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SEXTALK, POWER AND REVOLUTION:

DISCOURSE AND RESISTANCE IN THE NOVELS OF LIDIA FALCÓN

By

Mary Elizabeth Orlicki

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Romance & Classical Languages

2000

ABSTRACT

SEXTALK, POWER AND REVOLUTION:

DISCOURSE AND RESISTANCE IN THE NOVELS OF LIDIA FALCÓN

By

Mary Elizabeth Orlicki

Lidia Falcón O'Neill is one of the central figures of the Feminist Movement in 20th century Spain. Front-line activist, attorney, journalist, legal historian, playwright, PhD, and novelist, Falcón is a prolific writer. She is also the founder of the first Feminist Party in Spain. This dissertation examines Falcón's seven novels (*Clara, Asesinando el pasado, Es largo esperar callado, El juego de la piel, Rupturas, Camino sin retorno,* and *Posmodernos*) in light of their interrogation of history and of second wave feminist culture both within Spain and on the international scene. A preliminary overview of Women's Studies within Peninsular Hispanism reveals that the field has broadened and become more inclusive during the last five years, and that focus on Falcón has grown. Despite this change of tenor there persists a relative lack of critical inquiry devoted to her fictional works. This dissertation responds to this lacuna in the field.

A principal focus of this study is the examination of the power relations implicit in the discourse of female sexuality inscribed in Falcón's fiction. Some tools of critical analysis employed were developed by contemporary feminists who have theorized the body and the sexual discourse of power, from within Spain and internationally. This dissertation also draws on the work of Michel Foucault for the analysis of power relations in the discourse of sexuality, and to

relate these to the historical context of the characters, the author herself, and second wave feminism in Spain.

Scrutinizing Falcón's portrayal of the feminist catchphrase "the personal is political," particularly regarding female sexuality and feminist consciousness, this study traces the development of a feminist ethics vis-à-vis female sexuality. Examination of this theme reveals that Falcón's discourse on sexuality is not part of a Foucauldian general deployment of sexuality which serves to manipulate and control; nor does it promote what Elizabeth Grosz calls a feminist sexual norm tainted by patriarchal ideology. What Falcón develops is a feminist counter-ethics. She creates new subject positions for women and portrays feminist role models, but eschews the dictating of norms. Thus her counter-ethics stands in contrast to the patriarchal order.

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For Angel and Ben,

who made it all possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost Dr. Patricia V. Greene, mentor and guide, for the interest, enthusiasm, and encouragement she has demonstrated throughout the long process of conceiving and producing this document. Without her knowledge, expertise, and camaraderie this project would never have come to fruition.

I also extend my gratitude to other members of the dissertation committee: Dr. Jose Colmeiro, Dr. Nancy Marino, Dr. Joyce Ladenson, and Dr. Diedre Dawson.

To the friends and family members who kept me going, especially Dave and Jeff, may you ever find strength and joy in your kindness and generosity!

Finally I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to Lidia Falcón O'Neill for her commitment and passion, which inspired this work, and for her warm friendship, which has deepened my appreciation for all she has done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: Contextualization/Justification of the Research Topic 1
Introduction 1
Works which do not include Falcón 2
Works which do include Falcón 20
Further considerations 54

CHAPTER 2: The Early Novels 57
Falcon's first novel: *Clara* 58
Falcón's second novel: *Asesinando el pasado* 72

CHAPTER 3: *Es largo esperar callado* 87
Athenea and party politics 92
Historical context: Second wave feminism in Spain 96
Ruben vis-a-vis Athenea 100
Pilar, or the body politic 104
The representation of politics and the politics of representation 110
Plot structure and teleogenesis 120
Summary comments - *Es largo esperar callado* 128

CHAPTER 4: *El juego de la piel* 132
Synopsis of *El juego de la piel* 134
Intertextuality: William S. Burroughs and Elisenda in Hell 137
Dantesque dimensions in *El juego de la piel* 143
Salvation, Heaven, and Hell 151
Towards a feminist ethics 154
Sexual relations and the apparatus of sexuality 159
Summary observations - *El juego de la piel* 167

CHAPTER 5: *Rupturas* 171
Part I of *Rupturas:* Woman's place and its discontents 175
Part II of *Rupturas:* Engagement with the feminist movement 179
El feminismo de la igualdad y el feminismo de la diferencia 196
Feminist sexuality 205
Summary observations - *Rupturas* 213

CHAPTER 6: Falcon's Novels of the 1990s 218
Part I: Power, sex, and identity politics in *Camino sin retorno* 218
Summary observations - *Camino sin retorno* 230
Part II: *Postmodernos* 233
Principal female characters 238
Women loving women? Josefina, Beatriz, and Eugenia 250
Summary comments - *Postmodernos* 253

CONCLUSIONS 255
Notes 277
Appendix A: Outline of chapter 1 297

Appendix B: Bibliography for further study 299
Works cited 301

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALIZATION / JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC (REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE)

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of women's literature as a separate discipline within the field of hispanism began in the mid-1970s and continues to the present. Since the beginning of this period the work of Lidia Falcón has received sporadic attention from scholars, but as the discipline evolves studies of her work are increasingly more evident. Still, there is relatively little written about her fiction. A review of the major works to emerge in the field reveals trends and tendencies prevalent in the critical apparatus, and explains in part the dearth of material available on Falcón. Also, a survey of this literature serves to contextualize the examination of her work. In this chapter, critical studies which do not include Falcón in their subject matter are reviewed, first taking into consideration books written by a single scholar on multiple authors, followed by an examination of collections of essays by various scholars on more than one author. Both these subsections are organized chronologically. Next is a survey of critics whose research does focus on Falcón's writings. These writings are organized thematically, chronological order being followed within each theme.

The purpose of this chapter is, in part, to observe the contours of the discipline of womens' studies within hispanism. Another goal is to explain the initial lack of critical attention afforded Lidia Falcón, and to contrast that with the subsequent increase in published material available. In this way the future of research on this figure whose centrality to Spanish culture and global feminism is

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II. WORKS WHICH DO NOT INCLUDE FALCON AMONG THE AUTHORS STUDIED

II.A. STUDIES BY A SINGLE SCHOLAR ON VARIOUS AUTHORS

II.A.1. BIRUTE CIPLIJAUSKAITE - 1988

One of the earliest and most extensive examinations of women's literature in foreign languages to emerge from the American academy in the 1980s is Biruté Ciplijauskaité's *La novela femenina contemporánea (1970-1985): Hacia una tipología de la narración en primera persona*, first published in 1988. Ciplijauskaité's initial interest in undertaking this extensive study was to determine whether anything exists that can be called "feminine writing" (9). She read six hundred novels in languages she could read in the original (Catalan, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish). To delimit the range of her considerations, she opted to treat only European novels, for "la tradición del continente americano se apoya en estructuras sociales y actitudes mentales considerablemente diferentes, y las obras publicadas en él constituyen otro caudal inagotable" [10]). Since her primary intention was to investigate "los modos de crear una *nueva* escritura -- escritura de mujer que escribe conscientemente como mujer (lo cual no implica necesariamente un enfoque feminista)" (10) works from the Soviet block were excluded, since the predominant focus there is on content. Ciplijauskaité also chose to concentrate solely on works written in first person, which she contends present more innovative aspects. To further reduce the immensity of her undertaking this scholar limited the scope of her study to works published

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between 1970 and 1985, dates she says she chose merely for convenience. As the study progressed, she could not accomodate her findings to her original intention, and so changed the contours of the project:

