's high society. Most scenes take place in their city palace, the Jockey Club, Montevideo, and last but not least, in '*Bagatelle*', their sumptuous country estate which the peronist government intends to expropriate, unless the owner, Alejandro Pradere accepts the post of ambassador to Uruguay. Thus, the family finds itself confronted with two equally 'impossible' options: either losing the beloved estate or becoming traitors to their class by accepting a role in the loathed government. Pradere accepts the deal; however, on a visit to Buenos Aires from Montevideo he witnesses the fire in the Jockey Club and commits suicide. *Bagatelle* falls to the government and is converted into a public park.

Unlike Lynch who focuses on the impact of politics on her characters' personal lives, Guido concentrates on the regime's effects on an entire social class. However, the fate of Argentina's landed aristocracy under Peronism is heavily generalized in *Incendio*, the behaviour of the upper classes clearly stereotyped. This is most probably not the best novel ever written but, as Foster has noted, "questions of excellence are too relative and unreliable to serve as the only criterion for analytic criticism" (1985:82). According to Flori, during the cultural renaissance that took hold in Argentina after 1955 it became much easier for new writers to publish their works; new marketing techniques attracted more readers and made books more accessible. Stylistic concerns were put aside and the sociopolitical reality occupied the foreground (1995:23). However, the reception of *Incendio* by the public certainly was remarkable

- it became a real best-seller and was the most sold novel in the 60's (*Página12*, 09/02/2006).

Parallel to the Praderes' struggle to keep their privileges, we are made aware of the existence of another, more dangerous battlefield in the Argentina of the time. Its symbol is Pablo Alcobendas. Coming from a working-class family, his late father a union activist, he fights against the regime in the students' movement. He participates in a rescue operation to free two imprisoned unionists by throwing himself into the path of the prison van. During the ensuing commotion the two men manage to flee. The badly injured Pablo, in turn, is rescued by José Luis Pradere, the son of the family, who provides shelter on the top floor of his family residence. Even though Pablo is grateful, he is annoyed by Pradere's pompous language, a symbol for the different worlds the two men inhabit and an allusion to Pablo's secret *Schadenfreude* about the upper classes' misfortunes.

*El ascensor sube muy lentamente a un segundo refugio.*

*- Te quedarás en la "loggia". Allí no llega nadie. ¡Ni los sirvientes! Es nuestro último reducto.*

*No respondió; le molestaba ese idioma donde se mezclaban una palabra como "loggia", con "reducto". "Cuándo. Cuándo aprenderán a hablar sin ese sonido agudo que emiten después de cada frase. Con razón les tocan el culo", piensa. (52)*

In Guido's literary universe, moral values remain within the middle and working classes, not within the landed or industrial aristocracy (Barcia, 1990:47). Both Pablo and the Praderes are opponents of the regime but their motivations are different, the

stakes are unequal. While the Praderes 'only' stand to lose property, Pablo is risking his life; while the family fears the possible loss of material things, Pablo feels that the whole country, the nation is in danger of losing its integrity. During her nursing Pablo back to health in the attic, Inés Pradere, the daughter of the house, has formed an intimate relationship with him; but their love is flawed by their inability to understand each other's concerns.

*- Sería feliz, muy feliz en este momento, si a Perón o a su  
cuñado no se le hubiera ocurrido visitar, quizá expropiar  
Bagatelle... Él consigue tomarla de un brazo y sacudiéndole,  
grita sordamente: - Perón ha puesto el ojo en el país, en el  
país, ¿me entiende?, ¡no en esa maldita y absurda estancia  
de ustedes que no hacen otra cosa que nombrar como si fuera  
la Casa Rosada!  
Inés se libera y vuelve a desaparecer por el ascensor. (65)*

But what for Pablo seems like mere brick and mortar, for the Praderes has a much more powerful significance. The whole family, absorbed into the worship of *Bagatelle* which forms the core of family tradition, closes rank in order to defend this space which is now under threat. The government, the political reality which is Peronism, personifies the invader who advances and takes possession of somebody else's space (Barcia, 1990:66). This is the cultural image of the text: the push for a space, the private, the social, the political.

Two privileged spaces are invaded and looted: *Bagatelle* and the Jockey Club. While the expropriation of the country estate symbolizes the violation of the private sphere, the sacking of the Jockey Club carries much more weight than the privacy of a family -



it is an entire class that is under attack here, the class they belong to, under threat of being wiped out.

In Guido's novelistic world there is a tendency to posit the action within the environment of a big house, in whose core the conflicts unfold. The deterioration of the house speaks of time passing by and accompanies the growing decadence of a family and at the same time that of a socially privileged class into which Guido places the protagonists of her stories (Barcia, 1990:25).

Another recurring theme is that of violation, be it physical, sexual or psychological. In *Incendio* we learn of violent police tactics to extract information from Pablo and other prisoners deemed as subversive. However, Guido's predominant focus lies on the symbolic significance of the violation of buildings or the buildings' own hostile nature as if they were living beings<sup>170</sup>. Here, there are two traumatically violated spheres - two houses 'taken over'. There are, however, a number of details in which 'Guido's houses' in *Incendio* differ from Julio Cortázar's *Casa tomada*. In Cortázar's story it is the middle class that is under attack from intruders who are not clearly defined - they are a faceless threat lurking in the building's numerous rooms making their presence known through the noises they produce. Critics later defined them as the working classes, racially mixed peasants or the poor in general (*The Argentina Reader*, 328).<sup>171</sup> In *Incendio*, Guido leaves no doubt about the identity of the invaders; Perón, his brother-in-law, Juan Duarte, and members of the government are named in person

---

<sup>170</sup> In *La casa del ángel* the house is a protective environment that shields the protagonist from the dangers of the outside; in *La mano en la trampa* it figures as a prison for the protagonist during her summer holidays in the same way as the boarding school does during the year; in *El incendio y las visperas* the different houses clearly symbolize the private, personal possession, and a way of life.

<sup>171</sup> The notion of an 'invaded' Buenos Aires did not arise with Peronism - it is much older. It first appeared when General Rosas' rural militia entered the capital in the nineteenth century. It re-emerged during Yrigoyen's first Radical government (1916-22), when hitherto invisible urban and rural masses took to the streets in protest (see for example Buchrucker, 1987). Because of the mutual support between Perón and the working classes, their drastic increase in numbers and Perón's 'personalist' style of politics their presence was much more obvious than ever before. In *Peronismo clásico*, David Viñas lists and analyses a number of authors who have used the theme of invasion in their works (2007).

and are identified as those who threaten the elite and intend to appropriate their country estates: the rioting mob, the lower classes are those who set fire to the Jockey Club.

The Argentinean Embassy in Montevideo, the location for the involuntary exile of the Praderes, is also 'invaded'. It is the whole country, therefore, that finds itself under siege; not only the private spaces of a particular social sector. Amidst the luxurious surroundings of her bedroom in the embassy, dreading the welcome party for her father's inauguration to the new office, Inés feels threatened and trapped.

*...En cada pasillo, en cada cajón que se abre, detrás de cada puerta, entre las páginas de un libro abierto al azar, aparece el rostro de "ellos", sus pisadas, la impresión digital de sus dedos manchados: palabras como "justicialismo", expresiones como "Eva dignifica". "Eva, Eva; la historia con nombre de hembra, la historia con polleras, senos y vagina. Una historia con polleras", volvió a pensar.*

*La Embajada de la Avenida Agraciada se abría hoy para esa historia. Desprenderse de ella era imposible, y la entrega, un compromiso definitivo. (99)*

Guido's houses are not "taken" at the moment of almost final deterioration; but they are equally a symbol for economic power which has diminished, of a social glory that is ebbing away, of a class that has descended gradually from their distinguished place through the forces of history and politics. The house is a symbol for the country, through the eyes of a particular social class.

The working class and its rising power are represented by Antola, the elderly servant who has been looking after the family since time immemorial. Increasingly confident, Antola freely speaks her mind in front of the family, often on the verge of rudeness and insists on being asked politely for the services she renders, particularly on this day, 17 October, when all the other servants have taken the day off and Antola is supposed to perform tasks that are not usually her responsibility. This changing relationship between masters and servants signifies the end of an era and the beginning of a new one in which life as the Praderes have known it will never be the same again; and there is nothing they can do about it. Particularly Sofía, the lady of the house, is fearful of the future.

*...-Mi buena y querida Antola, el café en el montacargas, por favor.*

*- Subí nomás, te lo voy a llevar por hoy - ...*

*Sofía, involuntariamente agradecida, aprieta su mano en el hombro de Antola. Mide por primera vez su impotencia frente al quehacer cotidiano, su dependencia total frente a ella. Ha necesitado rogar, y por ese ruego comprende que algo está pasando fuera de su casa y que deberá repetirlo a los sirvientes, a partir de ese día, cada vez que necesite de ellos. (16)*

Like Marta Lynch who frequently deals with women who have lost control over events, feelings and relationships, Guido addresses the same crisis amongst the individual members of a particular social class. Lynch's success with her novels, as Foster has noted, has been to bring together her interest in the roles of women and the question of social dissolution in Argentina (1985:121). The same can be said about Guido who

explores the interrelationships between the crisis of the upper classes and the crisis of what they perceive as a destructive sociopolitical process.

Arturo Jauretche, Argentine thinker, writer and politician, is amongst the few who comment on Beatriz Guido's work. In an attempt to define which social sectors represent cultural mediocrity in Argentina, he concludes that it is those who have made *El incendio y las vísperas* a national best-seller; those who think of themselves as something they are not. In his book *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina* he states that Guido's novel has provided him with an excellent source to identify them. Jauretche finds that Guido is "*una autora marginal a la literatura,...un subproducto de la alfabetización. El lector debe comprender que el espacio que voy a dedicarle sólo se justifica por el interés del disector frente a la pieza anatómica*".<sup>172</sup>

Without being as harsh as Jauretche, one cannot help but notice that some of Guido's ideas of how members of the elite behave seem to be far fetched, sometimes even quite ridiculous. So for example: Alejandro Pradere, lover of fine arts, particularly admires a statue which adorns the main staircase in the Jockey Club - Falguière's Diana, sculptured in pink marble. In fact, Pradere is literally in love with the statue

*...No se atrevía a confesarse que había llegado a soñar, soñar  
despierto, que se acostaba con ella...Necesitaba tocarla antes  
de entrar al Jockey, como quien busca el agua bendita antes de  
entrar a un templo. (28)*

---

<sup>172</sup> "...a writer marginal to literature, a sub-product of literacy. The reader must understand that the space I will dedicate to her is justified only by the interest of the dissector in front of an anatomic part".

While Pradere's feelings towards this inanimate object might not be completely alien to art collectors, the far-fetchedness of what follows is ridiculous rather than "magically real":

*...Había traído de Bagatelle una bañera de su abuela, labrada en mármol de Carrara. La hizo depositar en uno de los vestuarios "de los viejos" en el sótano. Y allí la tenía para "bañarla". "Hace seis meses que no baña a su niña", le decía Arizmendi, un mozo del bar. "Después de que vuelva de Europa. Me lleva una mañana entera.... (p. 28)*

Now, Guido informs us that the statue was made of marble and, given its dimensions, obviously failed to realize the weight involved; however, she suggests that Pradere, with the help of Arizmendi, carries the sculpture from the staircase to the cellar, lowers it into a bathtub, and takes it back upstairs to the main hall. Furthermore, this happens in full view of Buenos Aires' *crème de la crème* of the landed and sporting society, since clandestinity would certainly not have been an option for such an undertaking. From the hands of, say, García Márquez, the above scene would have conveyed the foibles of an unconventional character who acts with surreal eccentricity. Guido only manages a far-fetched kinkyness.

As Jauretche points out, Guido portrays the upper classes in a manner her audience, the mediocre, the soap-opera-consumers, would imagine them. Inés nurses the severely injured Pablo with champagne, caviar, and American crackers just as these seem to be the only foodstuffs they ever consume apart from delicate pastries Antola calls *medias lunas* while the family insists on calling them *croissants*.

The Praderes' sexual relationships are always divorced from love and emotions. The men own small, clandestine apartments where they meet with their mistresses; the women entertain toy-boys on the living room floor, visit their lovers in said apartments, or engage in orgies with fellow exiles on Uruguayan beaches. Faced with genuine affection, the socialite, Inés, is puzzled how somebody like Pablo can be an experienced lover.

*...Dónde, dónde habrá aprendido este hombre, cuya vida ha transcurrido entre la cárcel y la lucha, entre la contrarrevolución y la oposición, los gestos del amor? (68)*

What could have been a reference to women's role or image ends up as ludicrous a notion as "the bathing of Diana". In the attic, Inés is in bed with Pablo, her most recent lover to whom she has just confessed that she has had four previous ones. Not at all happy with his fifth place, Pablo starts to investigate:

*...Ella, inmóvil, indefensa, permite que esa mano practique la tarea de reconocimiento y cuando él encuentra lo que buscaba, ante la resistencia dolorosa de ella, susurra en el oído:  
- Los cuatro amantes, señorita, pertenecen a su imaginación.  
Inés piensa: "Las mujeres de cierta condición tienen la virtud de parecer siempre vírgenes, después de ser poseídas por varios hombres. (69)*

No wonder then, says Jauretche, that all the 'mediocre' girls of Guido's readership aspire to ascend in class if it means such privileges.

On a more serious note it is worth pointing out that remarkably few analyses of Guido's work can be found; authors who address the work of other female writers of the time or Argentine twentieth-century literature in general only mention Guido in passing, if at all; and even then it appears that Guido has little in common with other authors. Although Flori briefly mentions Guido as a writer who brings to the forefront of her works a denunciation of the subjugated position of women (Flori, 1995:47), one cannot detect this particular commitment in *Incendio*. In some of her earlier stories, especially *La casa del ángel*, *La caída*, and *La mano en la trampa*, she touches on the experiences of women who, trapped by traditional social codes and demands for female purity, suffer ethical dilemmas when faced with moral corruption. The ladies in *Incendio*, on the other hand, are largely portrayed as 'equal' and are rarely plagued by their conscience. As for the other females, Antola or Pablo's mother and aunt, their description is limited to characteristics of physique or dress.

However, the most confusing characteristic of Guido's story is that it creates uncertainty as to whom or what she actually criticizes - who are the good and who are the bad. While she leaves no doubt about her anti-peronist position, it remains unclear whether she laments the fate of the upper class or rejoices in it. First impressions suggest the latter for her negative and exaggerated portrayal of the Pradere family; however, since she dedicates the book "a mí padre, que murió por delicadeza"<sup>173</sup>, she draws similarities with her father and Alejandro whose death was a consequence of his inability to cope with the loss of his way of life. It can be assumed therefore that she sympathizes with the Praderes rather than accusing them. She also fails to mention that in the decade following the fall of Perón, the landed bourgeoisie recovered a

---

<sup>173</sup> To my father who died of gentleness.

dominant position in Argentina. Under Peronism from 1943 to 1955, the previously most powerful landed bourgeoisie had lost the capacity to exercise direct political control. They had never been seriously hurt by Perón's economic policies, but they had been prevented from pocketing most of the profits from the wartime boom, and they had lost their lordship over the state. After the fall of Perón, the agrarians managed again to manipulate the apparatus of government (Corradi, 1974:11).

The position and fate of the middle class, Guido's own background and represented by the character of Pablo Alcobendas, is addressed too vaguely as to detect the writer's real standpoint. The description of Antola, the servant, as ugly, rude, almost freak-like, and definitely somebody to be feared leads one to believe that Guido was certainly not on the side of the working class; but again, the few corresponding passages are too generalizing and stereotypical as to allow an accurate judgment.

At the beginning of this chapter it has been noted that Lynch and Guido distance themselves from "typically female" writing. However, both works addressed above leave no doubt as to the gender of their authors; even if their names were removed from both the novels, the reader could immediately identify them as female. This raises the question of how they could so fervently insist on the masculinity of their voices and then produce such noticeably female texts; both, content and style are clearly targeting a female readership.

One explanation could be the fact that at the time *Ordóñez* as well as *Incendio* were published, the soap opera hit the television screens replacing the picture novel as a vehicle to experience romantic illusion, albeit at the price of fixing traditional female stereotypes (Feijoó et al, 1996:15). Nevertheless, there were also soap operas



that attempted to capture the social transformations of the time, even though their ratings were low and they were generally shortlived (Feijoó et al, 1996:15). Despite the fact that *Ordóñez* and *Incendio* have to be seen as falling into the latter of these categories, they obviously hit the right spot regarding the public's taste since both became best sellers and *Ordóñez* was made into a *telenovela*, although not until 1984. So it could well be, that Lynch and Guido temporarily abandoned their usual style of writing in exchange for financial gain - after all, both women expressed their desire for self sufficiency and independence.

On the other hand, the often exaggerated use of stereotypes, female in Lynch, class-related in Guido, could also be an implicit and deliberate criticism of the new media trends that, despite the general spirit of change, by and large portrayed women enacting their traditional roles. The favourite and ever recurring themes of the typical *novela rosa* - the scheming adulteress versus the decent, homely woman; the poor, innocent girl who marries the wealthy young man - are turned on their heads by both writers. True, Blanca Ordóñez has a number of illicit affairs but throughout the text, Lynch points to the fact that Blanca's concerns and problems are caused not so much by her but by domineering men who are supported by the patriarchal system which she cannot escape. Compared with these "real" issues, her transgressions appear much less scandalous.

In *Incendio*, it is the rich girl who falls in love with the poor guy; but rather than exploiting this theme in terms of its potential to create conflict within the Pradere family (a common theme in soaps), Guido concentrates on the difficulties the couple experiences - their priorities, their expectations - because of their profoundly different class-cultures. Like Blanca Ordóñez, the Praderes engage in numerous

adulterous affairs and yet, again, compared with the problems they face in terms of political reprisals, their moral wrongdoings become negligible side-issues.

Furthermore, by trivializing what is generally perceived as severe transgressions, indeed, by touching on sexual and political themes, in a language that, for the 1960s, was quite daring, Lynch and Guido challenge the well-known notion that women writers show a greater respect for taboo (see Castillo, 1992:98).<sup>174</sup>

As Castillo further notes, women's oppression is largely down to the fact that men have reserved the entire gamut of language that expresses sexual desire and eroticism for their exclusive use, because by doing so they have appropriated what should be shared with women and until women take back their share of language (erotic or otherwise transgressive, one might add), they will remain oppressed and excluded from other realms, power, wealth, and so forth (Castillo, 1992:99). This is only too logical a consequence since limitation of speech invariably also means restriction of thought. Lynch and Guido both refuse to be gagged in this manner and the pronounced female style of the novels in question might as well have been strategic.

As Medeiros-Lichem has noted, *La señora Ordóñez* significantly contributed to the development of the female voice in Latin American women's narrative in as much as it opens out the fictional space, hitherto confined to the domestic environment, to include women's participation in the public, political sphere (2002:103).

Blanca Ordóñez as a woman struggles against violation and enslavement by men, the Pradere family as a social class, struggles against violation and enslavement by the political regime. All the characters, however, comply with their subordination in order to keep their self intact. In Blanca's case, her submission often takes on erotic

---

<sup>174</sup> Castillo cites Clemente Hernando Balmori who maintains that women's language is more circumspect and graceful than men's and less charged with uncivilized variations on emotional expression because of their sense of modesty and decorum. According to Balmori, the reason why women show more respect for conventions can be found in their mental underdevelopment and their superstitious preoccupations (1962, in Castillo, 1992:98)

overtone, a theme that would become much more prominent in women's writing during the 1970s when the link between erotic subordination and political participation often became a central focus for female authors who would highlight the convergence of erotic submission to patriarchal domination and women's resistance to repression and authoritarianism (Medeiros-Lichem, 2002:103).

Many of those who, like the Praderes, found themselves threatened as a class retaliated against their humiliation and, in due course, turned from being oppressed to oppressors.

Concluding this chapter, it can be said that although by the 1960s, women's language had changed considerably since the writings of nineteenth-century female authors, women's relationship with their language remained marked by insecurity and inhibition. Patriarchal ideologies constructed and set into practice by the male-dominated system continued to determine women's lives; state and government persistently penetrated every aspect of their existence to the point of alienation and isolation within the family. Women's right to vote had been perceived as the most far-reaching vehicle for them to gain their place in the public sphere; however, women's access to decision-making positions remained firmly under the control of traditional power structures. Seen in this light, instead of gaining additional privileges, they lost control within their own homes because defining their roles became increasingly difficult.

Gorriti and Manso had felt cheated by a political system that was supposed to work according to Enlightenment principles but in reality sustained the mechanisms of the subordination of women as well as a rigid class system.

A century later, Peronism proved to be misleading to a similar extent. It is true that the Peronist state effected a number of important social reforms for most sectors but it could not legislate against the traditional cultural images of women or those pertaining to different social classes; it was not its intention to do so.

One of the most desirable elements of the image of the female was women's silence. Therefore, the fields of women's activities remained limited and their efforts for self-expression severely restricted.

Lynch and Guido accurately reflect this ambiguous attitude of the state and question its credibility in terms of its achievements. The themes they both address contain highly important issues of gender, power, and social discourses but their style is rather trivial. In both writers this can be seen as a strategy to emphasize the confusion the Peronist system diffused across the population.

Evidence seems to suggest that Peronism's main intention was to exploit hitherto dormant pools of potential voters rather than to diminish class discrepancies or women's subordination. Not unlike the Liberal State in the nineteenth century, Peronism failed to construct adequate foundations upon which the new, more egalitarian system could be developed. Instead of seeking a more consensual solution to class antagonisms, reforms were implemented by means of oppression which only radicalized the upper classes in their opposition; with devastating consequences.

The last chapter of this thesis will look at the work of two female writers who have portrayed the impact of these consequences on the majority of Argentines.

## Chapter 7

### Women writers and state terrorism

*Under authoritarian regimes language is the first system that suffers.*—Julio Cortázar<sup>175</sup>

In 1973, Perón returned to Argentina. Hector Cámpora<sup>176</sup> resigned to allow Perón to run for president. In a surprisingly uncontested move, the latter chose his third wife, Isabel<sup>177</sup> as his running mate. Perón's return from exile was marked by a growing rift between the right and left wings of the Peronist movement. Cámpora represented the left wing, while López Rega<sup>178</sup> represented the right wing. Under López Rega's influence, Juan and Isabel Perón favoured the right wing. Isabel had very little in the way of political experience or ambitions and she was a very different personality from Eva, who was more involved in politics and had renounced the post of vice-president years earlier. Juan Perón died on July 1, 1974, less than a year after his third election

---

<sup>175</sup> In Wilson, 2008:50

<sup>176</sup> Hector Cámpora was nominated by Perón's *Partido Justicialista* to run in the 1973 presidential elections and won. However, it was generally understood that Perón, still in exile, held the real power.

<sup>177</sup> María Estela Martínez Cartas met her future husband during his exile in Panama where she worked as a nightclub dancer. Juan Perón, who was 35 years older than she, was attracted to her beauty and believed that she could provide him with the female companionship he had been lacking since the death of Eva. Isabel gave up her career in show business and became Perón's personal secretary. Perón brought Isabel with him when he moved to Madrid in 1960. The Catholic Church did not approve of Perón's living arrangements with the young woman, so in November 1961, the former president reluctantly married for a third time. Having been deposed in a coup in 1955, Perón was forbidden from returning to Argentina, so his new wife would travel in his stead. As Perón began a more active role in Argentine politics from exile, Isabel became a go-between from Spain to South America. The trade unionist José Alonso became one of her main advisers in Perón's dispute against Steelworkers' leader Augusto Vandor's faction in the General Federation of Labour (CGT); Alonso and Vandor were both later assassinated in as-yet unexplained circumstances.

<sup>178</sup> José López Rega - former Minister of Social Welfare under the Cámpora government from May 1973 before Perón's return. He had played a rather obscure role in Perón's entourage in Madrid, chaperoning Isabel and acting as Perón's personal secretary, virtually controlling access to the aging General. An occultist and fortune teller, he published a 740-pages long book, entitled *Astrología esotérica* after his retirement as a police officer. The tome develops "in rambling, often impenetrably obscure language [...] strange theories about the colors of names and countries, and the importance of different forms of music on national traits." Others of López Rega's "works" include *El hombre, un mundo desconocido*, *Génesis de la nueva era*, *Tratado de canto, impostación y arte escénico*, *El libro de los desheredados*, and *Libro madre del éxito: predicciones y guía diaria válida hasta el año 2000* (Crawley, 1985:354 in Kantaris, 1995:45, footnote 16). According to López Rega himself, one of his books has been co-authored by the Archangel Gabriel (Simpson & Bennett, 1985:62-3, in Kantaris, 1995:46).

to the presidency. Isabel assumed the office and became the first non-royal female head of state and head of government in the Western Hemisphere. Although she seemed to lack Eva's charisma, the nation at first rallied to the grieving widow in this, her role of a lifetime. Even extremist groups were publicly offering their support to her following their rift with Perón. Isabel, however, abruptly canceled a full agenda of meetings with representatives of the Left, preferring to entertain the like of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Muammar al-Gaddafi and the Shah of Iran. The good will her husband's death had left her soon dissipated. Following a string of mysterious murders, public threats from leftist extremists and a wave of industrial strikes in September 1974, she became increasingly unpopular (Crawley, 1984:417-420). However, the real source of contention between her and the voters was that José López Rega had become the power behind the throne and set the agenda on a broad range of Isabel's policies. Acting as *de facto* Prime Minister he gained access to and control over the country's media and education. Furthermore, he exploited Isabel's acquaintance with other dictators to forge business partnerships with the like of Joseph Mobutu, for example and to establish contacts with foreign fascists like the Italian former Black Shirt Licio Gelli (Naylor, 2004:135)). Feared by the public and loathed by the Church and the Armed Forces despite his avowed right-wing views, López Rega was considered a borderline psychopath by other members of the government; in the mid-1970s he founded the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (Triple A), a death squad unit within the police force. Isabel had met López Rega during her time as Perón's "ambassador" during his exile in Madrid. She too was interested in occult matters and as president reportedly employed astrological divination to determine national policy, so the two quickly became friends. Isabel Perón and López Rega intended a fundamental turn-around of Perón's policies combining neo-liberal economics with political repression

which anticipated the military's strategy from the following year onwards; however, at this point they failed because of the strong resistance by the Unions and the lack of enthusiasm of the military that refused to back them. By the end of 1975, the military began to act in Tucumán in order to suppress the ERP (*Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo*), rehearsing the methods it would deploy later. By March 1976, the year of the *coup*, the constitutional government had lost all its power to control the violence and the confrontations between different social and economic sectors. (Romero, 48, at [http://www.unsam.edu.ar/escuelas/politica/centro\\_historia\\_politica/material/romero.pdf](http://www.unsam.edu.ar/escuelas/politica/centro_historia_politica/material/romero.pdf)).

The open criticism of the system that many writers engaged in during the 1960s had become impossible by the mid-70s. Without any doubt, the period of the Dirty War was a difficult and anxious one for writers, actors and directors alike. Many emigrated, mostly to Mexico<sup>179</sup> and Spain; but many also had left before because they already had been black-listed by Rega's Triple A from 1975 onwards. Those who stayed had to resort to metaphors, pseudonyms, and constant pretence (Esteve, 1991:60). Given a political system of unfettered state terrorism, words can become very dangerous indeed - for the speaker, the writer, and the reader - if every text produced is under the suspicion of disseminating subversive propaganda.

Literary production from the mid seventies and early eighties was, therefore, characterized by a new form of narratives that emerged within a framework of representational crisis. The authoritarian organization of culture by the oppressive military dictatorship in Argentina effected a suspension of the old beliefs and excluded customary interpretations from cultural production. The previous forms of capturing

---

<sup>179</sup> Valenzuela too felt obliged to leave Argentina in order to continue her career. She wrote *Cola* in Mexico. She has returned to Argentina occasionally since the restoration of democracy but her permanent home is in New York.

reality became useless faced with a set of disjointed and contradictory social experiences suffered by a fragmented society. Confronted with perplexity, the idea of finding significance and making sense of this experience became necessary. Therefore, narratives of this period abandoned the project of reproducing 'the real', experimenting with the production of incomplete and fragmented directions. This rejection of mimesis was based on the recognition that history had shattered and that it could not be recomposed narrating from a single point of view or a single discourse. The discourse of fiction, then, was posited as opposing the authoritarian discourse (La literatura durante el proceso military, [http://www.todo-argentina.net/Literatura\\_argentina/la\\_literatura\\_durante\\_el\\_proceso.htm](http://www.todo-argentina.net/Literatura_argentina/la_literatura_durante_el_proceso.htm)).

In her essay 'Whispers and Triumph' the poet and activist Marjorie Agosín said: "The woman writer in Latin America has taken on the role of witness; she has assumed the burden of the political barbarities of the society and taken up her position as a deliberate act of defiance against the silence imposed by oppressive governments. The image of the woman writer as someone who escapes real life and dwells in a world of fantasy and dreams, has been replaced by the woman who aims her pen like a rifle and lets fly words of lead and steel". (1986, in Bassnett, 1990:2)

For this last chapter, two more women writers have been chosen whose work reflects the political events and developments of their time. Luisa Valenzuela's *Cola de lagartija* as well as the short stories by Liliana Heker belong to the "literature of the Military Process". In accordance with Agosín's statement above, both writers' works bear witness to a country's descent into living hell and reveal the devastating impact of state terrorism on people's lives.



## Luisa Valenzuela<sup>180</sup>

Valenzuela often speaks of the need for women to engage in a “slow and tireless task of appropriation, of transformation”, with which she is indicating the important task of taking back the use of the language that asserts woman’s right to an estranged linguistic property as her personal possession and is also involved in a making-one’s-own of oneself, in realigning alienating categories and creating a new understanding of what is proper in the careful and intentional use of improprieties (Castillo, 1992:99).

“What goes unsaid, that which is implied and omitted and censured and suggested, acquires the importance of a scream. The disconcerting synonyms, the analogies, the varied connotations which disrupt the nature and functioning of every word are not to be understood as ‘contaminations’; writers sharpen and polish them, present them in the best way possible so that the light of the reading brings out all the facets of the text, even the most hidden ones, those most ignored and, as such most delightful - the ones that elude our self-censorship, our internal repression” (Valenzuela, 1986a:10).

Women are “naturally” more retiring, more superstitious, less able to speak directly about their bodies and particularly about their sexuality. As Valenzuela herself states, “Good girls can’t say these things, neither can elegant ladies nor any other women. They can’t say these things or other things, for there is no possibility of reaching the positive without its opposite, the exposing and exposed negative”<sup>181</sup> (Valenzuela,

---

<sup>180</sup>Valenzuela was born in 1938 in Buenos Aires and is a writer of both fiction and journalistic works. She is among Argentina’s most significant female writers and probably the most translated one. She is best known for the style of writing that blends magical and fantastic elements into prose. Valenzuela is also one of the most widely translated female South American writers. She has created numerous narratives in which authoritarian rule in society is mirrored by patriarchal domination in relations between men and women (for a more extensive biography see Magnarelli, 1990:532-45, Jehenson, 1995:64-75). *Apart from Cola de lagartija*, Valenzuela’s most known works include *Hay que sonreír* (1966), *Los heréticos* (1967), *El gato eficaz* (1972), *Aquí pasan cosas raras* (1975), *Como en la guerra* (1977), *Cambio de armas* (1982), and *Realidad nacional desde la cama* (1990).

<sup>181</sup> The translation belongs to Cynthia Ventura.

1986b:13); or, women's words have to be "clean" in order to maintain the image of the female clean and thus to maintain the social order. "The mouth", says Valenzuela, "is the most threatening orifice of the female body; it can eventually express what shouldn't be expressed, reveal the hidden desire, unleash the menacing differences which upset the core of the phallogocentric, paternalistic discourse; to clean, to purify the word, (is) the best possible form of repression" (Valenzuela, 1986b:13). In a wider sense, this controlling mechanism has been employed not only with regard to women but to all kinds of ethnic, religious, sexual or social minorities whose voices have to be closely scrutinized; it is only a small step from controlling, purifying, and ultimately silencing the word to the practice of purifying society from those who utter them if cultural and social norms are to be upheld.

Confinement to purity and 'cleanliness' bothers Valenzuela but she has no intention to play by the rules; instead, she employs the loophole of ambiguity that allows the reader to reinterpret the text. A very fitting example is her short story "The Fruits of Summer" (1986a:10-12) in which the first person narrator is a young woman who works at a market stall selling fruit and vegetables enthusiastically praising the quality of her produce. The nun who emerges from the convent opposite expresses her disgust at the girl's language.

"Come, touch, touch, feel them, you'll never find others as round and firm." With hands on my hips and with a fixed eye on the grapefruit, I don't look at her and she goes on reprimanding me. "This isn't the way, my child, the vendor's cry is different, everything you say degrades the market, it belongs somewhere else, it isn't the right way to say it. Don't say that, that shouldn't be said", she warns me, and I know damn well what can be said and

what should be said. "Smell, caress, taste. If you taste it, you take it."...I then cry out, "They are bursting with milk," while I offer a pair of coconuts, real hairy<sup>182</sup>.

What clearly is innocent hawking of merchandise is interpreted by the nun, who represents authority, the patriarchal oppressive system, as sexual innuendo; words that are forbidden for women; words that, coming from a woman's mouth, betray subversion. The market girl rebels against the system and gets away with it because she has appropriated language to serve her purpose.

Similarly, Valenzuela's short story "*Tango*" represents a critique of macho attitudes in the tango and Argentine society; but it also uses this popular dance as a perspective for male-female relationships, particularly in relation to power, control, and appropriate female behaviour (Díaz, 2007:108). Tango tells of Sandra, a woman who loves the tango but if she wants to dance she has to go along with tango etiquette; that is to say, she has to be submissive to her dance-partner who by controlling the moves also, seemingly, controls her. The tables turn, however, when Sandra willingly agrees to his suggestions to become more intimate.

"I am a widower and live with my two children. I used to be able to take a lady out for a meal in a restaurant and then back to a motel. Now all I can do is ask the lady if she has a flat somewhere central, because I can just about afford a chicken and a bottle of wine."...

"I haven't got a flat," I tell him, "but I do have a room in a

---

<sup>182</sup> Translation by Cynthia Ventura

boarding house, in a nice area, very clean. And I've got plates and cutlery and two green stemmed glasses, nice tall ones."

"Green? They're for white wine."

"Yes, they are."

"Sorry, I never touch white wine."

And without even dancing one more step, we part. (in Díaz, 114)<sup>183</sup>

With this short exchange, the man feels his control ebbing away rapidly and he makes a swift exit; meaning that women who exert power mean trouble and are best left alone - they are not "real" women if they do not act as is expected of them, i.e. according to their prescribed gender role<sup>184</sup>.

Valenzuela's intention is to create a female language that reveals what has not been represented - women's conscious expression of their sexuality and their bodies. This language is a new creation in as much as it is partly crafted from scratch and partly taken from existing, masculine language from which some elements are re-appropriated. Furthermore, it has to be used overtly, on full view and without inhibitions. Had Blanca Ordóñez been in possession of this language, she would not have suffered the frustrations over her inability to express herself (see Chapter VI).

---

<sup>183</sup> Translated by Margaret Jull Costa

<sup>184</sup> The 1986 film *Danzón* by the Mexican director María Novaro also deals with the gendered nature of popular culture. Like Valenzuela, Novaro addresses a female audience, offers a female point of view, and presents an alternative to the female image as sexual object as perceived through the male gaze (see Millán, 2001, <http://www.ub.edu>, 09/09/2009).

## Cola de lagartija<sup>185</sup>

This work is entirely based on reality. Any similarity

with characters or situations from fiction is strictly  
coincidental.

(Luisa Valenzuela about *Cola de lagartija*, 1988)

In this novel, Valenzuela demonstrates how the Third Peronism created the conditions for López Rega to rise to the powerful position that would directly lead to the horrors of the Dirty War - Rega's diffusion of terror and violence was only a "taste" of what would follow. "In 1974/75 we had not yet been conquered by the terror that blinds judgement. The atrocious violence spread by López Rega and his Triple A, a real state terrorism, was well known and evidenced; they did everything in broad daylight in order to sow terror and to silence us. With the subsequent dictatorship, violence became more clandestine, less visible; but even then, if you wanted to know something, you could find out a lot. Only then, you would not know any longer through the newspapers but through word of mouth, "fear to fear". We lived in a climate of hopelessness." (Valenzuela in Bilbija, 2003:155)

---

<sup>185</sup> The phrase *cola de lagartija* is a Spanish translation of a Guaraní term for a type of whip used for punishment that can inflict great pain. Although the Guaraní term expresses the whip's physical resemblance to a lizard's tail and not its actual substance, the metaphor suggests a series of images, among them the disruption of the lizard's corporeal integrity caused by the severing of its tail from the rest of its body. Another image it suggests is, of course, the phallus. Because the Sorcerer is obsessed with male sexuality and self-reproduction, it is fitting that the central image be masculine. Moreover, like the whip, the male member is used to oppress women who are routinely raped during torture sessions (Christoph, 1995:369). Also, as is well known, the lizard possesses the ability to re-grow its tail many times over. In this story, it is therefore symbolic for the continuation and replication of political systems culturally entrenched in the Argentine discourse.

*...Ideas en descomposición, los nobles preceptos pudriéndose lentamente y el olor a descomposición nos llega por oleadas, nos sofoca. Las sirenas de los patrulleros desprenden a veces esta fetidez, o la mirada turbia de los soldados que mañana tarde y noche nos apuntan con sus ametralladoras...¿Qué nos impide actuar o defendernos, qué nos paraliza? El terror. El asco...La necesidad de creer en algo. Los sueños. Las pesadillas.*  
(Cola, p. 76-7)

*Cola* reflects Valenzuela's effort to articulate the truth behind the lies that have occluded the reprehensible facts of her country's history. Employing humour and imagination, Valenzuela produces a chillingly comical description of ghastly acts to the human body; torture, murder, mutilation, and similar dominate *Cola*. The grotesque bodies that emerge in the reader's mind indicate that for Valenzuela the grotesque is one of the few aesthetic tools the artist can deploy to speak of unspeakable horrors in an effort to arrive at an understanding of the human capacity for violence and cruelty (Christoph, 1995:365)

"I wrote *Cola* with a sole objective: trying to understand. I could not explain to myself how a supposedly intelligent and sophisticated people like the Argentine could have fallen into the hands of the so-called Sorcerer". (Valenzuela in Picón Garfield, 1986)<sup>186</sup>; or in Eloy Martínez' words:

*Imaginen ustedes la inverosimilitud de un país que, tras una sucesión de golpes militares, incurre en la demasia de sentar*

---

<sup>186</sup> In this interview Valenzuela also clarifies a number of terms and names pertaining to South American indigenous mythology used in *Cola*.

*en el sillón presidencial a una mujer de pocas luces dominada por un cabo de policía con delirios ocultistas como sucedió en 1974 con Isabel Perón y José López Rega...Sólo la ficción podría contener todas esas delirantes realidades (1996:94-5, in Hughes Davies, 2007:291)*

The reader is introduced to José López Rega, head of the Triple A, the official mechanism of repression and torture. Ironically, he occupied the position of Minister for Welfare. Partly based on fact and partly fiction, Valenzuela creates a hideous character that has little in common with what is traditionally understood to be a human being. This mingling of fact and fiction is a typical characteristic of the postmodern narrative that redefines traditional categories that separated the real from the imagined (Díaz, *ensayos críticos*, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com)). López Rega is also known as El Brujo - The Sorcerer - because of his practising Black magic, macumba and witchcraft.<sup>187</sup>

In the novel, López Rega is neither man nor woman but has hermaphrodite qualities. His only interest is the cult of violence and his megalomaniac ambitions. We learn about the sorcerer's formation from childhood to death. We become witnesses of a perverse narcissism, the obsession with power, the sadism in which he delights, his taste for horror, torture and terror; in short, we experience the degradation of a human being in the most abject and cruel ways. Parallel to his psychological state, his physique is also monstrous. He has three testicles, the third of which he considers to be his sister, Estrella, and he intends to inseminate her, that is, he intends to inseminate himself in order to give birth to his own son: "hijo de Dios que sea Dios,

---

<sup>187</sup> He is also known in the novel as the red ant-sorcerer, witchdoctor, the Lord of Night and of the Tacurú (Guaraní for ant-hill), the Emperor of the Black Lagoon, Master of drums, High Priest of the Finger, Father/Mother of his own son "I", he/she, and Manuel (Gazarian Gautier, 1986:105).

puro y radiante" ("son of God who shall be God, pure and radiant"). He thinks that this auto-conception is possible because he believes himself to possess divine powers (Díaz, *ensayos críticos*, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com)).

We get a taste of The Sorcerer's bloodlust and megalomania right at the start of the novel where he refers to an old prophecy which he alters to fit his purposes:

*Correrá un*

*(quién pudiera alcanzarlo)*

*Correrá un río de sangre*

*(seré yo quien abra las compuertas)*

*río de sangre*

*(fluir constante de mi permanencia en ésta)*

*de sangre*

*(¡eso sí que me gusta!)*

*(sangre, rojo color de lo suntuoso, acompañándome*

*siempre, siempre para ador(n)arme*

*y*

*¡basta! La conjunción copulativa me da asco*

*Y Vendrán Veinte Años de Paz*

*- veinte años no es nada*

*- lo que vendrá puede ser postergado para siempre*

*- la paz ni la menciono, es el estatismo, es lo que*

*congela, lo que no me concierne y no me considera.*

*(9)*



El Brujo is telling us here that his intention is to suppress peace and perpetuate the river of blood “al compás de sus propios instrumentos” (according to his own tools [violence and torture]). It is also obvious that he seeks to become a god-like, omnipotent figure that controls life and death. He loves blood at all moments except when it represents the female bodily fluid in its conjunction with reproduction. He rejects women and his disgust at sexual intercourse alludes to his later efforts to become a super-being, self-sufficient even in procreation.

Valezuela reminds us “that the separation between what we usually call reality and fiction is more tenuous than we can imagine” (Interview with Picón Garfield, [http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/catalog/show\\_comment/221](http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/catalog/show_comment/221) ). Thus, the scenes in *Cola* that strike as particularly fantastic are often the ones that are closest to reality since they directly relate to what we know actually happened. El Brujo’s strange relationships with women are excellent examples for how the far-fetched might be a more adequate medium to relate the truth than a sober historical account.