> [P]arecía más útil tratar de establecer una tipología e investigar los procedimientos narrativos dentro de cada tipo. Los que ofrezco al lector, pues, son consideraciones que se apoyan en crítica existente (tanto la escuela americana como la francesa), acompañadas de un análisis más pormenorizado de algunas obras, cuya elección es arbitraria, dentro de cada categoría. Más que sugerir soluciones, he intentado apuntar algunos fenómenos en proceso de formación, con la esperanza de que las preguntas que se plantean y la bibliografía reunida puedan ser útiles para trabajos ulteriores. (10)

Given the parameters of Ciplijauskaité's investigation, it is clear that the works of Lidia Falcón are outside the boundaries of her interests. In the first place only one of Falcón's novels, *Asesinando el pasado*, an early novel from 1960, is written in first person; it falls short, however, of meeting Ciplijauskaité's other criteria. The same could be said of Falcón's other fictional works. Ciplijauskaité's interest is in discovering new narrative techniques by which women express their vital experiences and what it means to be female. While Falcón's politics and some of her subject matter may well be avant-garde in the Spanish context, it would be inaccurate to classify her narrative method as incorporating "aspectos innovadores." Notwithstanding, it is important to note that Falcón's fiction can be denominated "*nueva* escritura --escritura de mujer que escribe conscientemente como mujer (10)." There are many ways in which this consciousness may be expressed. Falcón's own brand of "writing woman" may best be classified as feminist writing, as shall be examined at length in this project.

II.A.2. NICHOLS - 1989 - *ESCRIBIR, ESPACIO PROPIO*

In *Escribir, espacio propio: Laforet, Matute, Moix, Tusquets, Riera y Roig por sí mismas* Geraldine Cleary Nichols gives voice to the principal contemporary female writers of Catalonia. The book consists of six extensive interviews carried out by Nichols with the titular authors in 1984. Nichols notes that at the time, "Entre los estudios monográficos de la narrativa española contemporánea, no figura ninguno que se enfoque exclusivamente en la narración femenina" (9). To substantiate her claim, Nichols reviews prevailing histories of contemporary Spanish literature (Alborg, Buckley, Gil Casado, Nora, Sanz Villanueva, Sobejano) and finds that those which make mention of women writers do so either briefly in passing, or they unambiguously assert that the women do not form part of the canon. Despite the numerous prestigious literary prizes awarded to women writers and the commercial success their books have enjoyed, the writers of the histories had not accorded due respect and appreciation to the literary works of female artists.

Hence Nichols' book is a corrective. The confluence of several contemporaneous trends, like the literary "boom" of women writers in the 1970s, the reinsertion of exiled writers like Chacel and Rodoreda, the as yet unexplained silence of outstanding women writers of the postwar period (Matute, Laforet, Moix, Martín Gaite, Quiroga), and the raising of feminist consciousness among international scholars within hispanism impelled Nichols to reread women's postwar novels in light of new critical trends regarding language and the marginalization of certain sectors of the writing world. The *doble marginalización* of these writers (as women, as Catalans) led Nichols to hypothesize that there might be a tradition proper to these particular women. This plus the lack of

biographical data available about them motivated the work involved in producing this collection. Not being a native Catalan, Falcón is not included.

II.A.3. ORDOÑEZ - 1991 - *VOICES OF THEIR OWN*

One of the most frequently cited works of criticism of Spainsh women writers is Elizabeth J. Ordóñez's *Voices of Their Own: Contemporary Spanish Narrative by Women*, which covers works from the 1940s through the 1980s. Like Nichols, Ordóñez addresses the generalized problem of women's narrative appearing "curiously unmanageable" (15) in studies of the Spanish novel of the latter twentieth century. Women's literature either did not fit adequately in preconceived categories (e.g., "existential", "social," or "new novel"), or they did not satisfy "the predilection for classical values" which "left many living writers at best ignored, at worst despised" (16). Another hindrance to literary assessment, an "especially vexing" one, is that among critics "women are considered a subset of the male species" which leads to the "unquestioned equation of inferior with femenine" (16).

Ordóñez recognizes that more recent publications have to some extent corrected the errors of the past, and credits this change to the "confluence of both Spanish and non-Hispanic theoretical influences" (17). In particular she acknowledges critics like David Herzberger and Fredric Jameson who brought to light the active role of social narrative in the textualization of society and history, inasmuch as narrative strategies or signifying practices mediate our understanding of events, our "social vision" (18). Moreover, Ordóñez brings Lacanian notions of mediating networks and the Symbolic Order to bear on her examination of women's texts; Derrida's concept of phallogocentric culture and

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Spanish women novelists' confronting and responding to "ordained notions of truth and knowledge" (20) also serve in her analysis, as do Foucault's theories on "'discursive fields and practices' that shape the cultural networks within which all texts are necessarily inserted" (21).[1] All these ideological constructs aid in the elucidation of the multiple discourses present in Spanish women's texts, which had theretofore gone unnoticed or devalued.

Fearing that she might trade "one set of unsatisfying fathers for another more to her liking," (22) Ordóñez turns to the French feminists and the concept of "l'écriture féminine" which "sought to devise a mode of expressivity beyond such dominant or paternal discourse, working to structure a language closer to the female body and identified with the mother rather than the father" (22). The triadic paradigm of "subversion, escape, and affirmation," which enables a point of view conducive to the unpacking and reevaluation of phallogocentric concepts, is a narrative model which Ordóñez perceives in contemporary Spanish narrative by women, especially in the 1980s (23). Other feminist theorists Ordóñez's analysis includes are Annie Leclerc, Elizabeth Meese, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Annis Pratt and Rosemary Jackson.

Significantly, and this point shall resurface throughout the present study, Ordóñez questions whether it is fair to "import theories willy-nilly from abroad and force Spanish texts into their perhaps procrustean beds" (24), citing the Catalans Carme Riera and Montserrat Roig as examples of writers who have embraced the vindication of "una nueva palabra de mujer" and "nuestro propio lenguaje," respectively (25). The question of feminist theory arising from within the ranks of Spanish women writers is certainly of primary interest. What Ordóñez wants, as she puts it borrowing from Luce Irigaray, is that "woman, as

reader and writer, should question the established hegemony of the masculine as universal, that she should uncover another reading to a story that has grounded itself thus far in a single legitimate exegesis" (26-27). In other words, the writer's work consists of "replanteando el discurso dominante. Interrogando la dominación de los hombres. Hablando a las mujeres, entre mujeres," as Mari Sarda has observed.[2] Ordóñez concurs, stating: "This is the position that I have chosen to assume throughout the following study" (27).

One conclusion Ordóñez draws from her very important and ambitious study is that "the contours of the readings suggest an increasing boldness through time of the transgressive nature of these narrative voices" (27). Ordóñez also bids us glean from her lessons: "The process of reading contemporary Spanish narrative by women advises us [...] to abandon classifications that have failed to address the attributes of women's texts and invites us to engage, instead, in an alternative perception of maternal connections or continuities among women's voices" (28). Falcón, on account of her particular family situation knew and lived just such a life. The question suggests itself: why did Ordóñez not treat any of Falcón's writing? Why is Falcón's work marginalized from this discourse?[3]

II.A.4. NICHOLS - 1992 - *DES/CIFRAR LA DIFERENCIA*

The scope and sophistication of feminist hispanism broadened significantly in 1992 with the publication of *Des/cifrar la diferencia: Narrativa femenina de la España contemporánea* by Geraldine C. Nichols. The book is a "compilation of previously published articles written from 1983 to 1987" (Charnon-Deutsch 29) with the addition of an introduction which is especially

noteworthy, and useful. In the introduction Nichols reviews in broad terms the history of feminist literary criticism, touching on critics and theorists from North America, Great Britain, France, and Spain.[4] Her history starts with Virginia Woolf (*A Room of One's Own*, 1928) and Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex* 1949), and then moves into relating the contemporaneous developments in these four countries, which followed the generalized *toma de conciencia* of the late 1960s. It was in the 1970s, "esos años de afianzamiento," (8) that feminist criticism began: women liberated ourselves from the lineal absolutes of masculine literary history, women stopped trying to view women from within the masculine tradition, and instead women focused on the recently discovered world of feminist culture.[5] Nichols traces developments in different approaches adopted by feminist critics and theorists of feminist critical method during the 1970s and 1980s in the US, the UK, and France. The information gleaned thereby is brought to bear on an overview of feminist criticism of Spanish literature, first in Spain and then in the US (17-22). For its uniqueness and its utility with respect to the interests of the present study, it is worthwhile to peruse Nichols' overview of these developments.

Feminist criticism within Spain was relatively poorly developed, due in its initial phase to political repression and later to both political and material problems (17). Support for independent investigation in the universities has been limited, although within some departments (history, sociology, economics, psychology, linguistics) feminist work has been done.[6] The decade of the 1970s has been called the "boom" of women's literature, due principally to its narrative (Roig, Montero, Riera, Tusquets, Ortiz, Puértolas and others). Articles by journalists as well as some critical essays discussed the phenomenon of

"literatura femenina" (17-18). In recent years feminist criticism is more in evidence thanks to the new generation of professors and to their students who are writing theses in the field. The recuperation of forgotten *autoras* is another side of feminist scholarship in Spain. In 1984 the *Seminario de Estudios de la Mujer de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* convened their *Jornadas de Investigación* dedicated to literature (18), and the published proceedings give a good idea of the state of feminist criticism in Spain at that particular point in time.[7]

In the United States there exist both the atmosphere and the infrastructure that support investigation and publication. The numerous published bibliographical guides and collections of essays centered on the Spanish woman writer exemplify this fact. Interestingly the incisive piece on American critics reading Spanish writers by Linda Chown in *Signs* (summarized below) is criticized by Nichols since:

> [E]n rigor todo/a crítico/a es ajeno/a al/a la creador/a de la obra que comenta, resida la extrañeza en su nacionalidad, su género, su edad o su mismo nombre (tomado como marcador de su identidad). Si por un lado las extranjeras ganan perspectiva con la distancia, por otra pueden perder significados importantes [...]. Es un postulado fundamental de la crítica deconstruccionista que nadie puede ser "objetivo" en sus juicios críticos: es una práctica feminista aclarar cuáles pueden ser nuestras limitaciones o condicionamientos al interpretar un texto. (22)

For Nichols, Chown's statement that North American exegetes fail to demonstrate the ability to "deshacerse de sus propios valores etnocéntricos [...] para poder apreciar los valores propios de una mujer española" (Nichols 21-22) is not a valid critique, since it is not possible for anyone to be "objective" in his/her critical judgments. Nichols nevertheless affirms that it is a feminist practice to be clear as to one's conditioning or limitations when interpreting texts. What else is Chown undertaking but exactly that: to make clear what American Hispanists'

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limitations/conditionings have been with respect to their reading of Spanish women's writing? This sort of zealous espousal of deconstructionist tenets is the frame of reference into which works by Lidia Falcón do not usually find entry; Nichols excludes Falcón from the group of writers to whose works she dedicates her critical energies.

II.A.5. HART - 1993 - *WHITE INK*

Calling into play the metaphor developed by Hélène Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" whereby Cixous attempts to depict the specificity of women's writing,[8] Stephen M. Hart entitled his 1993 study of Hispanic women's writing *White Ink: Essays on Twentieth-Century Femenine Fiction in Spain and Latin America*. For Cixous, the woman writer "is never far from 'mother' [...] There is always within her at least a little of that good mother's milk. She writes in white ink" (Hart 7). Apart from its gender specificity, white ink also connotes invisibility, "that invisibility which Virginia Woolf also proposed as the hallmark of women's writing" (7). Hart holds the positon that in spite of the increase in published women's writing in the last few decades, many view the problematic issue of gender in much the same way as did Woolf, i.e., women's writing forms an "invisible body within the literary canon, white on white, as opposed to the black on white" of men's work (8).

The Spanish women writers who are the subjects of Hart's study are Laforet, Rodoreda, Matute, Martín Gaite, Tusquets, Roig, and Montero. Acknowledging the impossibility of being all-inclusive, Hart states:

> The works chosen for analysis in this study were selected on the basis of the presence of one of the five structuring elements (*Bildungsroman*, the patriarchal prison, the fairy tale, sexual politics,

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> and gender trouble) which I would suggest are recurrent themes of contemporary women's writing in Spain and the Americas (6).

To the "renaissance" writers mentioned above Hart says he could add "a vast number of other names," listing some nineteen poets, dramatists, and novelists published from 1936 to the present ("The omission of a discussion of their work does not imply a negative evaluation of its quality" [6]). Falcón's name does not appear among them. One is left to wonder what the omission of her name means. Perhaps she has written her works in white ink?

II.B. B. COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS BY SEVERAL SCHOLARS ON VARIOUS AUTHORS

II.B.1. PEREZ - 1983

In her 1990 overview of the presence of women authors in past, present, and future Spanish literary history Joan L. Brown alludes to the "growing number of collections of critical essays [which] are devoted exclusively to female writers" and asserts that "the vast majority of these collections focus on a number of authors" (Brown *Rev canadiense* 558). The groundbreaking work in this genre was *Novelistas femeninas de la postguerra española* edited by Janet Pérez. In the *Prólogo* Pérez states the raison d'etre for the work: "La presente colección de ensayos, ni exhaustiva ni rigurosamente sistemática, constituye una respuesta inicial, obligadamente incompleta, a la parquedad de la crítica al tratar la obra de escritoras femeninas" (1). According to Pérez, prior to the publication of this collection only four articles on Spanish women's novels of the postwar period existed.

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The essays in this pioneering work are by an array of critics, many of whom have continued to concentrate on Spanish women's literature in their work, contributing some of our most valuable research tools to date. Pérez declares the intent of the volume: "[D]estacar las características literarias de una serie de obras cuya selección responde, no a ningún criterio a priori, sino a las actividades o lecturas actuales de los ensayistas. Estos se han elegido por su interés profesional en el género y la época representados" (2). Lidia Falcón does not number among the writers represented. Recognizing that there are many writers who do not appear in the volume, yet whose work deserve to be included, Pérez invites "a quienes las echan en falta a colaborar en completar esta tentativa" (3). This seminal text served as a portal, opening the way for subsequent works of its same kind.

II.B.2. MANTEIGA ET AL. - 1988

Following Pérez's lead, five years later another such collection was published: *Feminine Concerns In Contemporary Spanish Fiction by Women*, edited by Roberto Manteiga, Carolyn Galerstein, and Kathleen McNerney. Recognizing women writers from the 1940s, 1950s, and the early 1960s, and the cases of Martín Gaite and the women of the "cultural renaissance in Catalonia," the editors observe criticism's slow response to the new women's literature: "While there have been many interviews and book reviews, until very recently, few substantial articles of scholarly criticism have appeared, and even fewer full-length studies" (2). Among the major works that had come out, none dealt "specifically with the concerns of women as presented in the works of a

particular group" (3). This collection of essays filled the void. Its scope is limited to women writers born in Spain whose literary careers began after 1939.