The Sorcerer’s relationship with his sister Estrella, his third testicle, is a theme that appears throughout the book and is clearly one of these real/surreal elements, for Estrella is none other than Isabel Perón (Estela becomes Estrella). Her place, between his two natural testicles, symbolizes the close relationship they maintained and the restricted movement she was somehow subjected to - both vital requirements for him in order to carry out his pursuits. “Somos como el cristal: de una sola pieza” (we are like crystal: one single piece) he says (16). He needs Isabel to be the public face in order for him to act in the background: “Me importa manejar los hilos aunque nunca aparezca mi nombre en los periódicos” (it is important to me to pull the strings even

though my name never appears in the papers [17]). An omniscient narrator later tells us about the infamous union:

*Sólo una mujer creyó tenerlo y él la dejó creer,  
por conveniencia...Cuando un buen día tuvo que  
empezar a decirle Presidenta decidió hacer como  
quien caía en sus redes...Cumplió...orgullosa de  
estársela dando nada menos que a esa viuda y  
con la tranquilidad de saberla estéril.  
- ¿Quién lleva aquí los pantalones? - le solía  
gritar...y ella se veía obligada de rendirse a pesar  
de estar ocupando el más alto de los cargos públicos.  
Y él se sentía del todo seguro aunque ella saliera al  
balcón - cada vez más raramente - y el pueblo le  
gritara - Presidenta, coraje, al brujo dale el raje!!!  
(33).*

Another woman who stands out for her constant presence is La Muerta (the dead one), whom *El Brujo* worships and whom he dreams about in his drug-induced visions.

*Es ella, es la Muerta, el sueño de mi vida, la que  
siempre quise encontrar cara a cara en movimiento  
y no como de costumbre protegida por el inviolable  
rigor mortis. (26)*

If we did not know better, we would dismiss this episode as the ranting of the lunatic he undoubtedly is; but knowing that Eva Perón is still alive in the hearts and minds of

many Argentines and that she is buried in a fortress in order to prevent fanatics from disinterring her body, it can only be she whom he calls upon. Later, the Sorcerer obsessively plans to remove the “dead one’s” finger so that he can place it as a relic in his personal *altar del dedo* (altar of the finger)<sup>188</sup>.

El Brujo worships *La Muerta* because she presents no threat to him even though she wields great power; but because she is dead, she is also condemned to silence; and silent women do not spell danger - she is visible, but silenced, a fact that Valenzuela underlines in her story. Her severed finger is a fetish of the Sorcerer’s necrophilia and simultaneously a phallic symbol that may point to Eva’s powerful masculine characteristics as described earlier but also to El Brujo’s appropriating these powers by possessing the finger. Furthermore, the cut off digit means that the body it once belonged to is missing. Concurring with this symbolism, Molloy argues that “Only through the mediation of the fragment can the female body be apprehended and coveted in its plenitude - woman in her totality, woman complete - proves intolerable and more to the point, strong and threatening: she is then seen as agent, not victim of dismemberment” (1991:116 in Trulli, *ensayos críticos*, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com) ).

Then there is Valenzuela herself who appears in the book as the character “Rulitos”. She has made it her task to write el Brujo’s biography while he himself writes his autobiography. The Sorcerer, sinister face of power personified sitting on the throne of demagoguery, comes to life and almost destroys everything there is on earth. But it is Valenzuela herself who confronts him, author become character, in order to complicate El Brujo’s existence who is disarmed with only the use of her words; the word lends power (Díaz, 2002:10). Luisa knows that this will be a difficult undertaking

---

<sup>188</sup> López Rega ordered the restoration of Eva’s body in 1974 (see chapter 3, fn. 120), when her missing finger was replaced.

but she makes her intentions clear at the very start and throws down the gauntlet, so to speak, by issuing a word of warning (*advertencia*) to the Sorcerer:

- *Eso no puede escribirse*
- *Se escribirá a pesar nuestro. El Brujo dijo alguna vez que él hablaba con el pensamiento. Habría que intentar darle la palabra, a ver si logramos entender algo de todo este horror.*
- *Es una historia demasiado dolorosa y reciente. Incomprensible. Incontable.*
- *Se echará mano a todos los recursos: el humor negro, el sarcasmo, el grotesco. Se mitificará en grande, como corresponde.*
- *Podría ser peligroso*
- *Peligrosísimo. Se usará la sangre*
- *La sangre la usan ellos*
- *Claro. Le daremos un papel protagónico. Nuestra arma es la letra.*

As Lakoff has noted, it is not only how women use language but how language uses women and how men and women use language with/against each other in the metaphorical battlegrounds of social interaction (1975). In *Cola*, this interaction between the Sorcerer and Valenzuela (the character) takes on the form of a battle of words. Both are writing the about El Brujo's life and, obviously, their perceptions of it differ greatly from one another. As she comes closer to the truth, she also becomes a threat to him which, in turn, diminishes her control over his biography. As he extends his linguistic power in order to reduce hers, he invades her (the character's) terrain of

the imaginary (Christoph, 1995:378). At the end of the story, she realized that writing about El Brujo, in however an antagonistic manner, only adds to his power and she decides that the only way to silence him is by discontinuing his biography:

*Callando ahora creo poder acallarte. Borrándome  
del mapa pretendo borrararte a vos. Sin mi biografía  
es como si no tuvieras vida. Chau, brujo, felice morte.*

(246)

With the dead woman's enforced silence and Rulito's determination to speak out Valenzuela becomes the spokeswoman for silenced woman by making us aware of the profound rejection of high-quality literary works by women during that dark period of Argentine history (see *Peligrosas Palabras*, 93)

Body parts play an important role in the Sorcerer's life. Apart from the fascination with his third testicle and the obsession with the dead one's finger, he also suspends his victims' dismembered limbs from the ceiling of his cave, the anthill, where he can contemplate them when he lies on his bed. These human parts can be seen as representing the victims of the Dirty War, the thousands that were disappeared. The dismemberment of these people was of crucial importance to the military since it prohibited identification of the persons. Furthermore, it also stood in the way of the possible definition of them as martyrs. If people disappear it is as if they never had existed and any historical memory can therefore be prevented (Franco, 1987:66, 72).

Paley Fransescato employs Lacanian theory referring to the Sorcerer's narcissism - the discovery of his third testicle, his sister Estrella, is his first experience of himself as

love object, his narcissism (1985:877, in Craig, 2005:159). Craig, however, proposes to take this idea further by extending it to Freud's view of narcissism. Because El Brujo's mother is dead and there is no substitute except the red ants he lives with, he has no love-object. This lack makes object-libido impossible and results in his confinement within a state of pure ego-libido. The killing of the mother is the killing of the female *per se* and El Brujo's efforts to co-opt the female within himself denotes his fear of the female outside (1985:877, in Craig, 2005:160).

From the ceiling of his fortress, the anthill, the Sorcerer has suspended a large number of mirrors that not only reflect his collection of body parts but also provide him with an endlessly multiplied view of his own image. Lacan argues that when a child sees him/herself in a mirror for the first time he/she experiences great pleasure. Then follows the recognition that "me" is at once safely inside the skin, as always, and also there, outside the skin, in the glass reflection. Now, a person developing with a balanced object/ego-libido would then realize that they exist objectively to others; 'I am now only another being, and no longer everything. El Brujo, who has no love-object never makes this realization; he remains "everything" and since we covet what we see, El Brujo, looking permanently at his own image, feels desire only for himself. "Soy yo por dentro y yo por fuera", he says (I am inside and outside, 297). This suggests that not only does he fear the female outside, he fears the outside, period; a particular kind of paranoia characteristic of dictators.

Lacan argues further that the only way to capture the real is through language, that is to say, through the mediation of the symbolic. Language in *Cola* is perceived as an approximation to meaning and not as a mimetic representation of the real. The narration illustrates the multiplicity of voices and perspectives and temporality is the

experience as such and not a premeditated organization from a particular point of view (Díaz, *ensayos críticos*, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com) ).

Valenzuela stays true to her word of warning where she promises to use black humour in her fight against the Sorcerer. For the portrayal of a personality of a de-naturalized and monstrous character like him humour is indispensable in order to overcome fear and fight against self-censorship. The idea of bestowing a third testicle on the protagonist equipped with female attributes and the ability to procreate, constitutes a potent metaphor of the appropriation of the female on which the masculine order supports itself in order for its power to be imposed and rendered absolute. Furthermore, it confirms a well-orchestrated derision of this power. The laughter is bitter but beneficial. (Martinez: 2002:52-3). Despite el Brujo's hideous nature, or because of it, Valenzuela portrays some scenes in a way that make the reader laugh.

Delighting in constant efforts of self-reproduction and transformation the Sorcerer devises increasingly spectacular rituals to achieve his perfect self. Towards the end of the novel, in order to metamorphose into a woman, he has his aide, El Garza, make a clay body cast for him resembling the physique of a woman. As the clay dries it contracts and becomes very tight around El Brujo's body. He then suddenly realizes that he has practically bestowed the power of creator to El Garza - a role that is reserved exclusively for himself. He frees himself from the clay cast by releasing a fart of gigantic proportions.

*Y ahí nomás el embarrado Brujo se rajó un pedo  
estrepitoso que hizo temblar el agua fragmentando  
su imagen en mil pedazos. Y el pobre carrizal - que  
con el sol ya no era de oro sino de mera resequisima  
paja - ardió durante días. (261-2)*

Despite the abrupt interruption of the metamorphosis ritual, the Sorcerer's transformation has been completed. He emerges from the remnants of the clay cast as a perfectly formed woman with

*Carnes jugosas, lampiñas, tiernas, y sus pechos  
rebozantes apuntan ahora al resplandor del fuego  
y Estrella parecería reinar en soledad. (262-3)*

Also in possession of childbearing hips and rid of his (real) testicles, El Brujo is now perfectly equipped to produce his own son.

Some authors, like Sharon Magnarelli, for example, argue that *Cola* examines issues of power and language but rejects the notion of a gendered discourse in this novel (1988:135-70, in Christoph, 1995:365). Most of the grotesque and sometimes disgusting bodily images in *Cola* are in some way related to the female body, either to the feminized body of the Sorcerer or to female internal fluids or bodily functions. Throughout the text, female characters or images of the female are tools for el Brujo. They are vital for him in order to assert his absolute power through the oppression he is able to exercise on the female and his appropriating female biological characteristics. In this sense, feminist discourse runs through the entire text and denounces the patriarchal nature of the dictatorship. As noted in a previous chapter, Latin American feminists in the 1970s proclaimed that authoritarianism represented “the highest” form of patriarchal oppression and that social inequality is founded on gender inequality (Saporta Sternbach et.al, 1992:398).



The world of men<sup>189</sup> is marked by incomprehension, egoism and injustice; but it is a world where women also live. Rape, abortion, murder, and torture, therefore, keep reappearing in the works of many Latin American women writers and are often presented un-sensationally which makes them all the more chilling and terrifyingly absurd (Bassnett, 1990:5). In his early childhood, the Sorcerer clandestinely witnesses first a birth and later a rape which is part of an interrogation:

*...haciéndose el dormido, espío por entre las  
tablitas esas piernas abiertas, ese hueco feroz  
que iba abriendo como tragárselo, que después  
empezó a chorrear agua y se puso a escupir una  
araña peluda que emergió y emergió hasta develar  
la forma algo viscosa de la Cora. (40)*

*- Decinos dónde escondiste al fugitivo o te molemos  
a golpes...Un gendarme primero, y después el otro, se  
bajaron los pantalones y se le tiraron encima a doña  
Rosa dejándola chillar a gusto porque, total, en la  
inmensidad de la laguna... ¿quién escucharía esos  
chillidos, y a quién le importarían? El guri<sup>190</sup> ... solo  
pudo mirar y mirar esa escena confusa...mientras doña  
Rosa quedaba tendida allí, tan abierta de piernas que  
parecía rota. (42)*

For female authors in the 1970s and 80s “writing with the body” introduced a new practice that represented a way to establish the female subject within the symbolic

---

<sup>189</sup> I am sure Bassnett means the patriarchal system and not individual men.

<sup>190</sup> Guri - Guaraní for “young boy”.

order, as well as to entrench women's voice in literature and in the real world. The theories expounded in this field by Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig, and Julia Kristeva, only to name a few, have widely contributed to the development of this concept, demonstrating how, through history, women have been either alienated from their bodies or categorized as body-only. The introduction of bodily categories in the political terrain also constituted a central concern of feminism since its beginnings. Writing the body, in this sense meant to create a privileged space for women's words, inverting the relation of power between men and women that continued to exclude women and recover the space of their *jouissance*, their pleasure, bearing in mind the whole experience of life as women (Trulli, *ensayos críticos*, [www.luisavalenzuela.com](http://www.luisavalenzuela.com)).

For Foucault, the ways in which individuals give meaning to their activities and seek to interpret their experiences depend on different practices or techniques of the self, ranging from the concrete process of ordering one's day-to-day existence to the spiritual significance that one attaches to one's activities (1985, in McNay, 1992:52). To coherently and intelligibly interpret one's experiences, however, one has to be coherently sexed. The incoherence of sex marks the abject and the dehumanized from the recognizably human (Halperin, 1992:352). But Irigaray argues that the only sex understood to be coherent is the masculine one which is not marked as masculine but parades as a universal, as "one", a neuter and thereby silently extends its dominion. Woman's sex is not one, not coherent and therefore cannot be denominated as sex but finds itself outside this order. The coherent subject, which is always masculine, is thus constructed through the abjection and erasure of the female (Halperin, 1992:353). In *Cola*, Valenzuela obviously appropriated this idea and employed it successfully in the portrayal of the Sorcerer as a universal neuter and the female characters as

abject, inhuman, and totally dispensable. Valenzuela feels the constant need to access the abject, everything that is excluded from symbolic order and from the social subjectivity; that is, everything that “disturbs an identity, a system, an order” (Peligrosas Palabras: 50), thus trying to amplify the registers of this order, system and identity. She also insists on the need to enjoy the abject when it is translated as putrefaction and pestilence and the source of a profound disgust (Peligrosas Palabras: 46). For Valenzuela, this incursion on disgust has as its primary objective to perceive the power latently generated there. *Cola* is a powerful allegory of Argentina’s descent into the barbarism that it had so vehemently tried to avoid and that the writer investigated, searching in the dark places of history and delighting in the disgusting. She did it with the hope to achieve a minimum of understanding and to glimpse a solution (Martinez, 2002:50).

The theme of motherhood is particularly problematic for El Brujo. Not only does he refuse to include a woman in procreating his son, he claims that he created himself and that his mother was no more than a vehicle for his birth. With this, he is no longer reliant on a woman in order to have a child and he takes away women’s only power over men, namely the ability to give birth.

El Brujo is obsessed with power - his only pursuit is absolute power: “...*dominar el mundo es la única voluptuosidad posible, el gran orgasmo cósmico*<sup>191</sup> (p. 298). He does not need women to reach orgasm; he does not need women to procreate.

*¿Mujeres? ¿Para qué quiero mujeres? Yo vengo  
con mujer incorporada, soy completo. (32)*

---

<sup>191</sup> “...to dominate the world is the only possible voluptuousness, the great cosmic orgasm”.

El Brujo considers himself totally self-sufficient, the sole purpose of woman is to produce the egg after which she should die; or disappear, which strongly alludes to the thousands of pregnant women who were disappeared during the dictatorship. Once they had given birth, they were executed and their babies appropriated by the authorities.

*Dicen que mi madre gritó el doble al nacer yo y después  
se murió para siempre: no le quedaba otra cosa por  
hacer en este mundo. (11)*

*La gallina nunca ha sido más que intermediaria y una vez  
cumplida su misión conviene destruirla... El, que fue su  
propio padre y destruyó su claustro, es también la primera  
mujer por suerte sin vagina, el puro huevo (34)*

Apart from Lacanian and feminist theory, Valenzuela develops her story to also include the Argentine national discourse by way of describing the squalor and primitive living conditions in the rural areas and the subjection of women and the indigenous population. At the end of the novel, the reader witnesses how El Brujo's efforts to give birth become fruitful. He puts on weight and turns into an immense, delirious being. With the superb use of black humour, this grotesque character, finally giving birth, disintegrates with an enormous explosion; the scattered pieces slowly bleed rivulets of blood that flow towards the Argentine capital. The inhabitants believe that, at last, the famous river of blood has materialized and that twenty years of peace would follow. Except one bystander - he is doubtful:

*...Las tiranías ya no vienen como antes. Ahora tienen  
piezas de repuesto...este hilo no puede ser el tan mentado  
río de sangre, porque entonces en lugar de veinte años nos  
tocarán apenas veinte minutitos de paz. (302)*

With this, we can almost hear Sarmiento expounding his idea of the inevitability of violence in Argentine culture caused by the “natural” tendency of the (rural) population to ally itself with a violent dictator.

El Brujo’s death and his shattering into a million pieces create chaos but this chaos gives way to the deconstruction of the character and his disintegration into a trickle of blood. As Díaz further notes, at the core of every chaos there is the seed of a new order. The trickle of blood is followed by the possibility of peace; nevertheless, peace remains elusive because even the nature of dictatorships is not static, as our bystander has observed.

“A river of blood will flow” has been interpreted by the Sorcerer himself as a continuation of his reign of terror; however, the prophecy is now fulfilled on Valenzuela’s terms by making him explode (Jehenson, 1997:74). His third testicle, the woman within him that makes him a gender-less super being, in the end is the seed of his own destruction. Valenzuela, the character and women in general have taken their revenge.

“In the novel”, says Valenzuela, “I let language speak for itself, let it choose its own path”; and language seems to have appropriated reality: a Sorcerer, a fictional López Rega with three testicles with the indomitable desire to procreate his own son would die in prison years later with his real body ravished by testicular cancer. Power

of fiction? Power of the subconscious? Of the collective subconscious? (in Bilbija, 2003:163).

López Rega died in 1989.

### Liliana Heker<sup>192</sup>

Heker began publishing her work in 1966 in the year when Argentina came under the military rule of Carlos Onganía. The timely coincidence of her foray into literature and the beginning of a military dictatorship that became progressively more violent in the following years is symbolic for Heker's function as a literary historiographer (Gardiner, 1997:3).

Central to most of Heker's work is an 'other' of some kind; this can be in the form of a threat coming from the outside, invading people's lives or the portrayal of the protagonist as moving outside the dominant order.

Unlike Valenzuela's *Cola de lagartija* where the reader is immediately placed in a fantasy environment, Heker's stories begin in relatively "normal" every-day settings. Only gradually it becomes clear that the central theme of the texts is the interaction of social discourses and the individual's subjective perception of self, both of which are involved in the formation of an individual's identity. The revelation of the discrepancies between these two aspects of self, then leads to an identity crisis and

---

<sup>192</sup> Heker was born in 1943 in Buenos Aires. She founded two literary journals, *El escarabajo de Oro* and *El Ornitorrinco* which provided the space for the publication of many of her essays, critiques, and participation in ideological and cultural debates. All of Heker's short stories have been translated into English and many have been published in Europe and North America. Her work comprises three novels, *Un resplandor que se apagó en e mundo* (1977), *Zona de clivaje* (1987), and *El fin de la historia* (1996). Amongst collections of short stories are *Los que vieron la zarza* (1966), *Acuario* (1972), *Las peras del mal* (1982), *Los bordes de lo real* (1991), and *La crueldad de la vida* (2001). The collection *Cuentos* (2004) contains all her stories to date (Díaz, 2007:185-6).

the often painful recognition by the protagonist that “who they think they are” does not correspond with the perceptions others have of them<sup>193</sup>.

During the Dirty War, writers were faced with the problem of representing reality and also with the hegemony of normative aesthetics that presented the dilemma of how to construct the relation between reality and literature or the impossibility of such a relation (Sarlo, 1987:41). Most narratives of the time maintain a fluid and dynamic relation between the meanings of experiences and the meanings imposed by the authoritarian discourse and a set of meanings constructed in the years immediately preceding the military coup. This fluidity of meaning, the tension that is established between figurative forms, carves out a discursive space, open to interpretation (Sarlo, 1987:45-6).

Under the protection of the armed forces, the state articulated a one-dimensional theory about reality. This was aimed at the creation of a unified discourse and the elimination of any possible opposition; an institutional programme was created in order to uproot any sense of ‘other-ness’ (Masiello, 1987:13). In this sense, it could be argued that a dirty war was already in progress when José López Rega was manipulating politics in an attempt to reorganize the nation, even though both terms (*Guerra sucia* and *Reorganización nacional*) came into existence as late as 1976. Only, as Valenzuela states above, the terror was exerted much more overtly and therefore was somewhat easier to avoid than later under the junta.

---

<sup>193</sup> This same idea (Taylor, 1989) about the objective and subjective components of self has been briefly touched upon in chapter II (part 2, the Identity of Motherhood).

## Un secreto para vos

In 1972, within the collection of short stories, *Acuario*, Heker published *Un secreto para vos*. With this story Heker establishes the paradigm of her narratives that, by and large, emerge as an expression of the dynamic of order/disorder which is characteristic for her work (Corpa Vargas, 1996:122).

Albertina, the central protagonist of the story appears in the text through the narrative voice of a third person. She is a working-class woman who seeks employment in one of Buenos Aires' most prestigious fashion houses by the name of Maison Saint Simon. Because of Albertina's rather shabby appearance and the fact that her sick son is being looked after by a neighbour while she is out, her petition for employment is received negatively by the owner of the shop.