Regretting that many writers did not find their way into this volume, the editors state their hope that "today's marketplace will encourage critics to take more interest in the literary production of these and other women novelists" (3). Contributions to this collection come from "already well established scholars in the fields of Contemporary Spanish Literature and Women's Studies" (3) who offer varied readings of some fifteen women authors plus the Catalonian group. *Feminine Concerns in Contemporary Spanish Fiction by Women* did much to broaden and make more profound critical inquiry into Spanish women's writing.

II.B.3. VALIS AND MAIER - *IN THE FEMININE MODE* - 1990

Another widely read collection of critical essays devoted to a number of women authors is *In the Feminine Mode. Essays on Hispanic Women Writers* edited by Noël Valis and Carol Maier. The writings treat both Peninsular and Latin American literature from different historical periods and varying genres. They are organized into three topical sections: (1) "Writing the Self," which includes "essays that explore in different ways the notion of feminine identity, and essays that take feminine experience and its representation as their point of departure"; (2) "The Text of Subversion," which incorporates essays that "explore some of the ways in which Hispanic literature and history are being, and have been, written by women"; (3) "The Critical Space," where contributors examine either other critics' assessments of Hispanic women's writing or their own critical work (19). The purpose of this joint project is to "make readers 'think about the ways we approach women writers and about the ways writers change our perception of

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the feminine [...] revise our received ideas of the woman writer [...] make us see again, and differently,'" in Adrienne Rich's sense of "re-vision", i.e., "looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering the text from a new critical direction"[9] (18). To that end fourteen essays avail the reader of engaging inquiries into the work of women writers both familiar and unexplored; they reveal not a "comprehensive portrait" but rather an "incompleteness," where absence/presence, questioning, and silence predominate (20-1).

In the Feminine Mode offers readings on women writers by women writers. The move away from referentiality toward pure "literariness" (i.e., foremost concern for the literary art and its history), strongly evident in this collection, relegates Falcón's works to the other end of the spectrum. While clearly woman-oriented, this work is little concerned with the day to day battles of political change. As expected, works as polemical as Falcón's do not find a place in such a collection.

II.B.4. BROWN - *EXILES IN THE HOMELAND* - 1991

In her introductory essay to *Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland*, "Women Writers of Spain: An Historical Perspective," Joan Lipman Brown divides Spanish literary history into three epochs: "before Franco (1100-1936), during the Franco era (1936-75), and after Franco (1975 to the present) (13-14). Overviewing this history, Brown notes only six women who "entered the canon before 1936": Santa Teresa, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, Cecilia Böhl de Faber (Fernán Caballero), Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Bardo Bazán (14). Seeking to trace a feminine tradition in Spanish letters (in support of the hypothesis that "female predecessors are crucial to the

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self-definition of the woman artist" [14]), Brown cursorily reviews the literary careers of these women, observing the place garnered by them in the annals of literary history. In the first three decades of the twentieth century María Zambrano, Rosa Chacel, Carmen Conde, and Concha Espina, though not "first-rank figures," did manage to achieve "a measure of recognition" (16).

The fact that the number of women authors recognized is so small is due, argues Brown, to the practice of excluding women from the canon:

> Recent evidence dispels the myth that women did not write in substantial numbers and refutes the notion that women's writing was uniformly inferior to men's. The standard impediments to women's writing, including the inaccessibility of education and the sanctions against women's nondomestic achievement, did not preclude exceptional women from producing fine literature; in Spain, as elsewhere, these obstacles were surmounted. But when Spanish women did create literature, their contributions appear to have been ignored or denied. (17)

The exclusion of women from the canon reflects a prejudice deeply imbedded in Spanish culture: axiomatic machismo has denied the granting of intellectual status to women, just as it has traditionally precluded access to education and other forms of intellectual development (18).

The generalized focus among Hispanists on women's literature from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, radically different from the two previous eras, has made the presence of women writers in histories and commentaries increase, although "parity with male writers in encyclopedic literary histories is still far from sight" (18). The writers who appear in *Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles in the Homeland* are "among the most widely known, and arguably, the most outstanding [...] of the many talented writers of contemporary Spain" (19). For Brown these novelists serve to challenge the notion of a homogeneous women's literature: they "suggest that gender is secondary to the writer's

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historical moment and individual experience as a basis for literary direction" (21). While female characters in novels by women mark an essential difference between women's and men's literature, "evidence of specific gender-based differences in other aspects of fiction by contemporary Spanish women is lacking" (22). These are great writers who happen to be women.

A number of men are among the well established scholars in this volume: Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Randolph D. Pope, Andrew Bush, and Robert C. Spires. Indeed, the contextualization of women's literature within a gender-neutral field of Spanish literature is the vision Brown holds; however, the "affirmative action" of separating out women's literature from national literature is needed at present "to bring outstanding, underappreciated literature to the attention of a wider readership" (23). Once introduced, these works will command their own place in literary anthologies and in the marketplace, irrespective of the sex of their author.

II.B.5. CONDE AND HART - 1991

The year 1991 saw another collection of essays on women writers enter the marketplace: *Feminist Readings on Spanish and Latin-American Literature*, edited by Lisa P. Condé and Stephen M. Hart. Its contents were selected for inclusion from papers read at the 1990 Queen Mary and Westfield College (Hampstead), University of London conference, which covered feminist readings of Spanish and Latin American writers both male and female. The collection is important for, as the editors put it, it "might be characterised as the British contribution to the ongoing debate on the interaction between feminism and hispanism which mushroomed in the 1980s (xi). This incursion from Europe into feminist

hispanism marks a broadening of the horizons of the discipline of hispanism itself.

The volume offers provocative readings of masters from the male canon: Calderón, Galdós, Valle-Inclán, *La regenta*, and Unamuno. Feminist perspectives are offered on the works of Pardo Bazán, Chacel, and Tusquets; Catherine Davies' "The Sexual Representation of Politics in Hispanic Feminist Literature" is also included. The Latin American authors analyzed are: Alfonsina Storni, Dulce María Loynaz, Luisa Valenzuela, Clarice Lispector, and a number of Cuban writers. There is no mention of Falcón in this volume. Presumably no one read a paper on Falcón at the conference, or if someone did, it was judged less worthy than those published.

II.B.6. DAVIES - 1993

Two years later, Catherine Davies, a contributor to Condè and Hart's *Feminist Readings on Spanish and Latin-American Literature*, edited a further collection of essays proceeding from another conference on feminist issues in hispanism in Great Britain. The conference took place at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, in June 1991; *Women Writers in Twentieth-century Spain and Latin America* was the title of the conference as well as the volume in which selected proceedings are published. Two conferences with the theme of Hispanic women's writing had previously been held in Britain, in 1989 and 1990,[10] judged by Davies as "a necessary and appropriate forum of gynocentric discussion for British Hispanists" (5). Seen in light of the British context, this text serves the primary function of disseminating a unique perspective on the question of women's studies in hispanism, and adds significantly to its American

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counterparts. Although there is no essay on Falcón's work in this collection of writings, there is mention made of Falcón in Davies' introduction. There she raises an issue of no small importance which is worth the brief digression.