Nevertheless, she is employed as a seamstress. Her place of work is a small, isolated room, well apart from the luxurious quarters frequented by the affluent customers. That way "*las clientas ni la iban a ver*" (the clients would not even see her). Strangely, Albertina insists on locking the door to her work room and always answers in a strange voice if anybody talks to her through from outside. One day, however, something is wrong with her son and she feels obliged to open the door when she receives the bad news. To everybody's surprise, Albertina is dressed in sumptuous clothes and starts to perform a strange dance while all the other employees are laughing at her.

As Corpa Vargas rightly argues, with this story, Heker addresses the social discrepancies between the lower and upper classes in Argentina, antagonistic forces characteristic in a capitalist society.



Angus Fletcher's (1982) definition of the allegorical hero is applied by Corpa Vargas to the protagonist Albertina: she is engaged in a power struggle between herself and the shop owner; she almost obsessively pursues her objective, obtaining employment. Her space of action is an isolated place; sacred to her - the locked room; and in the end she performs a strange dance symbolizing her apocalyptic vision of the future. The fact that she wears eccentric clothes is a further characteristic of the allegorical hero, as pointed out by Fraser and she is driven by an abstract principle - that of class equality.

So far, so good; however, considering the time in which the story was published, Heker's allegory can be extended to even more immediate events than class struggle. The character Albertina could well be symbolic for a female participant in a left-wing political movement: The power struggle is between the militant and the establishment which is represented by the high class fashion house, Saint Simon. The locked, isolated room in which she works is representative of the clandestine nature of her activities and also for the break with her family after giving priority to the social struggle. The glamorous clothes Albertina wears speak of her desire to be a "normal" woman just like one of the interviewees in Chapter IV expresses<sup>194</sup>. Also identical to the "real"

*guerilleras*, she finds it difficult to balance her duties as a mother with the requirements of her work/activism. Finally, the apocalyptic vision expressed with a frantic dance can be understood as the disillusionment with the struggle and a foreboding of exile, prison or death.

---

<sup>194</sup> "Muchas veces tuve la ilusión de que si me vestía con la ropa elegante que me regalaba la abuela de mi hijo podría ser una señora como la dueña de la prenda, y me esforzaba en parecerlo para luego darme cuenta de que me cansaban los tacones y los gestos impostados. Quise ser como la mayoría de las mujeres y tener familia, casa y trabajo seguros; en otras ocasiones, cansada de todo sólo soñaba con tropezar en la calle con un hombre corriente que ofreciera cuidar de mí" (Vásquez, 426 in Valero, 2005: 148).

It is also significant that Albertina's physique is raised as a reason for the fashion lady's rejection of her:

*La sola idea de tener una mujer con ese aspecto dentro de Saint-Simon parecía una profanación. Albertina era grandota, oscura y algo deforme, en cuanto a su rostro [...] debería estar copiado del de un guerrero azteca (21, in Corpa Vargas, 125).*

This description clearly demonstrates Heker's intentions: Albertina's almost fierce, i.e. "militarized" face portrays somebody involved in a struggle, perhaps even a violent one; but also seems to depict either a rural person or an indigenous one or both; and with this, Heker clearly raises the issue of the sarmentine dichotomy. The "strange" dance Albertina performs also has indigenous, almost occult undertones which make her even more sinister in the eyes of the elegant employees. The woman clearly presents a metaphor for the threatening 'other'.

### **Cuando todo brille**

In this short story, published in the collection *Las peras del mal* (1982)<sup>195</sup>, it is also an 'other' that causes upheaval; but this time the roles are reversed; the 'other' does not come as a person but as something more abstract, more difficult to identify and, therefore, more difficult to fight.

---

<sup>195</sup> The story also appears in Moreno, 1998:11-20. This is the one used here.

The protagonist is Margarita, a married, middle-class house wife who lives with her husband in a nice, suburban house. A compulsive cleaner, one day she tells her husband to use the back door at the south side of the house if a northerly wind was blowing; and to come and go through the main entrance door, at the north side of the house if the wind came from the south; all this, to avoid dust being blown into the house. The husband's reaction is one of indignation:

*Él se puso de pie como quien va a pronunciar un discurso, gargajeó con sonoridad, casi con delectación. Después inclinó levemente el torso, escupió en el suelo, recuperó su posición erguida y, con pasos medidos, salió de la cocina. (13)*

After the husband has left in a huff, Margarita starts to clean the whole house meticulously; not just once but repeatedly, making sure all the time that the shine she raises on floors, furniture and fittings is absolutely free of any marks.

Things start to get out of hand when she finds herself with the problem of how to clean the cleaning cloths and equipment and keep them clean. She works through the night and at seven o'clock in the morning she feels faint from not having eaten anything for twenty four hours. She decides to prepare a steak and some fries; but she is manic now, acts erratically and becomes increasingly disturbed. Oil spills on the floor, water is rushing into the sink; Margarita slips on the oily tiles and hits her head. When she wakes, she finds herself lying in oily water which she uses to refresh her face; then she drinks some of it. She does not manage to get up to the bathroom and relieves herself on the floor. While she is lying in her own excrement, she remembers when she was a little girl, dressed in her best outfit. *She must not dirty her dress! - Or*

*her knees. Then the voice: Off with you to take a bath! And then she runs to the back of the house and throws herself into the dust, rolls in it; and her nails and hair and ears become full of dirt. She needs to feel dirty - every nook and cranny of her body has to be filthy so that she can have a purifying bath that will cleanse her from all the muck.*

In the present, lying on the floor, she looks at the excrement. “Pooh”, she says, and she sinks her finger into it voluptuously. Then she gets up and, with the same finger, writes on the kitchen wall “shit” and signs “Margarita”.

When the husband comes home five days later, dutifully entering through the back door (a northerly wind is blowing), a bunch of reconciliatory flowers in his hand, a gooey mess meets him in the kitchen.

Corpa Vargas sees Margarita’s behaviour through a Freudian lens. Freud attributed obsessive-compulsive behaviour, from which Margarita clearly suffers, to unconscious conflicts which manifest themselves as symptoms (1996:118). Sufferers display the typical behaviour corresponding to their illness but they are not aware of its significance; it is the process of repression that leads to the obsession<sup>196</sup>. Margarita experiences an external prohibition of her cleaning mania in the form of her husband; but the repression he exerts on her only make matters worse.

Furthermore, there is the repression she experienced in her childhood when she was prohibited from getting dirty. This developed her subconscious recognition that the dirtier one gets the more satisfying is the subsequent cleaning session. Thus, Margarita

---

<sup>196</sup> Freud describes the clinical history of a typical case of “touching phobia” as starting in early childhood, when the person has a strong desire to touch an item. In response, the person develops an “external prohibition” against this type of touching. However, this “prohibition does not succeed in abolishing” the desire to touch; all it can do is repress the desire and “force it into the unconscious” (see Freud’s Totem and Taboo, 150).

seeks out the smallest speck of dirt, real or imagined, in order to experience the bliss of getting rid of it.

However, characteristic for the literature of the time was the use of narrative strategies that incorporated a multitude of discourses that, in opposition to the single discourse of authoritarianism, sought to deploy different approaches to explain what was happening (Corbatta, 1999:164).

“*Cuando todo brille*” also belongs to the so-called *literatura del proceso* and what interests in the context of this work are the story’s reflections on political and gender related issues.

Something, an ‘other’, is invading Margarita’s ordered life and creates chaos - the wind, representing the repression exerted by the dictatorship.

*El viento. Entraba por las ventanas abiertas, arrastraba el polvo de la calle, arrastraba la basura del mundo que se adhería a las paredes y a su corazón...entraba por su nariz y por sus orejas y por sus ojos...(19)*

One cannot escape that wind. It is forever changing and alternatively blows from different directions just like the political systems; but no matter on which side they are orientated, they invariably disrupt one’s personal life. The order established by one regime is overthrown by the next which forces one to adapt time and again. As pointed out in chapter II, when state formations change, so do the roles that individuals play in society, particularly those of women.

As is well known, the military dictatorship placed strong value on traditional gender roles. Margarita complies - she is the perfect house wife and yet, the fulfilment of her duties only earn her the disapproval of her husband who is annoyed by her, as what he

perceives as over-zealous, cleanliness. Who can blame Margarita for being confused? Where are the guide lines for how much cleaning is appropriate? She clearly does not know any more what exactly is expected of her; no matter how great her efforts, they are not appreciated; thus, she enters into a severe identity crisis. Repressed from the outside and repressed from within, devalued from both sides, her disorder escalates and leads to total break down.

### **Family Life (Vida de familia)<sup>197</sup>**

In this story, Heker creates an intellectual character, Nicolás Broda who, like many other Argentine intellectuals, is caught in a battle between ideas and the ideological complexities during the years of the dictatorship (see Dalmaroni, 2004:155-7). In response to the repression, Heker, again, resorts to metaphor as a narrative strategy to convey the brusque irruption of the “outside” into a seemingly ordered setting. Like Margarita’s, Nicolás’ inability to cope with the menace that is lurking behind his back results in a psychosis.

Nicolás is a mathematician, an academic, a position that places him in a sector of Argentine society that has historically been plagued by a problematic relationship - that between intellectuals and the state who, particularly in times of repression, has fought thought and ideas that have been antagonistic to the ideological doctrines the regime sought to impose.

Somewhat reminiscent of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* (1961), Nicolás wakes up one 7 July and feels that something is not quite right. The noise of clanging pots and pans in the kitchen has interrupted his sleep. What immediately strikes him as odd is that his

---

<sup>197</sup> This story has only been available to me in its English translation by Alberto Manguel, 1994:55-84

alarm clock has not been set to its usual time of eight o'clock but half an hour later. What did he do last night? All he remembers is his father standing on the balcony dropping the forgotten house key. When he finally does remember he blames his blurred memory on a late night with his friend Segismundo, and he dismisses the rearranged clock as an oversight. The situation becomes more disturbing when an "unknown woman in a lace-trimmed dressing gown - fat, with peroxidized hair - comes out of his parents' bedroom", calls him Alfredo, and tells him to do up his fly (61).

Nicolás rearranged his underwear. He could not help admiring the cool head he was keeping under such extraordinary circumstances. He tried imagining the scene when he would tell all this to Segismundo. (61)

In the bathroom he notices that there are five toothbrushes instead of the usual four and yet, he does not recognize any of them as his. Although the clothes laid out for him fit his size, they are not his either and details of his room have changed too.

Here, Heker employs a number of symbols and images in order to express the fluidity of time and space within the historical development of the country. The 7 July is two days before National Independence Day, a date that initially announced a freedom that proved elusive subsequently.

The father figure on a balcony, most likely Juan Perón, providing the "key", the solution to a problem; how often have people been tricked by such figures promising improvement and solutions without them ever materializing afterwards?

The noise of pots and pans, usually produced by disaffected crowds on the streets has now infiltrated the house. Even a person's last private refuge has become a trap.

In this sense, Nicolás journeys through history in search of the beginning of the end (Corpa Vargas, 1996:116)

Although Nicolás knows at this point that the mother is not his mother, the father not his father, and that he does not have a sister, his mathematical mind prevents him from panicking because he knows that there has to be a logical explanation. He decides to act as “normal”, calls the strangers Mom, Dad, and Chelita and sets out to visit the computer centre where he works as a programmer. However, when he arrives there - having walked the familiar route - there is no computer centre, or the usual shops and buildings belonging to this neighbourhood.

He was in a totally unfamiliar place. For several seconds he had borne the unbearable impression that reality had shifted, that everything he believed in was false, that his points of reference suddenly made no sense. (70)

The same thing happened to him again at the Computer Centre...

When he left, he had found out something of the utmost importance: no Nicolas Broda worked there. No Nicolas Broda had ever worked there. (71)

It has become clear here that the protagonist has lost his identity; but unlike Margarita, who has lost hers while trying to comply with changed requirements, Nicolás, in his profession as an intellectual, is no longer required at all. In a dictatorship thinkers are redundant; there is nothing the oppressor fears and despises more than independent thought. While Margarita has to adapt her identity as woman in terms of the expectations others have of her, Nicolás' reinvention demands self-censorship to the point of self-denial.



As the reader might have guessed, the friend, Segismundo, no longer exists either, nor does the apartment block he used to live in. Here, Heker points to one of the most painful and devastating realities of state repression: long-term relationships of trust with family and friends break up due to even the most remote possibility of betrayal. To the same extent as one's own identity becomes distorted, that of others do too and trust becomes the most valuable though uncertain commodity. In this sense, institutionalized terror not only invades and disrupts daily routine, it goes as far as to denigrate and soil the most intimate and precious of human emotions like love and affection, condemning them to loneliness.

Despite Nicolás' disturbing situation he decides to adapt to his new life and complies with "his mother's" request to bring back some groceries, plays along at the dinner table, and finds out some facts about himself from note books and personal documents in his room.

By 7:00 he had managed to put the facts into some sort of order: either this was a dream, or this was really happening. if this was a dream, was it possible that, within the dream itself, he was considering the possibility of its being a dream? Yes, of course, things like that do happen in dreams. But do reasonings like this also happen in dreams? By 7:20 he had accepted that *this was really happening*. He went out for a walk. (78-9)

While out, something positive happens, something that tells Nicolás that the future is going to be all right: he feels that somebody has recognized him as himself! And he decides that

there was only one way out...He would be Alfredo Walter di Fiore, and he would make Alfredo grow vaster and more powerful than all the blonde women...He would do for Alfredo Walter de Fiore what he might never have done for Nicolas Broda...he had waited for a test, for that heroic or herculean act that only he would be able to undertake. And now he would undertake it. (81)

The small encounter during his walk has made Nicolás realize that nobody “would ever be able to dispossess him of the feeling of being himself” (80). True, “those he had loved, the things he had shared, that which until yesterday had been his past: where would he look for them now? He feels utterly alone; but he is *himself*” (80).

At this point the reader feels as euphoric as Nicolás himself at the prospect that he will somehow manage to remain himself and evade the attention of the authorities by living in disguise.

However, like Valenzuela’s bystander at the end of *Cola de lagartija*, who announces that peace will only last for twenty minutes, Nicolás’ hopes are severely diluted the following morning:

Someone was opening the door to his room. Nicolas saw a tall, thin woman walk in, her hair grey and dishevelled. The woman approached the window and lifted the blind. She turned towards Nicolas’ bed.

‘Nine o’clock, Federico,’ she said. (83)

And she reminds him that he had promised to get up early to paint the kitchen ceiling.

The theme of state repression and its effects on the personal life occupy a central theme in Heker's narratives; a strategy that can be understood as an attempt to resist the abuse of power through a metaphorical transferral of the national project to the private sphere. It can be said that Heker intends to raise the reader's consciousness with regards to the tactics of the state which, in turn, then offers the possibility for liberation (Corpa Vargas, 1994:418-19, in Colomina-Garrigós, 2009:64). In a way, "Cuando todo brille" and "Vida de familia" both could be understood as quasi a manual for how-not-to-get-caught-out by the state's manipulative strategies.

However, Nicolás' attempts to change his identity are doomed to fail because he forgets that the way others perceive him is as important for a coherent self as his own perception of himself.

To finish on a positive note - it is just as well that Nicolás does not succeed. After all, he would practically live in an isolated vacuum; he would end up repressing himself in addition to being repressed from the outside; he would become fragmented, alienated, and unable to communicate. In short, he would become the ideal product of repression; and then, the oppressors would have won.

## **Conclusion**

Valenzuela, in her search to understand the mechanisms of the abuse of power and how it affects the human psyche, conceptualizes power as a masculine force. With her portrayal of the Sorcerer she reveals the dark side of power that has been allowed to come to the surface. El Brujo is a personified Freudian Id lacking any other

components of self that would make him recognizable as a human being and fit to coexist with others.

Valenzuela's work embodies a combination of humour, sexuality, and political critique but there is also an element of hope. In *Tango* and in *Cola*, the female ultimately gains the upper hand. By manipulating and recuperating language they also gain power and they triumph because they subvert the traditional moral of female subordination. They no longer can be victimized because they have taken control over their own lives.

Like the authors in the previous two chapters, Heker addresses the alienation of individuals within their own families. The political and social upheaval that is establishing itself on the outside has started to spread into peoples' homes; their ultimate private refuge. The feeling of security inside the home has vanished and "normal" family life is no longer possible, life-long relatives and family members have become mutual strangers. Heker underlines the fact that men become affected by this phenomenon to the same extent as women. Neither of the characters in the chosen stories is able to carry out the roles they have, so far, been comfortable to occupy. The political system has changed and so have its expectations of individual members of society. With this, Heker alludes to the fact that women and men are manipulated by the state in order to fit its changing requirements. They all feel certain that worse is to come, that what is a menace at the moment predicts disaster for the future.

While for Valenzuela state-power and masculine power are synonymous and personified in the form of a psychopathic monster, Heker presents her male characters alternatively as oppressors, victims, or both at the same time.

As sometimes, in “*Un secreto*”, men do not appear at all; this is significant in as much as it emphasizes the extent to which patriarchy and its inherent repression are entrenched in cultural and social norms. With the absence of men in the narrative, the upper-class women now exercise power instead. This confirms Foucault’s notion that power is present at all levels, in all sectors of society.

Margarita’s husband figures as dominator and victim simultaneously. The couple are equally affected by the intrusion of the political system, which renders their private life increasingly uncomfortable. However, the husband is free to leave the house, while his wife is trapped inside it. At his return, he expects her to be there, in her place, like always. Only, nothing is like it used to be and neither of them can deal with this situation.

Nicolas Broda, a male intellectual, has been driven into a vacuum by political events. His family life, his work, and consequently his identity erode before his very eyes. His attempts to rationally solve his problems fail for the irrationality of the world he inhabits.

## Conclusion

The severe fragmentation of Argentine society and the disastrous political - and in consequence, economic - development undoubtedly have their roots in the post-independence notion of civilization/barbarism established by the Generation of 37. It is true, patriarchal systems, the neglect and discrimination of minority groups of all kinds, and the emergence of state terrorism have been entrenched global themes; however, in a cultural setting where these elements are perceived as an inherent national characteristic and destiny, it is much harder, hopefully not impossible, to achieve lasting peace and social coherence. Women's struggle against this founding ethos has been even harder than men's because they have had to adapt their demands to an already existing patriarchal structure; since they are largely excluded from participation in those decision-making bodies that organize society in the first place, their negotiation also happens from a subordinate position.

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo are probably the most well known Argentine womenactivists; however, it has been demonstrated that the first struggles for women's rights in Argentina go back to the last decades of the nineteenth century and continued through a number of changes in state formations and social transformation. Women have been active through wars, economic hardship, industrial modernization, brutal dictatorships, and have contributed widely to every aspect of the country's development. Unfortunately, the rewards they reaped for their efforts were few and far between. Even though there is now a female Argentine president, fundamental legislation for the protection of women remains elusive.<sup>198</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> In 2008, 208 women were murdered by their spouses or partners. Every five days, two women are killed in domestic violence cases. While the state continues to invade the private life of people, it shows little enthusiasm to interfere where it would be welcome. Adequate legislation to deal more effectively with this kind of offences has not been forthcoming so far; abortion is still illegal in Argentina.

Women's participation in protests and movements for change, more often than not, were motivated by the wish to fulfill rather than subvert traditional gender roles. In its initial stages, gender-research was marred by its treatment of women as a homogenous group regardless of the different interests they sought to protect in terms of race, class, age, and so forth. It has been shown that women were mobilized not only as women but also as mothers, workers, citizens, and of course, as a combination of all of the above. Unlike in Europe and the US, where women have mostly sought recognition within a gender neutral public sphere, in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America, women demanded recognition, first and foremost, in their roles as wives and mothers. They believe that these roles legitimize their sense of injustice and outrage, not only in the face of political oppression and the violation of human rights but also of economic policies and the lack of adequate labour-laws that prevent them from carrying out this role adequately.

This exploration has focused on three periods in Argentina's development since independence - the Liberal State, Peronism, and the years that preceded the military coup leading to the most recent dictatorship. It is quite obvious that the state always, not only during times of severe political oppression, has invaded the very core of the private sphere, the very space which has been regarded as women's domain but could not remain untouched by the events that developed on the outside. In this sense, women not only demanded wider incorporation into the state as full citizens in order to occupy their rightful place as equal human beings; additionally, they also laid claim to legal, social, and cultural provisions that would allow them to live their chosen

---

Nevertheless, 500.000 abortions are carried out illegally every year and around 100 women die from malpractice. 73 percent of those victims belong to the poorest sectors of society ([www.amnesty.org.ar](http://www.amnesty.org.ar), 01/09/2009). The only instance when abortion is allowed is when it is performed in order to avoid "danger to the life or health of the woman" or if the pregnancy results from the rape of a "*mujer idiota o demente*" (artículo 86, incisos 1º y 2º del Código Penal). ([www.amnesty.org.ar](http://www.amnesty.org.ar), 01/09/2009).

identity, to establish their right to inhabit their chosen roles. Practical and strategic gender interests are, therefore, not necessarily antagonistic or even separate concepts but closely linked aspects of Argentine feminism.

The recuperation of women's language and its recognition as such is as important an element of women's struggle for equality as any political movement because female and feminist interests can only be conveyed in a language that harmonizes with the thought that seeks expression.

We have seen the development of female writing from the tentative social criticism of Juana Manuela Gorriti to the outspoken attacks on the patriarchal system of Juana Manso, whose thought was far ahead of her time; Marta Lynch and Beatriz Guido expressed their discontent with Peronism while at the same time producing some of the most widely read novels in Argentina. Their literary strategy, aimed at fame and fortune, reflects women's desire for financial independence and recognition as professionals emerging at the time.