Davies states that one aim of the book is "to participate in the continuing process of widening the feminist canon, of opening up the binary of Anglo-America/ France into a discourse of difference" (2). While this collection incorporates theoretical constructs of Annie Leclerc, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Simone de Beauvoir, Toril Moi, Alice Jardine, Catherine MacKinnon, and Shoshana Felman, it strives to include other voices, such as Camila Enríquez de Ureña and the Native American Starhawk. Davies questions the validity of importing theories from abroad (as does Ordónez) and wonders why Spanish feminist theory is not brought into the fray:

> Contemporary feminist theory and criticism certainly exist in Spanish (for example, Lidia Falcón in Spain, Magda Portal in Perú, Vilma Espín in Cuba, to name a few) but it has not entered the Western academic market place and despite forceful Spanish American feminist models [...] it is marginalized by current metropolitan discourse. The subtle alignment of class and gender politics perhaps poses too many threats. (3)

Davies counterposes this conviction with the denial by some women authors of the interrelatedness of feminist theory and literature,[11] to wit: feminist theory is "a 'corsé de talla única' into which their work is forced" (3).

Davies sets out the terms of the problem, a large one not limited to feminist theory, by juxtaposing an argument made by Jorge Rufinelli with that of some deconstructionist thinkers. Rufinelli asserts that in spite of the few similarities between Anglo-American and Hispanic cultures, the dominance of the former is powerful, and deforms the autocthonous cultures inasmuch as they conform to the exercize of cultural penetration. Colonization occurs to the extent

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that the other's consciousness is blocked; the dominated are divested of real, original identity.[12] Deconstruction theorists, by contrast, challenge our understanding of "originality" and "real" and assert that "elite methodology" is essential to the study of subaltern texts: "to do otherwise would be to conflate identity with knowledge and to marginalize subaltern cultures even further"[13] (4). By way of synthesis, Davis inserts the black American feminist bell hooks into the debate, whose plea forms a middle path:

> Even if perceived "authorities" writing about a group to which they do not belong and/or over which they wield power, are progressive, caring, and right-on in every way, as long as their authority is constituted by either the absence of the voices of the individuals whose experience they seek to address, or the dismissal of those voices as unimportant, the subject/object binary is maintained and domination is reinforced.[14] (4)

For this reason Davies includes Hispanic voices (Clara Janés, Montserrat Ordóñez, Mirta Yáñez) in her compilation. This is not a book which only speaks of Hispanic women's writing, it includes Hispanic women's writing: the voices speak for themselves.

Yet the point remains: "Why not Spanish feminist theory?" (Ordóñez, *Voices* 24). Contemporary Hispanists' insistence on applying constructs derived from Anglo-American and/or French feminist literary criticism to Hispanic women's texts must be brought into question. Clearly of equal importance is the necessity of introducing Spanish feminist theory into the arena. While a few of the writers highlighted in the following section do this, there is much more to be done. This is one of the guiding principles of the current study, at least with respect to the feminist theory developed and promulgated by Lidia Falcón.

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III. WORKS WHICH DO INCLUDE FALCON AMONG THE AUTHORS STUDIED

The corpus of critical literature readily available to American academics on the writings of Lidia Falcón includes publications which cover a broad range. The variation among them reflects not only the different interests of the researchers, but also many of the multiple facets of Lidia Falcón's creative talent. There are annotated bibliographies, works highlighting her role as political activist, studies of her novels, and approaches to Falcón as playwright. Formats vary as well. Four published interviews have inserted Falcón's voice into the discourse of hispanism and American feminism, and numerous scholarly essays introduce her to an even larger reading public. Additionally, one book has been published whose sole subject matter is Lidia Falcón; it treats her biography, her radical feminism, and especially her dramaturgy.

III.A. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

III.A.1. *WOMEN WRITERS OF SPAIN* - 1986

Two important resource books which made information on Hispanic women writers more widely available to American readers are bio-bibliographical compilations. The articles on Falcón in both were penned by Gloria Feiman Waldman, who has been one of Falcón's most ardent promoters among American Hispanists to date. *Women Writers of Spain. An Annotated Bio-Bibliographical Guide*, from 1986, offers brief plot summaries of some 289 works by Spanish women from the fourteenth century through the twentieth.[15] The entry on Falcón summarizes thirteen of her works (all her books published between 1962 and 1984). In the biographical comments Waldman recognizes Falcón as

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"the guiding intellectual and activist force in Spanish feminism for over 20 years" (107).

III.A.2. SPANISH WOMEN WRITERS - 1993

An analogous volume, but published seven years later, is *Spanish Women Writers. A Bio-Bibliographic Source Book* which offers more expanded commentaries but on fewer authors. "Centered around the three central components of biography, major themes, and survey of criticism and infused with feminist theory, this source book offers original insights into the complex relationships among gender, creativity and social mores" (Charnon-Deutsch 21). The biographical account by Linda Gould Levine is the best found in the English language to date, weaving Falcón's life and work into a seamless whole; "Major Themes" gives a well informed estimation of her main lines of critique and expression; "Survey of Criticism" comments that most of the criticism of Falcón comes from Spain, where "[s]ince her writing is so extreme and confrontational, the critical response has been equally extreme" (174). The bibliography includes novels, plays, autobiography, nonfiction books, selected articles by Falcón, translations, and works about Falcón; it is the most extensive printed to date.

In her highly informative, terse summation of Falcón's life and work, Waldman pointedly asserts that "It is unforgivable that a writer of the stature of Lidia Falcón has received so little serious critical attention" (174). Offering insight as to the reasons for which Falcón has been systematically relegated to the margins among the Spanish inteligentsia and cultural mandarins, Waldman contends that the caustic incisiveness of Falcón's style and the fundamental

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challenge she poses to the status quo prevent facile acceptance, or even guarded receptivity, of her writing.

> Her Marxist-Leninist dialectical approach to radical feminism, not in favor these days, proposes a total overthrow of partiarchal structures in order to usher in a new era where women will not do two-thirds of the world's work, yet receive only 7 percent of the world's wages and only 1 percent of the world's wealth. (174)

III.A.3. PEREZ - 1988

Another volume of commentary of Spanish women's literature, which Joan L. Brown terms an "outline of a separate history" (*Rev canadiense* 558) is Janet Pérez's *Contemporary Women Writers of Spain*, published in 1988. Pérez states that due to the "panoramic scope and introductory nature" of her study, no detailed analysis of specific writers or works is offered (Preface n.p.). The book, limited to works of the twentieth century, is intended as a general reference work for non-specialists and the monolingual reader of English. Pérez selected material for inclusion in the work "partially on the basis of relevance for women's studies" (Preface n.p.). This endeavor to introduce Spanish women writers to readers outside of Spain includes Lidia Falcón.