Rather than describing the horrors of Argentina's Dirty War, this thesis has focused on the country's descent into the realms of the infernal, during the years immediately before the *coup*. Given the fact that political developments are always historically conditioned, it seemed important to single out the early 1970s, particularly because this period coincided with the *guerilleras* active in resistance movements. Simultaneously, Luisa Valenzuela and Liliana Heker produced some of the most poignant female literature that stands out, not only for revealing the truth behind the mechanisms of terror, but also for their accurate analysis of how this terror disrupted the private life of individuals.



The development of Argentine society and the political systems that emerged have been influenced significantly by women's movements. They not only achieved important changes regarding women's civil rights but also played a major role in the processes that ultimately led to the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems.

Given women's diverse identities, life experiences, and pursuits, it is necessary to reveal the multifaceted nature of their struggle for equality as well as their profound understanding of the underlying problems from their particularly female standpoint. The thesis has shown how women's political activism has been reflected in female literary engagement; these are, of course, only two aspects of the complex ways women have responded to state and governments and they hardly touch the surface. Nevertheless, my study could be an encouragement for further interdisciplinary investigation of the paths women take to effect changes in the political system.

## Appendix a

*Bomarzo*, Alberto Ginastera's (1916-1983) second opera, tells the story of a hunchbacked Italian duke, an anti-hero in the tradition of *Wozzeck*. He is a man as twisted spiritually as he is physically—a frustrated, ghost-ridden, sexually ambivalent shell of a man, obsessed with death and the promise of his own immortality. The libretto, by Argentine poet and novelist Manuel Mujica Láinez, is adapted from his prize-winning novel and is about the 16th century half-historical, half-fictional Pier Francesco Orsini, Duke of Bomarzo. The work includes near male and female nudity, and at ballet rehearsals for the premiere, four female dancers, all under 20, quit the production. Apparently, the orgiastic "dream scene" in Act II embarrassed them so, that they felt they couldn't go through with the opera. The girls also didn't like the idea of having to rip off their evening gowns in the middle of their dance and cavort around the stage in body stockings. There is also a seduction scene in a bordello, a public love-making scene, and an erotic and bizarre dance by Bomarzo, his wife, a courtesan (seemingly nude) in a body stocking, and Bomarzo's mute homosexual slave. All four dancers manipulate a leather whip in this sado-masochistic ballet. The opera was to have received its South American premiere August 4, 1967 at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires with the cast and production of the Washington performances (November 1, 1964), but was banned by Buenos Aires' Mayor Eugenio Schettini on the grounds that it was not fit for public showing because it was "obsessed with sex, violence, and hallucinations." Ginastera called the Mayor's action "a blatant case of censorship, based on no other references than newspaper clippings." The Argentine Writers Association protested against the ban; in fact, it produced almost universal indignation in the country. Ginastera forbade any of his other works to be

performed in Buenos Aires until *Bomarzo* was staged. He said, "I believe in the Spanish saying, 'No hay mal que dure cien años'—an evil thing cannot last 100 years...Even if I have to wait cien años, *Bomarzo* will be the next work heard of mine in Buenos Aires." Teatro Colón did, in fact, finally produce the opera in April 1972 and again in 1984. The opera was also staged by the New York City Opera in 1968 and 1969 and by English National Opera in 1976 (John J. Church, *Opera Insights*, <http://www.operaworld.com/special/bomarzo.shtml>, 16/0/2006).

## Appendix b

- Eduarda Mansilla belonged to the highest ranks of Buenos Aires society; her mother was the younger sister of Juan Manuel de Rosas and her father, General Lucio Norberto Mansilla, official in San Martín's liberation campaign and first constitutional governor of Entre Ríos province. Her work comprises most literary genres - novels, plays, philosophical essays, newspaper articles (*El Alba*, *La Gaceta Musical*, *El Plata Ilustrado*) on a variety of themes as well as musical critic. Her most famous works are *El médico de San Luis* and *Lucía Miranda* (both 1860). Eduarda left her husband and six children in Europe during a prolonged trip through the Old Continent and returned to Argentina after eighteen years of absence. Mansilla published all her works using her own financial resources. Mansilla often published her work under the pseudonyms 'Daniel' or 'Alvar' For literature about Mansilla see, amongst others: Lily Sosa de Newton, in Lea Fletcher (ed.), 1994; Bonnie Frederick, 1993; Remedios Mataix, 2003, 30-48).
- Rosario Orrego is considered the first Chilean woman novelist and also the first one to receive an academic title, social honoraria de la Academia de

Bellas Artes in Santiago (1873). One of the first to campaign for women's rights in Chile; she founded, directed and edited *Revista de Valparaíso*. Orrego's husband, a trader and businessman in the mining sector, died in the early 1850s and she starts publishing in 1858; Amongst her best known works are the novels *Alberto el jugador* (1860), *Los busca-vidas* (1862), and *Teresa* (1874) amongst others. Orrego mostly published under the pseudonym 'una madre'. For more details on Orrego see: Remedios Mataix (2003, 94-102; Ruth Gonzáles Vergara, 1993, 76-109).

- Adela Zamudio became famous in Bolivia as a writer, poet, thinker, painter, and headmistress and teacher of the first secular school in Bolivia. Born in La Paz, she wrote her first poem at the age of thirteen. Zamudio, who signed her poems with the pseudonym 'Soledad' rose against the prejudices of her times. In her work she challenged clericalism, the oligarchy, the terrible dictatorships that burdened Bolivia but, above all, she denounced women's subordination. She provided vivid portraits of street life but also of the frivolous parties in the salons of the aristocracy. She touched the periphery of politics with her poetry and journalistic prowess and chastised injustice with her liberal educational proposals. Interestingly, although an abundance of information about her work is available, her personal life and background remain in the dark. It can be assumed though, that considering her ability to write at an early age she enjoyed a good quality education and therefore came from a privileged home. Also see: Augusto Guzmán, 1982, 1975.
- Lucila Gamero was one of the first female writers in Honduras whose literary work, predominantly novels, reflected society and women's lives at the time. For many years she lived in Mexico where she published most of

her work. Her writings represent the later period of the Spanish American romantic novel; love relations and the family are the main themes in her narratives; she published Honduras' first novel, *Adriana y Margarita* in 1897 (Meza Márquez, 2005); her most famous one is *Blanca Olmedo* (1900); Gamero managed a rural estate, owned a pharmacy, and took pleasure in horse riding. Her husband was wealthy but culturally 'unrefined'. Gamero was generally perceived as manly and immoral, so much so that when she died the Church refused a requiem mass in her memory; her grave remains without a tombstone. Ahead of other writers of her generation, her novels reflect an incipient feminism through her female protagonists; Gamero touches on issues as problematic as the socialization of desire and the construction of a sexual identity. Also see: Helen Umaña, 2003.

- Lola Larrosa is considered the first Uruguayan novelist; her interpretation of the concept of family was a traditional one and she firmly believed that women should dedicate all their attention to their husbands and children. Nevertheless, and probably inadvertently, her novel demonstrate the traditional family in crisis: burdened by economic hardship, dependent on the good will of rich employers, and most susceptible to disruption in the case of illness or death of a providing family member; women forced through circumstances to earn their own living without the appropriate education or training. Larrosa's work represents a certain desperation with family life which was very different from the sentimentalism which is normally associated with female writing (Frederick, 1993:16). She was the only one who portrayed the poverty of women, undoubtedly because she herself suffered from it, in her four novels *Las obras de misericordia* (1882), *Hija mía* (1888), *El lujo* (1889), and *Los esposos* (1893), (Fletcher, 2007:16).

Larrosa wrote from personal experience - she had a son and mentally ill husband to support; she herself died from tuberculosis at 38 years of age.

- Clorinda Matto de Turner is regarded as one of the most influential Peruvian women writers. In her youth she studied the rather unconventional subjects of Physics, Philosophy, and Natural History in a women's secondary school in Lima. Later she married a wealthy landowner, the Englishman Dr. Turner, who died in 1881, leaving the estate bankrupt. Unable to meet financial needs, she moved to Arequipa where she became editor in chief of the newspaper *La Bolsa Americana*.

Between 1889 and 1895 she published a trilogy of novels, *Aves sin nido*, *Indole*, and *Herencia*) which were widely read and, from the social criticism which they imparted, won her many enemies. During a *coup d'état* which occurred in the capital city of Lima in 1895, her house was burned, her printing press smashed, her manuscripts destroyed and she was hung in effigy by angry crowds. She then fled into exile to Buenos Aires where she founded the magazine, *Búcaro Americano*, which also became an important vehicle for the liberation of women. (about Matto de Turner's work see: Hintze, 2002, Berg, 1999, Davies, 2004).

### Appendix c

- Silvina Bullrich (1915-1990) stands out as one of the most prolific and polemic writers. Like Lynch and Guido, many of her works became best-sellers, particularly for her sarcastic depictions of the upper classes and her addressing of feminist issues. Her works include: *Bodas de cristal* (1951), *Los burgueses* (1964), *Los salvadores de la patria* (1965), *Mañana digo basta*

(1968), and *Los pasajeros del jardín* (1971), her most autobiographical work for which she received the *Segundo Premio Nacional de Literatura* (Moreno, 1998:321).

- Silvina Ocampo (1903-1993), sister of the famous Victoria Ocampo, started her career writing for the newspaper *La Nación* and the literary journal *Sur*. Ocampo's first publication of the 1960s, *Las invitadas* (1961), secured her reputation as a short story writer. Major themes of her works include a penchant for erotic and exotic subject matters, an abundance of symbolism and classical allusions, and the juxtaposition of fantastic or grotesque elements with every-day situation (see Arrington Jr., 1990:362-3). Amongst Ocampo's work over the decades are *Viaje olvidado* (1937), *Espacios métricos* (1945), *La furia y otros cuentos* (1959), *El pecado normal* (1966), *La naranja maravillosa* (1977), and *Cornelia frente al espejo* (1988).
- Elvira Orphée (1930- ), author of several novels and collections of short stories. Childhood, a critical view of provincial social mores, rebelliousness, and dissatisfaction are recurrent themes of her fiction. Her hatred of torture prompted her writing of the novel *La última conquista de El Angel* (1977). Her work includes *Dos veranos* (1956), *Uno* (1961), *Las Viejas fantasiosas* (1981), and *El viaje de Amatista y el príncipe sucio* (1996) (Balderston & Gonzáles, 2004:402).
- Alejandra Pizarnik (1936-1972) is best known for her "death-driven" poetry and her attempts to go beyond the limits of human perception. The ever-present awareness of death in her work makes it as urgent as it makes it disquieting. Pizarnik died of an overdose of tranquilizers. It is unknown whether she committed suicide or took them by mistake. Amongst other

works, Pizarnik wrote *La tierra más ajena*(1955), *Arbol de Diana* (1962), *Nombres y figuras* (1969), *La condesa sangrienta* (1971), and *El infierno musical* (1971) (Fagundo, 1990:446-451).



## Bibliography:

### Books

- Alberdi, J. B., 1886, *Obras completas de JBA*, 8 vols. Buenos Aires: La Tribuna Nacional, Vol. 8  
1952, *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*, Buenos Aires: Ed. Estrada
- Alvarez, S., 1990, *Engendering Democracy in Brazil*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, in S. Westwood, & S. A. Radcliffe (eds), 1993, 'Viva', *Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*, London & New York: Routledge
- Anderson, B., 1983, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso
- Ansaldi, W., 1995, "Profetas de cambios terribles. Acerca de la debilidad de la democracia argentina, 1912-1945", in W. Ansaldi, A. Pucciarelli & J. C. Villarruel, (eds), *Representaciones inconclusas. Las clases, los actores y los discursos de la memoria, 1912-1946*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 23-69, in Giordano, V., 2006, "Los derechos civiles de las mujeres y el proyecto de reforma del Código Civil de 1936: el acontecimiento, la estructura, la coyuntura", 1-21  
[http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/Jovenes\\_investigadores/3JornadasJovenes/Templates/Eje%20cambio-conflicto-orden/GIORDANO-ORDEN.pdf](http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/Jovenes_investigadores/3JornadasJovenes/Templates/Eje%20cambio-conflicto-orden/GIORDANO-ORDEN.pdf) (30/03/2009)
- Archer, Ch. I. (ed.) 2000, *Setting the Scene for an Age of Warfare in The Wars of Independence in Spanish America*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.
- Archetti, E. 1999, *Masculinities, Football, Polo, and the Tango in Argentina*, Oxford, New York: Berg
- Area, L., 2005, *Álbum de señoritas de Juana P. Manso, periodismo y frustración para un proyecto 'doméstico' de fundar una nación*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- Arrington Jr., M., S., 1990, "Silvina Ocampo", in D. E. Marting, 1990, *Spanish American Women Writers. A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book*, New York, Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 360-370
- Ávila, V., 2000, *Enciclopedia de la nueva mujer. Diosas, mitos y símbolos femeninos. Las mujeres más influyentes a lo largo de los siglos*, Barcelona: Robinbook, in F. Gil Lozano, 2004, *Historia de las*

*mujeres*,  
<http://agendadelasmujeres.com.ar/index2.php?id=3&nota=43>  
(05/09/2008)

- Baily, S. L., 1976, *The United States and the Development of South America, 1945-1975*, New York, London: New Viewpoints
- Balderston, D. et al, 1987, *Ficción y Política. La narrativa argentina durante el proceso militar*, Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial
- Balderston, D. & Gonzáles, M. (eds), 2004, *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean literature, 1900-2003*, London and New York: Routledge
- Barcia, P. L., 1990, *El incendio y las vísperas: 17 de octubre de 1952, 15 de abril de 1953*, Madrid:Editorial Castalia
- Bassnett, S., 1990, *Knives and Angels: Women Writers in Latin America*, London: Zed
- Baudot, G., 1992, *La Vida Cotidiana en la América Española en tiempos de Felipe II. Siglo XVI*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, in B. López de Mariscal, 2002, *El Viaje a la Nueva España entre 1540 y 1625: El Trayecto Femenino*, in J. Andreo, & S. B. Guardia, (eds), 2002, *Historia de las Mujeres en América Latina*, Universidad de Murcia
- Beauvoir, S. de, 1972, *The Second Sex*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Benhabib, S., 1986, *Critique, Norm, and Utopia, A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Berg, M., 1994, “*Viajeras y exiliadas en la narrativa de J. M. Gorriti*”, in Lea Fletcher (ed.) *Mujeres y cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 69 - 79.
- 1999, “*Pasión y nación en Hima-Sumac de Clorinda Matto de Turner*”, in *Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional de Peruanistas en el Extranjero*  
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~icop/maryberg.html> (16/05/2008)
- Bhabha, H. K., 1990, “*DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation*” in H. K. Bhabha, (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, London and New York: Routledge
- Bilbija, K., 2003, *Yo soy trampa, ensayos sobre la obra de Luisa Valenzuela*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- Blanksten, G. I., 1953, *Perón's Argentina*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Bolívar, S., “*Soldados del Ejército Libertador de Venezuela, 22 de junio de 1813*”, in

- Lecuna, V., 1939, *Proclamas y Discursos del Libertador*, Caracas: Lit. y Tip. Del Comercio
- Booth, A. J., 1871, *Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism: A Chapter in the History of Socialism in France*, London : Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer
- Bottomore, T. & Goode, P. (eds), 1978, *Austro-Marxism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Bourdé, G., 1974, *Urbanisation et immigration en Amérique Latine*, Paris: Aubier, in Molyneux, 1986, "No God, No Boss, No Husband: Anarchist Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Argentina", (Special issue Latin America's Nineteenth Century History, *Latin American Perspectives*, 13.1:119-145
- Breen, D., 1978, "The Mother and the Hospital", in Lipshitz (ed.), 1978, *Tearing the Veil*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, in S. Rowbotham, 1989, "To Be or Not to Be: The Dilemmas of Mothering", (Special Issue: The Past before Us: Twenty Years of Feminism), *Feminist Review*, No. 31:82 - 93
- Brizuela, G. E., 2001, *Viajes por Europa, África y América, su significado en la evolución del pensamiento político de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento*, San Juan, Argentina: Editorial de la Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional de San Juan
- Brooksbank Jones, A. & Davies, C. (eds) 1996, *Latin American Women's Writing, Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Brown, M. (ed.), 2008, *Informal Empire in Latin America; Culture, Commerce and Capital*, Society for Latin American Studies, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Buchrucker, C., 1998, "Interpretations of Peronism, Old Frameworks and New Perspectives" in Brennan, J. P. (ed.), *Peronism and Argentina*, Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 3 - 28
- Burgin, M., 1946, *The Economic Aspects of Argentine Federalism, 1820 - 1852*, Harvard economic studies; History e-book project, ACLS Humanities E-book, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.02720.0001.001> (13/07/2008)
- Caistor, N., 1996, *Argentina, a Guide to the People, Politics, and Culture*, London: Latin American Bureau
- Calhoun, C., 1997, *Nationalism*, Buckingham, UK: Open University Press
- Calvera, L., 1994, "Revoluciones, minué y mujeres", L. Fletcher, 1994, *Mujeres y Cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 166 - 75

- Carlson, M., 1988, *¡Feminismo! The Women's Movement in Argentina from its Beginnings to Eva Perón*, Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers
- Carrió de la Vandra, A., 1973, *El Lazarillo de ciegos caminantes (c. 1775)*, edición, prólogo y notas de Emilio Carillo, Barcelona: Labour, in D. Marre, 2001, "En busca del origen de la marginación de las 'chinas' en la construcción de la nación argentina" in B. Potthast & E. Scarzanella (eds), *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, 29 - 57
- Castillo, D. A., 1992, *Talking Back, Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press
- Castro, D. S., 2001, *The Afro-Argentine in Argentine Culture: El Negro del Acordeón*, Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press
- Cementerio La Recoleta, *El Cadáver de Evita*, [http://www.cementeriorecoleta.com.ar/famosos/evita2\\_cr.htm](http://www.cementeriorecoleta.com.ar/famosos/evita2_cr.htm) (12/08/2009)
- Cernada, J., *Estudio preliminar Contorno*, Centro de documentación e investigación de la cultura de izquierdas en la Argentina, Buenos Aires, electronic edition
- Chambers, S. C., 2003, "Letters and Salons: Women reading and writing the Nation" In Chasteen, J. Ch. & Castro-Klarén, S. (eds), *Beyond Imagined Communities, Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 54 - 83
- Chant, S., 2003, "Gender, Families, and Households", in S. Chant, & N. Craske, *Gender in Latin America*, London: Latin American Bureau, 161 - 193
- Chasteen, J. Ch., 2003, *Introduction: Beyond Imagined Communities*, in J. Ch. Chasteen & S. Castro-Klarén, (eds), *Beyond Imagined Communities, Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press
- Chavarría, J. M., 1947, *La escuela normal y la cultura argentina*, Buenos Aires: El Ateneo
- Cherpak, E., 1978, "The Participation of Women in the independence in Gran Colombia", in A. Lavrin, *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press 219 - 235
- Cook-Gumperz, J., 2004, "Public Discourse and the Private Life of Little Girls: Language and Woman's Place and Language Socialization",

in M. Bucholtz, (ed.), *Language and Woman's Place, Text and Commentaries*, New York: Oxford University Press

- Corbatta, J., 1999a, *La narrativa de la guerra sucia*, Buenos Aires, Corregidor  
1999b, *Narrativas de la guerra sucia en Argentina*, Piglia, Saer, Valenzuela, Puig, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor
- Corpa Vargas, M., 1996, *Los cuentos de Liliana Heker*, New York: Peter Lang
- Couturier, E., 1978, "Women in a Noble Family: The Mexican Counts of Regla 1750 - 1830", in A. Lavrin, 1978, *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, London Greenwood Press, 129 - 149
- Craig, L., 2005, *Juan Carlos Onetti, Manuel Puig and Luisa Valenzuela, Marginality and Gender*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis
- Craske, N., 1999, *Women and Politics in Latin America*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Crawley, E., 1984, *A House Divided: Argentina 1880-1980*, London: C. Hurst
- Cresta de Leguizamón, M. L., 2005, "Aportes de J. M. Gorriti a la narrativa argentina", in L. Fletcher (ed.) *Mujeres y cultura en la Argentina" del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 61 - 68
- Criscenti, J. T. (ed) 1993, *Sarmiento and his Argentina*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers
- Crow, J. A., 1992, *The Epic of Latin America*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Davis, A. Y., 1981, *Women, Race, and Class*, New York: Random House, in P. Hill Collins, 1999, "Producing the Mothers of the Nation: Race, Class and Contemporary US Population Policies", in N. Yuval-Davis & P. Werbner, (eds), 1999, *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London and New York: Zed Books, 118 - 130
- Deere, C. D. & Leon, M., 2001, *Empowering Women*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press
- De Grandis, R., 2003, "Recontextualizing Violence as a Founding Myth: La sangre derramada by José Pablo Feinmann", in S. Hart, & R. Young, (eds), *Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies*, London: Arnold, 90 - 101
- De La Fuente, A., 2000, *Children of Facundo: caudillo and gaucho insurgency during the Argentine state-formation process (La Rioja, 1853-1870)*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press
- Delgado, A., 1892, "La educación social de la mujer", in J. M. Gorriti (ed) *Veladas literarias de Lima 1876-1877*, 1:27-39, Buenos Aires: Europa