In Pérez's compendium Falcón is included in the chapter "Recent Narrators in Castilian" with a heading of her own: "Lawyer, Feminist Leader, Journalist, and Novelist" (155). Others in the chapter are Marina Mayoral, Ana María Moix, Esther Tusquets, Rosa Montero, Marta Portal, Lourdes Ortiz, and Soledad Puértolas. Still others are grouped together in a separate section, "Minor Contemporary Narrators in Castilian" (168) and accorded less attention. Pérez limits her comments to very brief plot summaries and offers no critique of Falcón's or of anyone else's works. The inclusion of Falcón in this reference

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III.B. STUDIES OF FALCON THAT FOCUS ON HER POLITICAL ACTIVISM

III.B.1. LEVINE AND WALDMAN - 1980

In 1974, before the second phase of the feminist movement became a public phenomenon in Spain, Linda Gould Levine and Gloria Feiman Waldman conducted interviews with leading feminists, subsequently publishing *Feminismo ante el franquismo: Entrevistas con feministas de España* in 1980. Some of the interviews were updated in 1976 and 1978.[16] As Levine and Waldman characterize their enterprise:

> Este libro es el testimonio de un momento todavía desconocido por la mayoría de las personas que han seguido apasionadamente el rumbo de la política española en los últimos años del franquismo: es el documento del movimiento feminista clandestino, descrito por las mujeres comprometidas en esta lucha. (13)

The compilers make special note of the tremendous changes of tenor in the movement from 1974 to 1980, summarizing major events and institutions that signal the spread of "sisterhood" and attest to contemporary feminists' connectedness with radical women of the past. The women interviewed are those who "en el '74 estaban en la vanguardia del movimiento feminista ilegal y que en '80 siguen luchando -abiertamente- por aquellos mismos derechos y principios de igualdad todavía no conseguidos" (14).[17]

In the interview Falcón discusses the hardships of being a woman attorney in Spain; the extension of feminist organization within the peninsula; the knowledge of Spanish feminists about the international movement in relation to other nations' ignorance of the Spanish scene; class struggle and Falcón's

insistence on women as a class; the legal system with respect to women; abortion and the lack of access to it (and women's ignorance on this front: "Realmente, si la mujer tuviera conciencia al cien por cien, la lucha ya estaría en otro nivel y habríamos llegado a otro estadio de la lucha" [74]); bourgeois women's reactions to the movement; Falcón's writing as feminist (especially *Mujer y sociedad* and *Cartas a una idiota española*); and the current relative ease of publishing for women:

> Es que está de moda el tema de la mujer y nosotros hemos llegado a ponerlo de moda. No hay ninguna publicación, en un solo día, revistas, periódicos, cualquier cosa así, en que en un momento u otro, no salga el tema de la mujer. En un artículo, en una conferencia, en un reportaje, siempre habrá una referencia a la problemática de la lucha de la mujer, pero porque la hemos puesto al día. Porque durante años, se está escribiendo y hablando y protestando y planteando. (81)

In the updated comments, Falcón provides a detailed account of new directions of the feminist movement since 1974, evincing the kind of changes which caused Linda Gould Levine such surprise upon her return in 1978: "En un espacio minúsculo de dos años, el ambiente feminista se había transformado con una rapidez asombrosa" (19).

Interestingly, two issues touched upon in this interview had a prognosticatory quality, both related to Falcón's September 1974 arrest and incarceration (which are chronicled in her prison memoirs and discussed below). In the interview, carried out prior to her arrest, Falcón explains the ambitious organizational plans Spanish feminists had underway at the time for the "Primer Congreso Internacional en el mundo sobre la problemática de la mujer. Pensamos hacerlo en noviembre en el Palacio de Congresos" (70). After her detention in September, feminists throughout the world, in solidarity, sensing

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that her arrest was due as much to her feminist activism as to political maneuverings, suspended the conference (85n1). Falcón laments the lack of testimonies of women's prison experiences in light of the many dozens of men's prison memoirs available. With chilling detail she envisions how such a text might read, what might be included, and the difficulties likely to be encountered in the effort at publicizing it:

> Lo podría escribir yo o podría excribirlo cualquiera que conozca el problema, pero ¿quién lo publicaría? Tenemos que ser nosotras las que tengamos un organo de publicación, porque si esto lo damos a un partido político que son los que tienen los órganos de información, no lo harán. O lo publicarán esquematizado, o lo cortarán o lo tirarán a la basura. (78)

Shortly after proclaiming these words Falcón would be writing that very document, *En el infierno: Ser mujer en las cárceles de España*. She would later publish it at a small press she founded, Ediciones de Feminismo of Barcelona, the precursor to Vindicación Feminista which she stills own and operates today.

III.B.3. MILLER - *ICONS AND FALLEN IDOLS* - 1983

In 1978 Beth Miller observed that "Hispanists have lagged behind other scholars in recognizing the existence of women's studies [...], course syllabi in college and university Spanish departments include even fewer women authors than those in English departments," and "'the literary mistreatment of women has been compounded by the critical mistreatment of women's literature'" (25).[18] In an effort to correct the apparent lack of critical interest in Hispanic women's literature at the time, Miller compiled and in 1983 published *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols*, her desire being that "more work will be stimulated by this publication" (25).

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This eclectic compilation incorporates articles which "represent varied scholarly and critical approaches and range in time from the eleventh century to the 1970s, from the Old World to the New (Argentina, Chile, Mexico). The literary genres treated include the novel, short story, drama, lyric poetry, history, didactic prose, and autobiography, and the volume ends with an essay on film" (1). The contributors consider images of women in works by men (medieval Spanish *exempla*, Golden Age drama, eighteenth century drama, Mexican literature, Lorca's tragedies, Buñuel), and also women writers, "some obscure and overlooked, some lesser-known, and some quite famous literary figures" (i.e., Avellaneda, Gabriela Mistral, Sara de Etchverts, Spanish women writers under Franco, Chicana poetry) (3).

Clearly Miller's intention was to inscribe Hispanic texts into the mainstream discourse of women's studies. She cites accomplishments of both American and British scholars and laments the absence of feminist scholarship in Hispanic studies. In particular Miller applauds the many researchers in England and the United States who "have studied the correlations between women's history and the literary production of women" and decries the "notable absence of comparable scholarship on Spanish and Latin American writers" (5). After all, as Annis Pratt makes clear: "The world of woman's art is not the aesthetic other-world of the new critics, self-existent, with no reference to historical and cultural context"[19] (Miller 6). Miller also points to the "relatively little scholarsip which attempts to relate the literary production by women to the history of the feminist movement or to women's history" (11n17).

Typifying Miller's interest in the correlations between women's literary production, women's own history, and the history of the feminist movement is

Linda Gould Levine's contribution "The Censored Sex: Woman as Author and Character in Franco's Spain." Lidia Falcón ranks among the writers treated in Levine's study, which looks at select nonfiction and fiction writers. Levine views the literature of Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaite, and Ana María Moix (in particular but not limited to *La trampa*, *Retahílas*, and *Julia*, respectively) as attempts to express feminist consciousness in fiction (315). These attempts have, in her view, consistently met with frustration:

> The critics have yet to confront the female consciousness presented in these and other works. Too often they have chosen to characterize the fiction written by women as "poetic," "lyrical," "sensitive," and "melodramatic" instead of delving into the social messages that the authors attempt to communicate or recognizing the literary values of the text. Too often, women writers with a feminist perspective have also been given a low priority by Spanish publishing houses (315).

Yet conditions faced by women writers have varied over time in the post-Franco era. As Levine sees it, "No doubt this situation has changed somewhat because feminist groups have continually confronted the press and media with their demands and ideologies and have demonstrated that 'we're conjugating in the street the verb *to vindicate*'[20] " (315).

As Levine points out, the central importance of the feminist movement to the production and reception of women's literature is exemplified by Lidia Falcón's organization *Vindicación Feminista*. When feminist activism (demonstrations, work stoppages, conferences, symposia, etc.) received little or no attention by the Spanish press, it was "continually documented and reported in Spain's leading feminist magazine, *Vindicación Feminista*" (directed by Falcón and edited by Carmen Alcalde) which "provided a consistently radical theoretical approach toward Spanish feminism" (290). Later expanding into the

publication of books, *VF* has made available in translation numerous important works on feminism.