- De Tocqueville, A., 2008, *Democracy in America*, e-book available at <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/tocqueville/alexis/democracy/complete.html> (08/04/2008)
- Denegri, F., 1996, *El Abanico y la Cigarrera: La primera generación de mujeres ilustradas en el Perú*, Lima: Flora Tristán Centro de la mujer peruana/Instituto de Estudios Peruanos
- Diana, M., 2006, *Mujeres Guerrilleras, sus testimonios en la militancia de los setenta*, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta
- Diaz, G. J. (ed.), 2002, *Luisa Valenzuela sin máscara*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- 2007, *Women and power in Argentine Literature: Stories, Interviews, and Critical Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press
- DiTella, T. (ed.), 2001, *Diccionario de Ciencias Sociales y Políticas*, Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores S.A.
- Dore, E., 2000, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century", in M. Molyneux & E. Dore (eds), *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 3 - 32
- Dujovne Ortiz, A., 1997, *Eva Perón*, London: Warner
- Dunn, J., 1984, *Locke*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Duchen, C., 1986, *Feminism in France, From May 1968 to Mitterand*, London: The Women's Press
- Earle, R., 1999, "Popular Participation in the Wars of Independence in New Granada", in A. McFarlane and E Posada-Carbó (eds), *Independence and Revolution in Spanish America: Perspectives and Problems*, University of London: Institute for Latin American Studies, 87 - 101
- 2000, "Rape and the Anxious Republic: Revolutionary Colombia 1810 - 1830", in E. Dore, & M. Molyneux (eds), *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 127 - 146
- Elias, N., 1978, *The Civilizing Process*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, in A. Appadurai, 1988, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30.1:3 - 24.
- Elias, N., 1990, *Studien über die Deutschen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp,

- Eloy Martínez, T., 1995, *Las memorias del General*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta
- 2002, *Santa Evita*, Madrid : Alfaguara
- 2003, *La novela de Perón*, Madrid : Alfaguara
- Erro, D. G., 1993, *Resolving the Argentine Paradox, Politics and Development 1966 - 92*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers
- Fagundo, A. M., 1990, *Alejandra Pizarnik*, in Marting, D. E., 1990, *Spanish American Women Writers. A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book*, New York, Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, pp. 446-452
- Ferro, L., 2005, “Mujeres y participación política. El caso de Santa Fe en los ´70”, in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), *Historia, género y política en los ´70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 190-208
- Fisher, J., 1993, *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance and Politics in South America*, London: Latin American Bureau
- 2000, “Gender and the State in Argentina. The Case of the Sindicato De Amas de Casa”, in E. Dore, & M. Molyneux, 2000, *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 322-345
- Fletcher, A., 1982, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, New York: Cornell University Press
- Fletcher, L., 1994, *Mujeres y Cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- 2007, *Narrativa de mujeres argentinas: bibliographia de los siglos XIX y XX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- Flint, R., 1894, *History of the Philosophy of History*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894
- Flores, M., 1952, *The Woman with the Whip: Eva Perón*, New York: Doubleday
- Foster, D. W., 1985, *Alternate Voices in the Contemporary Latin American Narrative*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- 1995, *Violence in Argentine Literature, Cultural Responses to Tyranny*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press
- Foucault, M., 1986, *On the genealogy of ethics: an overview of work in progress*

- Fraser, N. & Navarro, M., 1980, *Evita, The Real Lives of Eva Perón*, London: Andre Deutsch
- Frederick, B., 1998, *Wily Modesty: Argentine Women Writers, 1860-1910*, Tempe: Arizona State University Centre for Latin American Studies Press  
1993, *La pluma y la aguja*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- Freud, S., 1950, *Totem and taboo: some points of agreement between the mental lives of savages and neurotics*, London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, (English translation first published in 1918)
- “Fundación de ayuda social “María Eva Duarte de Perón”,  
<http://www.marianowest.com.ar/archivos/biblioteca/historiadelperonismo/11.pdf>  
(12/07/2009)
- Galeano, E., 1972, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, Montevideo: Universidad de la República
- García Canclini, N., 1995, *Hybrid Cultures: strategies for entering and leaving modernity*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Gardiner, E. E., 1997, *Who am I? Questioning Identity in Three Short Stories by Liliana Heker*, Master Thesis, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
- Germani, G., 1978, *Authoritarianism, fascism and national populism*, New Brunswick, NJ : Transaction Books
- Gerth, H. & Wright Mills, C., 1964, *Character and Social Structure*, New York: Harbinger Books
- Gillespie, R., 1982, *Soldiers of Peron, Argentina's Montoneros*, Oxford: Clarendon Press  
2002, “*Montoneros: Soldiers of Perón*”, in G. Nouzeilles, & G. Montaldo, 2002, *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 377-385
- Goldar, E., 1971, *El peronismo en la literatura argentina*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Freeland
- Goldwert, M., 1972, *Democracy, militarism, and nationalism in Argentina, 1930-1966: an interpretation*, Austin: University of Texas Press
- González-López, G., 2005, *Erotic Journeys: Mexican Immigrants and Their Sex Lives*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- González Vergara, R., 1993, *Nuestras escritoras chilenas*, Santiago: Guerra y Vergara
- Goody, J. 1982, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press



- Gorriti, J. M., 1862, *El ángel caído*,  
<http://www.camdipsalta.gov.ar/INFSALTA/cap2.htm>  
 (05/05/2008)
- 1890, *Cocina ecléctica*, (1<sup>st</sup> Edition), Buenos Aires:Félix Lajouane  
 Editor
- 2003, *Dreams and Realities : Selected Fiction of Juana Manuela Gorriti*.  
 Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/bham/Doc?id=10085447&ppg=147>  
 (29/04/2008)
- Grammático, K., (ed.) 2005, “*Las mujeres políticas y las feministas en los tempranos setenta: ¿Un diálogo (im)posible?*”, in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammático, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 19 -38
- Green, D., 1997, *Faces of Latin America*, London: Latin American Bureau
- Guardino, P. F., 2000, “*The War of Independence in Guerrero, New Spain*”, 1808-1821, in Ch. I. Archer, (ed.), *Setting the Scene for an Age of Warfare in The Wars of Independence in Spanish America*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc.
- Guerra Cunningham, L., 1995, “*Silencios, disidencias y claudicaciones: los problemas teóricos de la nueva crítica feminista*” in A. López de Martínez, (ed.) *Discurso femenino actual*, San Juan: Universo, pp. 21-32.
- Guido, B., 1974, *El incendio y las visperas*, (16<sup>th</sup> Edition) Buenos Aires:Editorial Losada, (1<sup>st</sup> Edition published 1964)
- Gutman, M. C., 1996, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Guy, D. J., 1991, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family and Nation in Argentina*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- 2000, “*Parents before the Tribunals, The Legal Construction of Patriarchy in Argentina*”, in M. Molyneux, & E. Dore, *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 172 - 93
- 2001, “*La verdadera historia de la Sociedad de Beneficiencia*”, in B. Potthast & E. Scarzanella, E., *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, Frankfurt am Main & Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana, 253-269
- Guzmán, A., 1975, *Poetas y escritores de Bolivia*, La Paz: Editorial Los amigos del libro

- 1982, *Biografías de la literatura boliviana: biografía, evaluación y Bibliografía*, Cochabamba: Editorial los amigos del libro
- Hall, S., 1997, "Who needs Identity?" in S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage, 1-17,
- Haller, M. H., 1984, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University
- Halperin, D. M., 1992, "Historicizing the Sexual Body: Sexual Preferences and Erotic Identities in the Pseudo-Lucianic Erôtes", in D. C. Stanton, (ed.) *Discourses of Sexuality, from Aristotle to AIDS*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 236-261
- Halperín Donghi, T., 1972, *Argentina : la democracia de Masas*, Buenos Aires : Paidós
- 1987, "1880: Un Nuevo clima de ideas, in *El espejo de la historia, problemas argentinos y perspectivas latinoamericanos*", Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, in K. Mead, 1997, "Gendering the Obstacles to Progress in Positivist Argentina, 1880-1920", *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 77.4 (Nov.):645 - 675
- 2003, "Argentine Counterpoint: Rise of the Nation, Rise of the State" in J. Ch. Chasteen & S. Castro-Klarén, (eds), *Beyond Imagined Communities, Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 33 - 53
- Haraway, D. J., 1991, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge
- Heker, L., 1994, "Family Life", in A. Manguel, (ed.), *Liliana Heker, The Stolen Party and other stories*, (1<sup>st</sup> Edition) Toronto, Canada: Coach House Press, 55 - 84
- 1998, "Cuando todo brille", in M. Moreno, (ed.), *Damas de letras. Cuentos de escritoras argentinas del Siglo XX*, Buenos Aires: Libros Perfil S.A., 11 - 20
- Hill Collins, P., 1999, "Producing the Mothers of the Nation: Race, Class and Contemporary US Population Policies", in N. Yuval-Davis, & P. Werbner, (eds), 1999, *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London and New York: Zed Books, 118 - 130
- Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T. (eds), 1983, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Honneth, A., 1995, *The Struggle for Recognition, The Moral Grammar of Social Conflict*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

- Hudson, W. H., 1902, *Marta Riquelme in Tales of the Pampas (El ombú and other stories*, online version at <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/whh/ombu.htm#marta> (01/05/2008)
- Hughes Davies, L., 2007, *Projections of Peronism in Argentine Autobiography, Biography and Fiction*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press
- Houston Luiggi, A., 1965, *Sixty-five Valiants*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press
- Iriarte, J. & Torre, C., 1993, “*La mesa está servida*”, in C. Iglesias, (ed.), *El ajuar de la patria, Ensayos críticos sobre Juana Manuela Gorriti*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 45 - 61  
 2005, *Juana Manuela Gorriti, Cocina ecléctica. “Un si es no es de ajo molido”* in L. Fletcher (ed.) *Mujeres y cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 80 - 86
- James, D., 1988, “*Perón and the People in Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class*”, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo, (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 273 - 295
- Jauretche, A., 1967, *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina, apuntes para una sociología nacional*, Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, Editor, 9th Edition, Chapter VII, *Una escritora de “medio pelo” para lectores de “medio pelo”*, 191 - 211  
 1968, *Los profetas del idio y la yapa : La colonización pedagógica*, 5th Edition, Buenos Aires: Peña Lillo
- Jeffress Little, C., 1978, “*Education, Philantrophy, and Feminism: Components of Argentine Womanhood, 1860 - 1926*”, in A. Lavrin, (ed.), *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, London: Greenwood Press, 235 - 253
- Jehenson, M. Y., 1995, *Latin-American Women Writers: Class, Race, and Gender*, Albany: SUNY
- Jopling, David A., 2000, *Self-Knowledge and the Self*, London, UK: Routledge, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/bham/Doc?id=10053779&ppg=16> (11/01/2007)
- Kafka, F., 1961, *Metamorphosis and other stories*, translated from German by W. & E. Muir, Harmondsworth: Penguin; first published in 1916, Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag
- Kamenka, E. 1976, *Nationalism: The Evolution of an Idea*, London: Edward Arnold

- Kampwirth, K., 2002, *Women and guerilla movements : Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*, University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press
- Kantaris, E. G., 1995, *The Subversive Psyche: Contemporary Women's Narrative from Argentina and Uruguay*, Oxford: Clarendon
- Katra, W. H., 1988, *Contorno : literary engagement in post-Peronist Argentina*, Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press; Cranbury, NJ; London: Associated University Presses
- LaFeber, W., 1981, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, New York, London: W. W. Norton
- Lakoff, R., 1975, *Language and Woman's Place*, New York, London: Harper and Row
- Laqueur, T. W., 1992, "Sexual Desire and the Market Economy during the Industrial Revolution D. C. Stanton, (ed.), *Discourses of Sexuality, from Aristotle to AIDS*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 185 - 215
- Larrain, J., 2000, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America*, Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Lavrin, A., 1978, *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, London: Greenwood Press
- 1995, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay 1890 - 1940*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press
- Lecuna, V., 1929, *Cartas del Libertador*, Tomo VI, Caracas: Lit. y Tip. del Comercio Letters dated Magdalena, 10 July 1826 and Lima, 10 August 1826
- Libânio Dantas, A. L., 2008, *The Autonomous Sex: Female Body and Voice in Alicia Kozameh's Writing of Resistance*, Master Thesis, Centre for International Studies of Ohio University <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd/send-pdf.cgi> (22/06/2009)
- Lindstrom, N., 1989, *Women's Voice in Latin American Literature*, Washington DC: Three Continents Press
- Lobato, M. Z., 2004, Prologue to Nari, 2004, *Políticas de maternidad y maternalismo político*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 13 - 22
- Loomba, A., 1998, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London and New York: Routledge
- López de Mariscal, B., 2002, *El Viaje a la Nueva España entre 1540 y 1625: El Trayecto Femenino*, in J. Andreo & S. B. Guardia, (eds), 2002,

*Historia de las Mujeres en América Latina*, Universidad de Murcia

- Lugones, L., 1945, *Historia de Sarmiento*, Buenos Aires: Comisión Argentina de Fomento Interamericano
- Luna, F., 1972, *De Perón a Lanusse, 1943/1973*, Barcelona: Editorial Planeta
- Lynch, J., 1992, *Caudillos in Spanish America 1800-1850*, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Lynch, M., 1973, *La señora Ordóñez*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana (7<sup>th</sup> Edition), 1<sup>st</sup> Edition: Buenos Aires, Compañía General Fabril Editora, 1962
- MacKinnon, C. A., 1989, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, Cambridge, MA; London : Harvard University Press
- Mafia, D. & Kuschnir, C. (eds), 1994, *Capacitación Política para mujeres: Género y Cambio social en la Argentina actual*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora
- Magnarelli, S., 1988, *Reflections/Refractions: Reading Luisa Valenzuela*, New York: Peter Lang, pp. 135-70, in N. Christoph, 1995, "Bodily Matters: The Female Grotesque in Luisa Valenzuela's 'Cola de lagartija'", *Revista hispánica moderna*, 48.2 (Dec.): 365 - 380
- 1990, *Luisa Valenzuela*, in D. E. Marting (ed.), *Spanish American Women Writers, A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book*, New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 532 - 545
- Martínez, Z. N., 2002, "*Luisa Valenzuela y su heraclitiana desmesura*", in G. Díaz (ed.), *Luisa Valenzuela sin máscara*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 45 - 56
- Marting, D. E. (ed.), 1990, *Spanish American Women Writers, A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book*, New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press
- Mallon, F., 1995, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of the Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*, University of California Press
- Mansilla, E., 1860, "*Lucía Miranda*", <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/35738330101351941976613/index.htm> (13/04/2008)
- 1962, *El médico de San Luis*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba, chapters VIII, IX, and XX available at <http://www.abanico.org.ar> (12/04/2008)

- Manso, J. 1854, *La familia del comendador y otros textos/ Juana Manso*; con prólogo de L. Lewkowicz, Buenos Aires: Colihue: Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina, 2006
- 1868, *Comentarios a las lecturas de Horace Mann*, Buenos Aires, in M. Southwell, 2005, "Profiles of Educators, Juana P. Manso (1819-1875)" *Prospects*, 35.1 (March):117 - 132
- Marre, D., 2001, "En busca del origen de la marginación de las 'chinas' en la construcción de la nación argentina" B. Potthast, & E. Scarzanella, *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, Frankfurt am Main and Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana 29 - 57
- Marx, J., 1994, "Mujeres, participación política y poder", in D. Mafia, & C. Kuschnir, (eds), *Capacitación Política para mujeres: Género y Cambio social en la Argentina actual*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 123-134
- Masiello, F., 1987, "La Argentina durante el Proceso", in D. Balderston, & M. Gonzáles, (eds), 2004, *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean literature, 1900-2003*, London and New York: Routledge, 11 - 29
- 1989a, *Ángeles del hogar argentino. El debate femenino sobre la vida doméstica, la educación y la literatura en el siglo XIX*, Anuario del IEHS
- 1989b, *Between Civilization and Barbarism: Women, Family and Literary Culture in Mid-Nineteenth Century Argentina* in Vidal, H. (ed.), *Culture and Historical Grounding for Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Feminist Literary Criticism*, Minneapolis, MN: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 517 - 566
- 1992, *Between Civilisation and Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- 1997, *Between Civilization and Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Mataix, R., 2003, "La escritura (casi) invisible: narradoras hispanoamericanas del siglo XIX, in *Anales de Literatura Española*, No. 16, Monografías No. 6, *Narradoras Hispanoamericanas desde la Independencia a Nuestros Días*, Universidad de Alicante, 5 - 15
- Mayer, T., 2000, *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, London and New York: Routledge
- McFarlane, A. & Posada Carbo, E. (eds), 1999, *Independence and Revolution in Spanish America: Perspectives and*

*Problems*, University of London:  
Institute for Latin American Studies,

- McNay, L., 1992, *Foucault and Feminism; Power, Gender and the Self*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Medeiros-Lichem, M. T., 2002, *Reading the Female Voice in Latin American Women's Fiction, from Teresa de la Parra to Elena Poniatowska and Luisa Valenzuela*, New York: Peter Lang
- Melhuus, M. & Stølen, K. A., 1996, *Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas, Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery*, London, New York: Verso
- Mendelson, J. S. R., 1978, "The Female Press: The view of women in the colonial journals of Spanish America, 1790 - 1810", in A. Lavrin, (ed), *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*, London: Greenwood Press, 198 - 218
- Mercer, K., 1990, "Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics", in Rutherford, J. (ed.), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 43 - 71  
1994, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge
- Mignone, E., 1987, *The Military: What is to be Done?*, NACLA Report on the Americas, in D. Green, 1997, *Faces of Latin America*, London: Latin American Bureau
- Miller, N., 1999, *In the Shadow of the State, Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America*, London, New York: Verso
- Moghadam, V. M. (ed.), 1994, *Identity Politics and Women: Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspectives*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press
- Molyneux, M., 2000, "Twentieth Century State Formations in Latin America", in M. Molineux & E. Dore, (eds), *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 33 - 84
- 2001, *Women's Movements in International Perspective, Latin America and beyond*, New York, NY and Basingstoke UK: Palgrave
- Molloy, S., 1991, *Women's Writing in Latin America: An anthology*, Westview Press in A. Trulli, *Hay que escribir: Luia Valenzuela y su manera de infringir las reglas*, <http://www.luisavalenzuela.com> (12/08/2009)

- Montesquieu, Baron de, C. L. de Secondat, 2001, “*The Spirit of the Laws (1748)*”, in V. P. Pecora, (ed.), 2001, *Nations and Identities*, Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Inc. 60-72
- Moraña, M. (ed.), 2002, *Espacio urbano, comunicación y violencia en America Latina*, Pittsburgh, PA: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, in R. De Grandis, 2003, “*Recontextualizing Violence as a Founding Myth: La sangre derramada by José Pablo Feinmann*”, in S. Hart, & R. Young (eds), *Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies*, London: Arnold, 90 - 101
- Moreno, M. (ed.), 1998, *Damas de letras. Cuentos de escritoras argentinas del Siglo XX*, Buenos Aires: Libros Perfil S. A.
- Moreno-Durán, R. H., 2002, *De la barbarie a la imaginación, la experiencia leída*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica
- Mosse, G. L., 1985, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability & Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, New York: Howard Fertig
- Mulhall, M. G. & Mulhall E. T., 1892, *Handbook of the River Plate Republics*, Buenos Ayres &c.
- Nari, M. A., 2002, *Feminist Awakenings*, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 528 - 537
- 2004, *Políticas de maternidad y maternalismo político*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos
- Navarro, M., 1981, *Evita*, Buenos Aires: Corregidor
- 2002 “*Evita*”, en J. C. Torre, *Nueva Historia Argentina. Los años peronistas (1943-1955)*, Buenos Aires Sudamericana, Tomo VIII, in A. Poderty, 2005, *La batalla conceptual: el diccionario de los argentinos (1945-1976)*, Anales, ISSN 1101-4148, N°. 7-8, 2004-2005, p. 191-222, at <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/autor?codigo=280637> (12/08/2009)
- Naylor, R. T., 2004, *Hot Money and the Politics of Debt*, Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, available at <http://books.google.co.uk/books> (30/07/2009)
- Norton, A., 1988, *Reflections on Political Identity*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, in K. J. Dodds, 1993, “*Geography, Identity and the Creation of*



the Argentine State”, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 12.3 (Sept.):331 - 331

- Nouzeilles G. & Montaldo G. (eds), 2002, *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press
- Papanek, H., 1994, “*The Ideal Woman and the Ideal Society: Control and Autonomy in the Construction of Identity*”, in V. M. Moghadam (ed.), *Identity Politics and Women: Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspectives*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 42 - 76
- Pasquali, L., 2005, “*Mujeres y militantes. Un acercamiento a las organizaciones armadas revolucionarias desde la historia oral*” in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammático, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 122- 139
- Pearce, J., 1981, *Under The Eagle*, London: Latin American Bureau
- Pecora, V. P. (ed.), 2001, *Nations and Identities*, Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Perdía, R., 2006, “*Roberto Perdía recuerda a las mujeres montoneras*”, in Diana, *Mujeres Guerrilleras, sus testimonios en la militancia de los setenta*, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 379 - 384
- Perón, E. M. 1952, *Mi mensaje*, at <http://www.elortiba.org/pdf/mimensaje.pdf>, (13/12/2008)
- Pescatello, A. (ed.), 1973, *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, University of Pittsburgh Press
- Plummer, K., 1995, *Telling Sexual Stories, Power, Change and Social Worlds*, London & New York: Routledge
- Potthast, B. & Scarzanella, E., 2001, “*Las mujeres y las naciones*” in Potthast & Scarzanella (eds), *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, pp. 7-17, Frankfurt am Main and Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana
- Pozzi, P., 2001, “*Por las sendas argentinas...*” *El PRT-ERP. La Guerrilla marxista*, Buenos Aires, EUDEBA, in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammático, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), 2005, *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora

- Quintero, I., 2001, “*Las mujeres de la independencia: ¿heroínas o transgresoras? El caso de Manuela Sáenz*”, in Potthast & Scarzanella (eds), *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, Frankfurt am Main and Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana
- Rabinow, P. (ed.), 1984, *The Foucault Reader*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Ramacciotti, K. & Valobra, A. (eds), 2004, *Generando el peronismo. Estudios de cultura, política y género (1946-1955)*, Buenos Aires: Proyecto Editorial, in G. Oueirolo, 2006, “Del código civil a los avisos clasificados: aproximaciones al trabajo femenino en el sector terciario (Buenos Aires 1926- 1940)”, International Seminar Fazenda Gênero 7, Simposios Temáticos “Gênero e Preconceitos”, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 28, 29 and 30 August, [http://www.fazendogenero7.ufsc.br/st\\_15.html](http://www.fazendogenero7.ufsc.br/st_15.html) (12/10/2008)
- Rock, D., 1975, (ed.) *Argentina in the twentieth century*, London: Duckworth
- 2002, *The Unión Cívica Radical*, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 231-250
- 2008, *The British in Argentina: From Informal Empire to Colonialism*, in M. Brown, (ed.), *Informal Empire in Latin America; Culture, Commerce and Capital*, Society for Latin American Studies, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 49-78
- Romero, L. A., *La violencia en la historia argentina reciente: un estado de la cuestión* in A. Pérotin-Dumon, ed., *Historizar el pasado vivo en América Latina* [http://www.unsam.edu.ar/escuelas/politica/centro\\_historia\\_politica/material/romero.pdf](http://www.unsam.edu.ar/escuelas/politica/centro_historia_politica/material/romero.pdf) (23/07/2009)
- Rommelspacher, B., 1999, *Right-Wing’ Feminism’: a Challenge to Feminism as an Emancipatory Movement*, in N. Yuval-Davis & P. Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London and New York: Zed Books, 54 - 64
- Rotker, S. (ed.), 2002, *Citizens of Fear: Urban Violence in Latin America*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, in R.De Grandis, 2003, “*Recontextualizing Violence as a Founding Myth: La sangre derramada by José Pablo Feinmann*”, in S. Hart, & R. Young, (eds), *Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies*, London: Arnold, 90 - 101
- Russell, B., 2004, *Philosophie des Abendlandes*, München und Zürich: Piper

- Rutherford, J., (ed.), 1990, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart
- Salazar J. A., 2002, “*La casa de los fantasmas*”, en *Mujeres de fuego*, Bogotá: Planeta in S. Valero, 2005, “*Testimonio, mujer y memoria*” in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), 2005, *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 140-153
- Said, E. W., 1975, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, New York: Columbia University Press, in R. De Grandis, 2003, “*Recontextualizing Violence as a Founding Myth: La sangre derramada by José Pablo Feinmann*”, in S. Hart, & R. Young, (eds), *Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies*, London: Arnold, 90 - 101
- Sapriza, G., 2005, “*Memorias del cuerpo*”, in A. Andujár, D. D’Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), 2005, *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 39 - 60
- Sarlo, B., 1987, “*Política, ideología y figuración literaria*”, in D. Balderston et al, *Ficción y Política. La narrativa argentina durante el proceso militar*, Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial, 30-59
- Sarmiento, D. F., 1849, *Viajes en Europa, Africa i America (Ortografía original)*
- 1849, *De la Educación Popular*
- 1850, *Recuerdos de Provincia (ortografía original)*
- 1868, *Un viaje de Nueva York a Buenos Aires*  
Sarmiento - Mitre Correspondencia (1846-1868)
- 1868, *Facundo; o Civilizacion i Barbarie*  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Edition - 1868) (original spelling)
- 1875, *Discursos Parlamentarios*
- All of the above at:  
<http://www.proyectosarmiento.com.ar/proyecto.htm> (08/01/2007)
- 1938, *Obras pedagógicas*, Buenos Aires, Talleres Gráficos Consejo Nacional de Educación
- 1944, *Diario de un viaje*, Santiago de Chile: Edit. de Santiago de Chile in M. Southwell, 2005, *Profiles of Educators, Juana P. Manso (1819-1875)*, *Prospects*, 35.1 (March):117 - 132
- 1961, *Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants*,

- Civilisation and Barbarism*, New York, N. Y.: Collier Books
- 2002, *Facundo (Chapter 1) Physical Aspect of the Argentine Republic, and the Forms of Character, Habits, and Ideas induced by it*, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 80-90
- 2004, *Facundo : Civilization and Barbarism*, Ewing, NJ, USA: University of California Press,  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/bham/Doc?id=10062326&ppg=31>  
 (08/01/2007)
- Schávelzon, D., 2003, *Arqueología Histórica de una Ciudad Silenciada*, Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores
- Scobie, J. R., 1964, *Argentina, a City and a Nation*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Schirmer, J., 1993, “*The Seeking of Truth and the Gendering of Consciousness: The Comadres of El Salvador and the CONAVIGUA Widows of Guatemala*”, in S. Westwood, & S. A. Radcliffe (eds), 1993, ‘Viva’, *Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*, London & New York: Routledge , 30 - 64
- Sebreli, J. J., 1966, *Buenos Aires : vida cotidiana y alineación*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Siglo Veinte, in O. Terán, 1993, *Nuestros Años Sesenta: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual argentina 1955-1966*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Cielo
- Simpson, J. & Bennet, J., 1985, *The disappeared: voices from a secret war*, London: Robson
- Shumway, J. M., 2005, *The Case of the Ugly Suitor and Other Histories of Love, Gender, and Nation*, University of Nebraska Press
- Shumway, N., 1991, *The Invention of Argentina*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press  
 1993, “*Sarmiento and the Narrative of Failure*”, in J. T. Criscenti (ed.), *Sarmiento and his Argentina*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 51 - 60
- Socolow, S. M., 2000, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Solberg, C., 1970, *Immigration and Nationalism. Argentina and Chile 1890 - 1914*, Austin: University of Texas Press, cited in E. Archetti, 1999, *Masculinities, Football, Polo, and the Tango in Argentina*, Oxford, New York: Berg
- Solomianski, A., 2003, *Identidades Secretas: La negritud argentina*, Rosario,

Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora

- Soria, C., 2005, *Los cuerpos de Eva: anatomía del deseo femenino*, Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo
- Sosa de Newton, 1994, "Eduarda Mansilla de García: narradora, periodista, música y primera autora de literatura infantil", in L. Fletcher (ed.), 1994, , *Mujeres y Cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 87 - 95
- Stanton, D. C. (ed.), 1992, *Discourses of Sexuality, from Aristotle to AIDS*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Stevens, E. P., 1973, "Marianismo: The Other Face of "Machismo" in Latin America", in A. Pescatello (ed.), *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 89 - 102
- Stølen, K. A., 1996, *The Power of Gender Discourses in a Multi-Ethnic Community in Rural Argentina*, in M. Melhuus, & K. A. Stølen, (eds), *Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas, Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery*, London, New York: Verso, 159 - 83
- Storace, P., 1989, *The Art of M.F.K. Fisher*, The New York Review of books, 7 (Dec.):41 - 5
- Susti González, A., 2002, *Seré millones. Eva Perón: melodrama, cuerpo y simulacro*, Buenos Aires: Beatriz Viterbo Editora
- Taylor, C., 1989, *Sources of the Self, The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press  
1992, "The Politics of Recognition", in A. Gutmann, *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition'*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 25 - 73
- Taylor, D., 1997, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, in L. Stephen, 2001, "Gender, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity", (Special Issue: Power Policy and Neoliberalism), *Latin American Perspectives*, 28.6 (Nov.):54-69
- Terán, O., 1993, *Nuestros Años Sesenta: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual argentina 1955-1966*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Cielo
- Tosco, A., 2002, *The Cordobazo*, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 364 - 371
- Ulloa, Antonio de, 1990, *Viaje a la América Meridional [1748]*, Edición de Andrés Saumell, Madrid: Historia 16, in D. Marre, 2001, "En busca del

*origen de la marginación de las 'chinas' en la construcción de la nación argentina*" B. Potthast, & E. Scarzanella *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina, problemas de inclusión y exclusión*, Frankfurt am Main and Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana, 29 - 57

Umaña, H., 2003, *La novella hondureña*, Guatemala: Libros sin fronteras

Valenzuela, L., 1983, *Cola de lagartija*, Mendoza: Bruguera

2001, *Peligrosas Palabras*, Buenos Aires: Temas Grupo Editorial

Valero, S., 2005, *Testimonio, mujer y memoria*, in A. Andujár, D. D'Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), 2005, *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 140 - 153

Vassallo, A., 2005, "*Las mujeres dicen basta': movilización, política y orígenes del feminismo argentino en los '70*", in A. Andujár, D. D'Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, pp. 61-88

Villaruel, J. C., 1988, *El estado, las clases sociales y la política de ingresos en los gobiernos peronistas, 1946-1955*, in M. Rapoport, *Economía e Historia*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Tesis, 436-7, in Cernada, *Estudio preliminar Contorno*, Centro de documentación e investigación de la cultura de izquierdas en la Argentina, Buenos Aires, electronic edition

Viñas, D., 2002, *The Foundation of the National State*, in G. Nouzeilles & G. Montaldo (eds), *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 161 - 9

Wagner, P., 1994, *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline*, London: Routledge

Werbner, P., 1999, "*Political Motherhood and the Feminization of Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Public Sphere*", in N. Yuval Davis & P. Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London and New York: Zed Books, 221 - 245

Westwood, S. & Radcliffe, S. A. (eds), 1993, '*Viva*', *Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*, London & New York: Routledge

Williamson, E., 1992, *The Penguin History of Latin America*, London: The Penguin Press

Woodward, K. (ed.), 1997, *Identity and Difference*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Young, R. J. C., 2001, *Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, in Rock, 2008, *The British in Argentina: From Informal Empire to Colonialism*, in M. Brown, (ed.), *Informal Empire in Latin America; Culture, Commerce and Capital*, Society for Latin American Studies, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 49 - 78
- Yuval-Davis, N., 1997, *Gender and Nation*, London: Sage Publications
- Yuval-Davis, N. & Werbner, P. (eds), 1999, *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, London and New York: Zed Books
- Zabaleta, 1993, *Women in Argentina: Myths, Realities and Dreams*, International Reports on Women, London: CHANGE
- Zuccotti, L., 1994, "Gorriti, Manso: de las Veladas literarias a Las conferencias de maestra", in Fletcher, 1994, *Mujeres y Cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 96 - 107

#### Journals, Newspapers, and Websites

- Agosín, M., 1986, "Whispers and Triumph: Latin American Women Writers Today", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 9.4:427 - 33, in Bassnett, S., 1990, *Knives and Angels: Women Writers in Latin America*, London: Zed
- Agozino, A. C., 1997, *El estilo político de la Unión Cívica Radical en la Argentina 1890 - 1930*, Monografías Historicas, El Centro de Tesis, Documentos, Publicaciones y Recursos Educativos, [www.monografias.com](http://www.monografias.com) (05/09/2006)
- Alonso, C. J., 1994, "Reading Sarmiento: Once More, with Passion", *Hispanic Review*, 62.1 (Winter):35 - 52,
- Appadurai, A., 1988, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30.1 (Jan.):3 - 24.
- Ares, C., 1985, "La escritora argentina Marta Lynch se suicida de un disparo en la sien", *El País*, 10/10, <http://www.elpais.com> (20/01/2010)
- Ateneo virtual, [http://www.alasbarricadas.org/ateneovirtual/index.php/La\\_Voz\\_de\\_la\\_Mujer](http://www.alasbarricadas.org/ateneovirtual/index.php/La_Voz_de_la_Mujer), 20/06/2006).
- Bachrach Ehlers, T., 1991, "Debunking Marianismo: Economic Vulnerability and Survival Strategies Among Guatemalan Wives",

- Bar-On, T., 1997, "The Ambiguities of Football, Politics, Culture, and Social Transformation in Latin America", *Sociological Research Online*, 2.4 <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/4/2.html> (10/09/2006)
- Barrancos, D., 1987, "Los niños proselitistas de las vanguardias obreras", <http://www.ceil-piette.gov.ar/docpub/documentos/docceil/dc24barrancos.pdf> (20/03/2007)
- 1997, "Presencia de la mujer en las luchas sociales argentinas del Principio de siglo", <http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/agn/barrancos.pdf> (17/01/2007)
- 2006, "Problematic Modernity, Gender, Sexuality, and Reproduction in Twentieth-Century Argentina", *Journal of Women's History*, 18.2:123 - 150.
- Barros, R., (1986), "The Left and Democracy: Recent Debates in Latin America", *Telos*, 68:49 - 70, in N. Chinchilla, (1991), "Marxism, Feminism, and the Struggle for Democracy in Latin America", (Special Issue Marxist Feminist Theory), *Gender and Society*, 5.3 (Sep.):291 - 310
- Batticuore, G., 2006, "Lectoras románticas del siglo XIX", *El Clarín*, 02/09, [www.clarin.com](http://www.clarin.com) (15/04/2008)
- Belucci, M., 2006, "Anarquismo y feminismo: el movimiento de mujeres anarquistas con sus logros y desafíos hacia principios de siglo", *El Libertario*, Año 21, No. 63, Primavera de 2006. <http://www.anarquía.org.ar/node/95> (03/011/2008)
- "Alicia Eguren de Cooke: la voz contestaria del peronismo" [http://www.elortiba.org/cooke.html#Alicia\\_Eguren\\_de\\_Cooke](http://www.elortiba.org/cooke.html#Alicia_Eguren_de_Cooke) (03/11/2008)
- Bialet Masse, J., 1904, "Informe sobre el estado de las clases obreras en el interior de la república", Buenos Aires, III, D. J. Guy, 1981, "Women, Peonage, and Industrialization: Argentina, 1810-1914", *Latin American Research Review*, 16.3:65-89
- Birkemoe, D. S., 1982, "The Virile Voice of Marta Lynch", *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 16.2:191 - 211
- Brennan, J.P. & Gordillo, M. B., 1994, "Working Class Protest, Popular Revolt, and Urban Insurrection in Argentina: The 1969 Cordobazo", *Journal of Social History*, 27.3 (spring):477-498
- Brewster, C., 2005, "Women and the Spanish-American Wars of Independence: an overview", *Feminist Review*, 79.1 (March):20-35



- Bruner, J., 1991, "The Narrative Construction of Reality", *Critical Inquiry*, 18.1 (Autumn):1 - 21
- Bunkley, A. W., 1950, "Sarmiento and Urquiza", *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 30.2 (May):176 - 194
- Castro, D., 2005, "El Mundo en Los Sesenta", *Revista Los '70*, No. 1, [www.los70.org.ar/n01/castro](http://www.los70.org.ar/n01/castro) (10/11/2005)
- Chaher, S., 2003, "Aquellas 3", *Página 12*, 17/01, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar> (03/03/2008)
- Chinchilla, N., 1991, "Marxism, Feminism, and the Struggle for Democracy in Latin America", (Special Issue) *Marxist Feminist Theory, Gender and Society*, 5.3 (Sep.):291 - 310
- Christoph, N., 1995, "Bodily Matters: The Female Grotesque in Luisa Valenzuela's 'Cola de lagartija'", *Revista hispánica moderna*, 48.2 (Dec.): 365 - 380
- Church, J. J., "Opera Insights", <http://www.operaworld.com/special/bomarzo.shtml> (12/11/2005)
- Colomina-Garrigós, L., 2009, "El tratamiento metatextual del desamor en tres Relatos de La crueldad de la vida, de Liliana Heker", *Hipertexto* 10 (Verano):63-73  
<http://www.utpa.edu/dept/modlang/hipertexto/docs/Hiper10Colomina.pdf> (05/08/2009)
- Coldaroli, C., 1960, "Los primos de Chabrol", *Sur*, 263 (marzo-abril), in O. Terán, 1993, *Nuestros Años Sesenta: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual argentina 1955-1966*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Cielo por Asalto
- Corpa Vargas, M., 1994, "Los primeros principios o arte poética" de Liliana Heker: Narrativa del proceso: resistencias y reflexiones en un discurso autobiográfico", *Alba de América* 12:417-24, in L. Colomina-Garrigós, 2009, "El tratamiento metatextual del desamor en tres Relatos de La crueldad de la vida, de Liliana Heker", *Hipertexto* 10:63-73  
<http://www.utpa.edu/dept/modlang/hipertexto/docs/Hiper10Colomina.pdf> (05/08/2009)
- Costa, I., 2002, "Una pesadilla censurada", *El Clarín* digital edition, 27/04, [www.clarin.com/espectaculos](http://www.clarin.com/espectaculos) (12/11/2005)
- Cottrol, R. J., 2007, "Beyond Invisibility. Afro-Argentines in Their Nation's Culture and Memory", *Latin American Research Review*, 42.1:139 - 156

- Dalmaroni, M., 2004, "La palabra justa: Literatura, crítica y memoria en la Argentina, 1960-2002", *Universidad Nacional de La Plata*  
<http://www.fuentesmemoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/libros/pm.1/pm.1.pdf> (11/07/2009)
- D'Amico, D. F., 1977, "Religious Liberty in Argentina during the First Perón Regime, 1943-1955", *Church History*, 46.4 (Dec.):490-503.
- Davies, C., 2004, "Spanish-American Interiors: Spatial Metaphors, Gender and Modernity", *Romance Studies*, 22.1 (March):27 - 39.
- Diario La Opinión, 1976, "La Quema de Libros", 30/04  
<http://www.elortiba.org/quelib.html> (13/06/2009)
- Díaz, G. J., "Postmodernismo y teoría del caos en Cola de lagartija de Luisa Valenzuela", <http://www.luisavelanzuela.com> (11/07/2009)
- DiLiscia, M. S., 2002, "Cuerpos para experimentar: Objetivación médica, positivismo y eliminación étnica en Argentina (1860-1890)", *Asclepio*, 1:183 - 200  
<http://asclepio.revistas.csic.es/index.php/asclepio/article/view/125/124>  
 (05/08/2004)
- Dodds, K. J., 1993, "Geography, Identity and the Creation of the Argentine State", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 12.3 (Sept.):331 - 33
- Einwohner, R. L., Hollander, J. A. & Olson, T., 2000, "Engendering Social Movements: Cultural Images and Movement Dynamics", *Gender and Society*, 14.5 (Oct.):679-699
- Esteve, P., 1991, "1980-1981-La prehistoria de Teatro Abierto", *Latin American Theatre Review*, Spring:59-68, at  
<https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/latr/article/viewFile/874/849>  
 (17/08/2009)
- Feijoó, M. C., Nari, M. M. A., & Fierro, L. A., 1996, "Women in Argentina during the 1960", *Latin American Perspectives*, 23.1 (Winter):7 - 26
- Ferré, R., "La cocina de la escritura", *Sitio a Eros*. Digital version  
<http://www.esayistas.org/antologia/XXA/ferre/ferre2.htm>  
 (06/06/2008)
- Fletcher, L., 2005, "Que sepa bordar, que sepa escribir", Interview with Lea Fletcher, in *Página/12*, 26/08/ at [www.pagina12.com.ar](http://www.pagina12.com.ar)  
 (12/04/2008)

- Foster, D. W., 1992, "Spanish, American and Brazilian Literature: A History of Dissonance", (Special Issue, The Quincentennial of the Columbian Era) *Hispania*, 75.4 (Oct.):966-978
- Franco, J., 1987, "Gender, Death and Resistance; Facing the Ethical Vacuum", *Chicago Review*, 35.4:59-79
- Fraser, R., 1967, "Allegory. The Theory of a Symbolic Mode by Angus Fletcher", *The Modern Language Review*, 62.2 (Apr.):298-299
- Frederick, B., 1989, "Frames of Folklore, Frames of Fiction: The Narrative Frames in "El kacuy" and "Marta Riquelme", *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 43.1/2:7-18
- 1991, "In Their Own Voice: The Women Writers of the Generación del '80 in Argentina", *Hispania*, 74.2 (May):282-289
- Freytes, N. J., 2007, "Entre lo público y lo privado, lo personal y lo político. Un acercamiento a la militancia femenina de los IV años '70", Paper presented at Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores, CEIM, Faculty of Humanities and Arts, National University of Rosario, Argentina, *Fundación Bataller*, [http://www.fundacionbataller.org.ar/quienes\\_somos/index.php](http://www.fundacionbataller.org.ar/quienes_somos/index.php) (06/02/2008)
- Friera, S., 2004, "Tres mujeres que dieron que hablar", *Página 12*, 23/04, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar> (03/03/2008)
- Paley Francescato, M., 1979, "La novella de la dictadura: Nuevas estructuras narrativas", *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, Año 5.9:99-104
- 1985, "Cola de lagartija: látigo de la palabra y la triple P", *Revista Iberoamericana*, 51:875-882, in Craig, 2005, see above
- Gandía, E. de, 1962, "Sarmiento y Su Teoría de "Civilización y Barbarie", *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 4.1 (Jan.):67-87
- García, M. A., 1999, "The Gender of Militancy: Notes on the Possibilities of a Different History of Political Action", *Gender and History*, 11.3 (Nov.):461-474
- Gazarian Gautier, M. L., 1986, "The Sorcerer and Luisa Valenzuela: Double Narrators of The Novel/Biography, Myth/History" *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol.3 (Fall):105-108
- Gil Lozano, C. F., "Feminismos en la Argentina de los 70 y los 80", Paper Presented at: I Jornadas de Reflexión Historia, Género y Política en los 70