Levine groups Falcón's writings with those of Carmen Alcalde, Maria Aurelia Capmany, and María Campo Alange, whose works together

> constitute the core of recent nonfictional feminist literature that has sought to define and analyze the particular nature of Spanish feminism, Spanish machismo, the Spanish legal code, the family structure, and the contribution of women of the Second Republic to the development of the movement. The importance of these works cannot be overstated, for they represent a concerted effort to provide a link between Spanish feminism of the past and the present movement, a much needed step in the formulation of a uniquely Hispanic brand of feminism. (290)

While clearly recognizing the symbiotic relationship between feminist activism, theoretical works, and fictional production, Levine is careful not to draw too direct a correlation: "It is too soon to evaluate the impact that the feminist movement will have on contemporary Spanish letters and in particular on women authors" (293). She concludes:

> With the growth of the feminist movement in Spain and the existence of over fifty different women's groups, this social reality will inevitably change and may ultimately be reflected in literature. The concept of solidarity and sisterhood has become an increasingly important element in contemporary fiction written by women, but it is noticeably absent from the novels of Matute and Martín Gaite. (303-04)

The concept of sisterly solidarity (or lack thereof) is a central issue in the fictional works of Falcón.

III.B.4. *OFF OUR BACKS* - 1983

Falcón in her role as international feminist activist became familiar to a select sector of American readers when in March of 1983 *off our backs* published in their "international interview" section "Feminism in Spain: Lidia Falcón." *off*

our backs, a "newsjournal by, for and about women," was established in 1970 as a forum for women's issues "at a stage when the existing institutions and channels for communication [had] ceased to meet the growing needs of the women's struggle" (*off our backs* 2). In the interview Falcón highlights several key issues: activities of the Club Vindicación Feminista including the establishment of a house for battered women; the decline in feminist activism throughout Spain since 1976; the precarious status of women's bookstores; the schism between feminists working within and without organized political parties; Falcón's imprisonment; history of the Partido Feminista; and the need for theoretical sophistication among Spanish feminists (*off our backs* 8-9). There is no direct mention of Falcón's writings, except for the magazines which she directed (and in the second case, still directs), *Vindicación Feminista* and *Poder y Libertad*. The similarities between the purposes and accomplishments of *off our backs* and those of Falcón herself make her appearance in this publication not only unsurprising, but expected.

III.B.5. MORGAN - *SISTERHOOD IS GLOBAL* - 1984

Another forum where Falcón appears as an expected addition is the compendium *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* edited by Robin Morgan and published in 1984. In "Spain (Spanish State)," an overview of demography, government, economy, gynography, herstory, and mythography, there is no mention of Falcón by name (there are no twentieth-century writers listed), but the journals *Vindicación Feminista* and *Poder y Libertad*, and the Partido Feminista are part of "Herstory" (626). Moreover, Falcón authored the companion entry "SPAIN: Women are the Conscience of Our

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Country," a brief synopsis of the feminist movement in Spain. She informs her readers that "To write about the Spanish feminist movement is to write about a revolution betrayed" (626), and credits women with bringing Spain into modernity after the war:

> It was they [women] who achieved the demographic miracle of this century: nearly doubling the Spanish population in only forty years. [...] This reconstruction of the country, which allowed Spain to enter the realm of industrialized nations with a brilliant number ten ranking, is owed to women: the anonymous heroines [...]. (627)

After tracing developments in the movement during the 1970s, Falcón explains that "a sector of the original women's movement rejects its roots," distancing itself from the label 'feminist' in favor of being "thought well of in male circles, to obtain the crumbs that those who control society allow them" (630). Looking to the future, Falcón sees only limited gains (abortion legalized but with great limitations, some family planning centers established) because of splintering within the ranks. Yet the revolutionary women, "the conscience of the country, [...] the elaborators of the theory that women are a social class"[21] have changed the face of history, for "it will never again be said that in Spain the women did not know how to organize themselves, that they did not know how to fight, that they did not win their place in the country and their place in history" (631).

III.B.6. GABRIELE IN *HISPANIA* - 1991

John Gabriele engendered among Hispanists a further familiarization with Falcón by publishing in *Hispania* "Lidia Falcón y el feminismo español: una entrevista." The material covered in this conversation displays multiple facets of Falcón's history and talent: her earliest feminist writings at the age of fourteen, her impassioned struggle against the *dictadura*, the activities of the Partido

Feminista de España, the current situation of women in Spain, Falcón's incarcerations, feminine and masculine characterization in her novels, her "feminismo radical," and her assessment of the Spanish feminist movement in light of its own history and that of progress made in other countries.

What is of particular interest, and what this interview offered probably for the first time to the American reading public, is a clarification of the state of the feminist struggle for abortion rights in Spain. In fact, in his introductory comments Gabriele talks about the efforts of the Spanish government during the 1980s "por poner a la disposición de la mujer mayores oportunidades sociales y políticas" like divorce, abortion, the *Instituto de la Mujer*, and the incorporation of women into the armed forces (947). Yet in the interview Falcón states that "la situación de la mujer española actualmente está muy mal, verdaderamente mal," considering aspects such as the low numbers of women working in jobs that offer real security, the abandonment of separated or divorced women due to the absence of social services or family assistance, and the abortion law. The decriminalization of abortion of 1987 was only partial, as Falcón clarifies:

> El asunto del aborto es el disparate más horrible que un jurista pueda hacer. El Congreso no elaboró una ley. Lo que hizo fue introducir en el código penal, en el artículo en que el aborto se consideraba un delito, tres eximentes de responsabilidad [...]. Siendo tantas las condiciones que tienen que cumplirse para que el aborto sea declarado legal, cuando les parece a los grupos de derecha que en una clínica están practicando el aborto presentan un querella criminal. Como todavía hay jueces y fiscales fascistas entonces procesan a médicos, los meten en prisión, cierran la clínica, etc. Pues esto es la batalla que estamos viviendo en cuanto al aborto. (949)

Crediting the government with the decriminalization of abortion in Spain as an advance in women's rights is very far off the mark. Thus part of the value of this interview is the clarification of key issues regularly glossed over, or falsified, by

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E.B.T. JONES

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well meaning commentators bent on glorifying the victories of the post-Franco government. For reasons such as this it is imperative that Falcón's voice be heard.

III.B.7. JONES - 1997

Recent trends in Women's Studies within hispanism show a broadening of the discipline, with an accompanying interest in history and literary forms other than fiction. *Women in Contemporary Spain* by Anny Brooksbank Jones, published in 1997, is a prime example of the new scholarship. Jones' work is more broadly one of cultural or social studies, what might be termed Women's Studies, than it is an examination strictly of literature. Thus Falcón's role as "one of Spain's best-known and most controversial feminist theorists" is underscored (5), as is her founding, with others, of the *Partido Feminista*, "[a]rguably the most uncompromising rejection of androcentric politics" in postwar Spain (12). Jones recognizes in Falcón a persistent line of thinking: "a questioning of dual activists' qualifications for representing other women: first, on the grounds that party feminists seek to enter what they themselves admit is a deeply partiarchal culture; second, because once inside they adapt too readily to its norms" (12).

Women's writing is discussed in the chapter "Versions of Identity," where Jones treats both cinema and writing. She mentions Falcón among women who in their writing tell their own experiences as social protagonists during the last years of the regime. Rosa Montero, Montserrat Roig, Mercedes Soriano, and Falcón "all in their different ways sought to recover what were represented as collective experiences, helping to raise feminist consciousness, dramatising the debates of the time and exploring their history" (163).