- University of Buenos Aires. [www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar](http://www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar) (05/09/2008)
- 2004, "Miradas del feminismo de la segunda ola Argentina 1970", [www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar](http://www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar) (05/09/2008)
- Giordano, V., 2006, "Los derechos civiles de las mujeres y el proyecto de reforma, del Código Civil de 1936: el acontecimiento, la estructura, la coyuntura"  
[http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/Jovenes\\_investigadores/3JornadasJovenes/Templates/Eje%20cambio-conflicto-orden/GIORDANO-ORDEN.pdf](http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/Jovenes_investigadores/3JornadasJovenes/Templates/Eje%20cambio-conflicto-orden/GIORDANO-ORDEN.pdf) (24/03/2008)
- Glavé, L. M., 1996, "Letras de mujer", *Fractal*, 1.3 (Oct./Dec.):93 - 125  
<http://www.fractal.com.mx/F3glave.html> (15/04/2008)
- Guido, H. J., 1968, "El menu de la selva", *Todo es Historia*, 2.12:86-89
- Guy, D. J., 1981, "Women, Peonage, and Industrialisation: Argentina, 1810 - 1914", *Latin American Research Review*, 16.3:65 - 89
- 1988, "White Slavery, Public Health, and the Socialist Position on Legalised Prostitution in Argentina, 1913 - 1936", *Latin American Research Review*, 23.3:60 - 80
- 1996, "Los Padres y la Pérdida de la Patria Potestad en Argentina: 1880-1930", Paper given at the celebration of the 175 anniversary of the Archivo General de *la Nación*, 25 July 1996,  
<http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/agn/guy.pdf> (05/08/2004)
- Guzzetti, L. & Fraschini, M., 2005 "El movimiento feminista ante las políticas neoliberales de los noventa", *Agenda de las mujeres*, [www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar](http://www.agendadelasmujeres.com.ar) (05/09/2008)
- Halperín Donghi, 1997, "En busca de la especificidad del pensamiento político hispanoamericano", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe*, 8.1:1 - 12  
[http://www.tau.ac.il/eial/VIII\\_1/donghi.htm](http://www.tau.ac.il/eial/VIII_1/donghi.htm) (12/12/2007)
- Hawkes, T., 1965, "Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode", *Renaissance News*, 18.4 (Winter):340-342
- Hayek, E. L., 2003, *Presidencias de Marcelo T. de Alvear y 2° Hipólito Yrigoyen*, Monografías Historicas, El Centro de Tesis, Documentos, Publicaciones y Recursos Educativos, [www.monografias.com](http://www.monografias.com) (10/05/2006)
- Hintze, G., 2002, "Pensadoras latinoamericanas en el proceso de integración: Clorinda Matto de Turner y El Búcaro Americano", proceeds of V Encuentro del Corredor de las Ideas, Biblioteca Digital de la Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, Córdoba (Argentina)

<http://juanfilloy.bib.unrc.edu.ar/completos/corredor/corredef/comid/HINTZEGL.HTM> (15/04/2008)

Hollander, N., 1974, "Si Evita Viviera", (Special Issue: Argentina: Peronism and Crisis) *Latin American Perspectives*, 1.3 (Autumn):42 - 57

1977, "Women Workers and the Class Struggle", *Latin American Perspectives*, 4.1-2 (Winter-Spring):180 - 93

Icken Safa, H., 1990, "Women's Social Movements in Latin America", (Special Issue: Women and Development the Third World), *Gender and Society*, 4.3 (Sep.):354 - 369

Jaen, T. D., 1966, "La Generación Romántica Argentina y el Problema de Hispanoamérica", (Special Issue: Argentina - Uruguay) *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 8.4(Oct.):565 - 584

James, D., 1976, "The Peronist Left, 1955-1975", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 8.2 (Nov.):273 - 296

Kegan Gardiner, J., 1981, "On Female Identity and Writing by Women", *Critical Inquiry*, 8.2 (Winter):347 - 361

Kohen, H. R., 1996, "Desapariciones en Argentina: imágenes, cadáveres, personas. El Caso de Eva Perón", in *Razón y Revolución*, No. 2, (Spring) , Electronic Edition,

<http://www.razonyrevolucion.org.ar/textos/revryr/luchadeclasses/ryr2KohenEva.pdf> (04/08/2009)

Kolesnico, P., 2000, "Marta Lynch, un personaje trágico", 09/10  
<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2000/10/09/s-04801.htm>  
(20/01/2010)

"La literatura durante el proceso militar" [http://www.todo-argentina.net/Literatura\\_argentina/la\\_literatura\\_durante\\_el\\_proceso.htm](http://www.todo-argentina.net/Literatura_argentina/la_literatura_durante_el_proceso.htm) (12/07/2009)

"Eugenia Castro y Juan Manuel de Rosas: la compañera secreta", *La Nación*,  
[http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota\\_id=680751](http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=680751) (20/02/2005)

Larrain, J., 1994, "La identidad latinoamericana, teoría e historia", *Estudios Públicos*, 55 (invierno):1 - 34

Lavrin, A., 1989, "Women, Labour, and The Left: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1925", *Journal of Women's History*, 1.2 (Fall):88 - 116

Leonardi, S., 1989, "Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster à la Riseholme,

- and Key Lime Pie”, *PMLA*, 104.3 (May):340 - 347
- Lindstrom, N., 1978, “The Literary Feminism of Marta Lynch”, *Critique*, 20.2: 49-58
- 1980, “Feminist Criticism of Latin American Literature: Bibliographic Notes”, *Latin American Research Review*, 15.1:151-159
- Lionetti, L., 2001, “Ciudadanas Útiles Para la Patria. La Educación de Las ‘Hijas del Pueblo’ en Argentina (1884-1916)”, *The Americas*, 58.2 (Oct.): 221-260
- Luna, L., *La otra cara de la política: Exclusión e inclusión de las mujeres en el caso latinoamericano*, Mujeres en red,  
<http://www.nodo50.org/mujeresred/politica-lgl.html> (03/09/2007)
- Manso, J. P., 1854, *Album de señoritas*, 7.12 (February), in M. Southwell, 2005, “Profiles of Educators, Juana P. Manso (1819-1875)”  
*Prospects*, 35.1 (March):117 - 132
- Marini, A. M., 1977, “Women in Contemporary Argentina”, *Latin American Perspectives*, 4.4 (Autumn):114-120
- Martín Maglio, F., 1999, “El Pensamiento de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento”, San Nicolás - República Argentina  
<http://www.fmmeduccion.com.ar/Historia/Notas/sarmiento.htm> (09/07/2008)
- Massarino, M., 2006, “La hoguera del miedo. Quema de libros durante la dictadura militar argentina 1976-1983”, *Revista Sudestada* 46,  
<http://www.elortiba.org/quelib.html> (18/03/2006)
- McClintock, A., 1993, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family”,  
*Feminist Review*, 44 (summer):61 - 80
- McFarlane, A., 1984, “Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial Granada” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 64.1 (Feb.):17 - 54
- McGann, T. F., 1953, “The Generation of ‘Eighty’”, *The Americas*, 10.2 (Oct.): 141 - 157
- McGee Deutsch, S., 1991, “Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth Century Latin America”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71.2 (May):259 - 306
- Medrano-Pizarro, J., 2001, “María Gabriela Mizraje’s Argentinas de Rosas a Perón” (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1999), *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana*, XXVII.54:249-252
- Méndez, J. L., “Lo sagrado y lo profano en la canonización de Eva Perón”,

[http://umbral.uprrp.edu/files/Lo%20sagrado%20y%20lo%20profano%20en%20la%20cano nizaci%C3%B3n%20de%20Eva%20per%C3%B3n\\_0.pdf](http://umbral.uprrp.edu/files/Lo%20sagrado%20y%20lo%20profano%20en%20la%20cano nizaci%C3%B3n%20de%20Eva%20per%C3%B3n_0.pdf) (12/08/2009)

Metz, A., 1993, "Gustavo Juan Franceschi and the Jews: The Overcoming of Prejudice by an Argentine Prelate", *Church History*, 62.2 (June): 207-220.

Meza Márquez, C., 2005, "La evolución de una tradición escritural femenina en la narrativa centroamericana: Textos paradigmáticos", Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, México  
<http://collaborations.denison.edu/istmo/n10/articulos/evolucion.html#end10>  
(14/07/2009)

Millán, M., 2001, "El cine de las mujeres en México: Situando el deseo del sujeto Femenino", Lectora, Universidad Nacional autónoma de México,  
[http://www.ub.edu/cdona/Lectora\\_07/ARTICLES/Dossier%20monogr%E0fic%20dones%20i%20cinema/Margara%20Millan\\_Cine%20de%20las%20mujeres%20en%20Mexico.pdf](http://www.ub.edu/cdona/Lectora_07/ARTICLES/Dossier%20monogr%E0fic%20dones%20i%20cinema/Margara%20Millan_Cine%20de%20las%20mujeres%20en%20Mexico.pdf)  
(08/08/2009)

Molyneux, M., 1985, "Mobilisation without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua", *Feminist Studies*, 11.2 (Summer):227 - 254

1986, "No God, No Boss, No Husband: Anarchist Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Argentina", (Special Issue:Latin America's Nineteenth-Century History) *Latin American Perspectives*, 13.1 (Winter):119-145

Moreau de Justo, A., 1969, "Participación de la mujer en la política nacional", *Revista de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba X*, in N. Hollander, 1974, "Si Evita Viviera", (Special Issue: Argentina: Peronism and Crisis) *Latin American Perspectives*, 1.3 (Autumn):42 - 57

Mucci, C., 2008, "Los escritores y el poder", *La Nación*, 04/10,  
<http://lanacion.com.ar> (30/10/2008)

Naciones Unidas, Consejo Económico y Social, Comisión de Derechos Humanos, 2005, *Integración de los Derechos Humanos de la Mujer y la Perspectiva de Género*, E/CN.4/2005/NGO/250  
[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/d4e447a69a850ee2c1256e610040cb e2/\\$FILE/G0410205.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/d4e447a69a850ee2c1256e610040cb e2/$FILE/G0410205.pdf) (04/09/2007)

Nari, M. A., 1996, "Abrir los ojos, abrir la cabeza: el feminismo en la Argentina de los años '70", *Feminaria*, 9.18/19:15 - 21

Navarro, M., 1977, "The Case of Eva Perón", (Special Issue: Women and National Development: The Complexities of Change), *Signs*, 3.1 (Autumn):229-240



- 1980, "Evita and the Crisis of 17 October 1945: A Case Study of Peronist and Anti-Peronist Mythology", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 12.1 (May):127-138.
- Paley Francescato, M., 1979, "La novella de la dictadura: Nuevas estructuras narrativas", *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, Año 5.9:99-104
- 1985, "Cola de lagartija: látigo de la palabra y la triple P", *Revista Iberoamericana*, 51:875-882, in L. Craig, 2005, *Juan Carlos Onetti, Manuel Puig and Luisa Valenzuela, Marginality and Gender*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis
- Patiño, 2006, "Debates teóricos en torno a la literatura latinoamericana: el surgimiento de un nuevo proyecto crítico (1975-1985)", *Orbis Tertius: revista de teoría y crítica literaria*, 12:1 - 10  
<http://163.10.30.238:8080/OrbisTertius/numeros/numero-12/6-patino.pdf>  
 (12/08/2009)
- Pérez, T. *Apuntes biográficos, Vélez Sarsfield, los caminos de un abogado*  
<http://www.unrc.edu.ar/publicar/23/cuatro.html> (02/07/2008)
- Picón Garfield, E. 1986, Interview with Luisa Valenzuela, *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 6.3:25-30, Dalkey Archive Press, University of Illinois,  
[http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/catalog/show\\_comment/221](http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/catalog/show_comment/221) (05/08/2009)
- Pierini, M., 2002, "Historia, Folletín e Ideología en Los Misterios del Plata de Juana Manso", *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 50.2:457-488.
- Pilcher, J. M., 1996, "Tamales or Timbales: Cuisine and the Formation of Mexican National Identity, 1821-1911", *The Americas*, 53.2 (Oct.):193-216
- Poderti, A., 1999, "*La nación imaginada. Trayectos ideológicos y ficcionales en el espacio andino*", *Anales* (Instituto Iberoamericano, Universidad de Göteborg), 2:107 - 122
- 2005, "La batalla conceptual: el diccionario de los argentinos (1945-1976)", *Anales*, ISSN 1101-4148, 7-8:191-222,  
<http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/autor?codigo=280637>  
 (14/06/2008)
- Pogoriles, E., 2006, "Sarmiento, el escritor oculto", *El Clarín*, 28/01  
<http://www.servicios.clarin.com/notas> (09/07/2008)
- Pratt, M. L., 1993, "Las mujeres y el imaginario nacional en el siglo XIX", *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, 19.38:51-62
- Pubill, C., 2007, "El enigma de lo subversivo en Informe bajo llave de Marta



Lynch”, *A contra corriente, Revista de historia social y literatura de América Latina*, 4.2 (Winter):1-30  
[www.ncsu.edu/project/acontracorriente](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/acontracorriente) (04/03/2008)

Punte, M. J., 2004, “La novela en la encrucijada de la historia: una nueva lectura del peronismo en la narrativa argentina”, *EIAL, Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, 15.2 (Jul. - Dec.):1-12,  
<http://www.punte.org/textos/novecruc.htm> (01/10/2007)

Queirolo, G., 2004, Reseñas de libros, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, 6,  
<http://nuevomundo.revues.org> (12/10/2008)

2006, “Del código civil a los avisos clasificados: aproximaciones al trabajo femenino en el sector terciario (Buenos Aires 1926-1940)”, *International Seminar Fazendo Gênero 7, Simposios Temáticos “Gênero e Preconceitos”, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*, 28, 29 and 30 August,  
[http://www.fazendogenero7.ufsc.br/st\\_15.html](http://www.fazendogenero7.ufsc.br/st_15.html) (12/10/2008)

Ranis, P., 1975, “En respuesta a E. Kenworthy: “Interpretaciones ortodoxas y revisionistas del apoyo inicial del peronismo”, *Desarrollo Económico*, 15.57 (Apr. - Jun.):163 - 166

1979, “Early Peronism and the Post-Liberal Argentine State”, *Journal for Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 21.3 (August):313 - 338

Rapisardi, F., 2001, “De lo público a lo secreto”, *Página 12*, 25/03  
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/2001/suple/Libros/01-03/01-03-25/nota1.htm>  
(30/10/2008)

Ray, R. & Kortweg, A. C., 1999, “Women’s Movements in the Third World: Identity, Mobilisation, and Autonomy”, *Annual Review Sociology*, 25:47 - 71

Rocco Cuzzi, R., 2004, “Homenaje a las tres pioneras del best-séller femenino”  
*El Clarín*, 20/04,  
<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2004/04/20/s-03306.htm>  
(20/01/2010)

Rowbotham, S., 1989, “To Be or Not to Be: The Dilemmas of Mothering”, (Special Issue: The Past before Us: Twenty Years of Feminism),  
*Feminist Review*, 31. (Spring):82-93

Ruddick, S., 1980, “Maternal Thinking”, *Feminist Studies*, 6.2 (summer):342-367

Sáenz Quesada, M., 2005, “Eugenia Castro y Juan Manuel de Rosas: la compañera secreta”, *La Nación*, 20/02,  
[http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota\\_id=680751](http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=680751)

(11/09/2007)

- Saporta Sternbach, N., Navarro Aranguren, M.,  
Chuchryk, P. & Alvarez, S. E., 1992, "Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to  
San Bernardo", *Signs*, 17.2 (winter):393 - 434
- Sandoval García, C., 2004, "Contested Discourses on National Identity", *Bulletin of  
Latin American Research*, 23.4 (Oct.):434-445
- Savigliano, M., E., 1997, "Evita, The Globalization of a National Myth", *Latin  
American Perspectives*, 24.6 (Nov.):156-172
- Savio, K., 2006, "Acerca del concepto pueblo en los discursos de Eva Perón",  
*Revista de los Alumnos de Maestría en Análisis del Discurso*, 3  
(Dec.), Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2 - 14  
[www.lsdrevista.net](http://www.lsdrevista.net) (28/01/2010)
- Scott, J. W., 1986, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", *The  
American Historical Review*, 91.5 (Dec.):1053 - 75
- Scott, N. M., 1992, "Juana Manuela Gorriti's Cocina eléctrica: Recipes as Feminine  
Discourse", *Hispania*, 75.2 (May):310-314
- Schüssler Fiorenza, E., 1997, "Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation", *The  
Harvard Theological Review*, 90.4:343 - 358
- Schwartz, K., 1972, "Themes, Trends, and Textures: The 1960's and the Spanish  
American Novel", *Hispania*, 55.4 (Dec.):817-831
- Shumway, J. M., 2001, "The Purity of My Blood Cannot Put Food on My Table:  
Changing Attitudes towards Interracial Marriage in  
Nineteenth- Century Buenos Aires", *The Americas*, 58.2  
(Oct.):201-220
- Smith, P. H., 1969, "Social Mobilization, Political Participation, and the Rise of  
Juan Perón", *Political Science Quarterly*, 84.1 (March):30 - 49
- Southwell, M., 2005, "Profiles of Educators, Juana P. Manso (1819-1875)",  
*Prospects*, 35.1 (March):117 - 132
- Spectorowski, A., 1994, "The Ideological Origins of Right and Left Nationalism in  
Argentina 1930-43", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29.  
1 (Jan.):155-184  
2000, "Nationalism and democratic construction: the origins of  
Argentina and Uruguay's political cultures in comparative  
Perspective", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*,  
19:81-99
- Stabb, M. S., 1971, "Argentine Letters and the Peronato: An Overview", *Journal of*

*Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 13.3/4 (Jul. - Oct.):434-455

- Stanley, J. 2002, "Incluir los sentimientos: darse a conocer a uno mismo a través del testimonio político personal". *En Taller*, 18, (April), in L.
- Pasquali, 2005, "Mujeres y militantes. Un acercamiento a las organizaciones armadas revolucionarias desde la historia oral" in A. Andujár, D. D'Antonio, N. Dominguez, K. Grammatico, F. Gil Lozano, V. Pita, M. I. Rodriguez & A. Vasallo (eds), *Historia, género y política en los '70*, Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora, 122- 139
- Stephen, L., 2001, "Gender, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity", (Special Issue: Power Policy and Neoliberalism), *Latin American Perspectives*, 28.6 (Nov.):54-69
- Stevens, E. P., 1965, "Mexican Machismo: Politics and Value Orientation", *Western Political Quarterly*, 18.4:848-57
- Stival, A. & Iturburu, J., 2005, "Córdoba, el vientre de la rebeldía", *Revista Los '70*, 1, [www.los70.org.ar/n01/cordoba.htm](http://www.los70.org.ar/n01/cordoba.htm) (10/09/2005)
- Trulli, A., "Hay que escribir: Luis Valenzuela y su manera de infringir las reglas", <http://www.luisavalenzuela.com> (11/07/2009)
- "Trial Watch" [http://www.trial-ch.org/en/trial-watch/profile/db/legal-procedures/rodolfo-eduardo\\_almiron-sena\\_607.html](http://www.trial-ch.org/en/trial-watch/profile/db/legal-procedures/rodolfo-eduardo_almiron-sena_607.html) (20/07/2009)
- Tuozzo, M. F., 2004, "World Bank, Governance, Reforms and Democracy in Argentina", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 23.1 (Jan.): 100 - 118
- Tutino, J., 1983, "Power, Class, and Family: Men and Women in the Mexican Elite, 1750 - 1810", *The Americas*, 39.3 (Jan.):359 - 81
- Unión Argentina de Mujeres, <http://www.uma.org.ar> (30/03/2009)
- Urraca, B., 1999, "Juana Manuela Gorriti and the Persistence of Memory", *Latin American Research Review*, 34.1:151-173
- Valenzuela, L, 1986a, "Dangerous Words", *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 6.3 (Fall):9-12
- 1986b, "Dirty Words", *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 6.3 (Fall):13-14
- Wilson, T., 2008, "Starmakers: Dictators, Songwriters, and the Negotiation of Censorship in the Argentine Dirty War", *Contra Corriente*,

*A Journal on Social History and Literature in Latin America*,  
6.1 (Fall):50-75,  
[www.ncsu.edu/project/acontracorriente](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/acontracorriente) (15/07/2009)

Winston, C. M., 1983, "Between Rosas and Sarmiento: Notes on Nationalism in Peronist Thought", *The Americas*, 39.3 (Jan.):305- 332

Yuval-Davis, N., 1996, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of The Nation", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 19.1/2:17 - 24

Zea, L. 1968, "Philosophy and Thought in Latin America", *Latin American Research Review*, 3.2 (Spring):3 - 16

Zeballos, F., "Bibliotecas y Dictadura Militar: Córdoba 1976-1983",  
[http://www.ffyh.unc.edu.ar/archivos/investigacion\\_concurso\\_baez.pdf](http://www.ffyh.unc.edu.ar/archivos/investigacion_concurso_baez.pdf)  
(07/07/2009)