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III.C. WORKS WHICH APPROACH FALCON AS NOVELIST

III.C.1. CHOWN - 1983

Linda E. Chown's review essay "American Critics and Spanish Women Novelists, 1942-1980" published in a 1983 edition of *Signs* presents a critical assessment of some problems inherent to American critics' understanding of Spanish women's sensibilities. In the final section of the essay Chown proposes "several alternate studies that could open up the criticism and lead to fruitful results both for Spanish and American feminist theory" (102-3). She points to the "urgent need for an exhaustive study" of the history of women's literature in Spain, especially in the last one hundred years:

> Surprisingly, American critics seldom mention the many, very thoroughly contemporary Spanish feminist studies. An investigation of these sources could result not only in an exciting study of the connections between politics and literature but should also point out additionl motifs, images, and patterns peculiar to Spanish women's literature. (103)

Chown annotates her comments with specific references to some of Falcón's work: back issues of the journal *Vindicación Feminista* and *Mujer y sociedad.* Regarding Spanish women authors and the connections between politics and literature she states that "it should be noted that the authors' interest in the inner world does not separate them from the social world, from political action. The majority of them have participated in political action against Franco, in feminist meetings, and the like" (103 n36). Falcón epitomizes this aspect, and the study of her "thoroughly contemporary Spanish feminist studies" would satisfy Chown's exhortation.

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III.C.2. *ALEC* - 1987

An excellent collection of essays indicative of the bourgeoning interest in women's literature in the second half of the 1980s is the 1987 special issue of *Anales de la literatura eapañola contemporánea*: *Reading For Difference: Feminist Perspectives On Women Novelists of Contemporary Spain.* Its guest editor Mirella Servodidio introduces the essays by recurring to the myth of Demeter who, by way of her mother Persephone's countervailing the hegemony of Zeus and Hades, is able to escape the underworld and walk the earth two seasons each year, reunited with her mother. For Servodidio "the joyful finding of Persephone emblematized the feminine archetype as a vision of continuous attachment and transfigurative strength, mapping the return from darknes to light, from submergence to renewal" (12). The aptness of this myth to the feminist project is explained:

> Describing a rendezvous of myth and history, the Demeter-Persephone archetype has continuous and current resonance in all aspects of women's relationships with each other and can be said to govern the ethos of the women's movement itself, shaped as it is by the internal networks, continuities and friendships of women who span various generations. (12)

"The sameness and identity with the mother" and the "universality of this maternal metaphor," both inscribed in current feminist theory,[22] are a common thread among each of the novels represented in this *ALEC* compilation (12). The article on Falcón in this issue is Elizabeth Starcevic's "*Rupturas*: A Feminist Novel" (175-189), which studies the protagonist Elena's feminist *toma de conciencia* and the depictions by Falcón of various aspects of the contemporary feminist movement in Spain where Elena begins to find herself. For Starcevic this latter

aspect "makes the novel both an unusual contribution and a provocative one" (10).

Overall, Starcevic's analysis reflects an understanding of Falcón's own purposes and intentions. Rather than import theoretical considerations foreign to Falcón's own methodology, Starcevic demonstrates ways in which Falcón's narrative style furthers her objectives, i.e., "her writings [are] a means of engaging the reader in a process of discovering aspects of women's lives hitherto absent from literature" (177). Of particular importance in both Falcón's work and Starcevic's analysis is the interrelationship between the immediate historical circumstances and the personal events of the protagonist's life. Elena's breaking away from the "series of relationships that are strangling her" (179) is predicated on her recognizing the nature of her entrapment. This recognition involves the reader in an analysis of institutional and personal practices which serve to oppress, from every angle, Elena and by extension all women. As Starcevic points out, this form of textual politics is purposeful, for it "offers the reader, who is likely to be a middle-class Spanish woman, many points of reference against which to measure her own situation. Indeed, Falcón's use of a direct, realistic style appears chosen with this audience in mind" (179).

In analyzing the structure of *Rupturas* Starcevic notes that the work is divided roughly in half: the first part consists of the elaboration of Elena's problems; the second half, which situates Elena amidst the fervor of International Women's Year, deals with the possibility of personal solutions, and the empowerment available through the feminist movement. Starcevic observes the "theatrical quality" (179) of the novel's structure (minimal place description, abrupt changes, the blank page separating the halves after which the curtain rises

on International Women's Year, etc.) and the depiction of real historical events such as the church sit-in protesting a mistaken custody decision.

Starcevic's approach leads one to again ponder the question posed by Elizabeth Ordóñez regarding theoretical voices which are French, American, and British. "Have they anything to do with women in Spanish culture? Is it fair to import willy-nilly theories from abroad and force Spanish texts into their perhaps procrustean beds? Why not Spanish theory?" (*Voices* 24). Starcevic integrates thinkers like Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter, Catherine MacKinnon, Foucault, and Terry Eagleton, but the principal basis of her insight into Falcón's fiction is the author's very purposeful and obvious intentions and the material historical context of the second wave feminist movement in Spain. In this approach Starcevic remains true to Falcón's literary philosophy and political commitment.

III.C.3. GAZARIAN GAUTIER - *INTERVIEWS WITH SPANISH WRITERS* - 1991

While the reason for inclusion of Falcón in Levine and Waldman's critically important *Feminismo ante el franquismo* was her role as protagonist of the feminist movement, she appears in another significant collection of interviews solely by virtue of her being a novelist. Marie-Lise Gazarian Gautier describes her 1991 book in this way:

> *Interviews with Spanish Writers* is a collection of twenty-four interviews with the giants, the veterans, and some of the newcomers of Spanish literature. Most of these writers are novelists, although there are some poets and playwrights. It is the first book of its kind, totally devoted to Spain, to appear in English. (xi)

Part of Gazarian's purpose in producing this book was to give voice to those whose work went on in relative obscurity during the forty years of Spain's isolation, for first-rate writers went unrecognized in the ranks of world literature. To break this silence many of these writers "graciously accepted to define for us their literary and personal worlds, revealing their inner traits and giving us insights into their works" (xv).

Among the twenty-four writers featured, there are six women: Carmen Conde, Lidia Falcón, Carmen Laforet, Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Matute, and Rosa Montero. It is unusual to see Falcón listed among the ranks of Spain's most important women writers; Gazarian Gautier is unique in that she early on recognized the importance that Falcón has in Spanish letters. In the interview Falcón characerizes the conditions of her own marginalization:

> If I had been a man, I would have had more opportunities to defend women. If I had written as a man in favor of women, I would have received many literary prizes and medals for my social activities. I would have been among the ranks of important writers. A man can do anything without being criticized; at worst they would say he is a bit of an eccentric. Whites can defend blacks, men can defend women, from an altruistic point of view. But when the oppressed stands up and speaks out loud, people who hold the power consider them crazy and say that they exaggerate and they don't know what they are doing. (135)

In the course of the conversation, Falcón discusses her novelistic art: her "viviparous"[23] style of conceiving and creating her novels; the fact that her characters are based on real people and events: "I want to transmit through the spoken word the tragedy of oppressed women"; her rejection of fantasy motifs; her audience: "Basically I write for women" ; censorship, which "stifles the imagination and enslaves the mind"; her family and the means by which she came into contact with the Falcóns of Perú; literary influences on her work; and

women writers and their fear of admitting their feminism (129-31). This last point is worth quoting:

> MLG: Are there others writers like you in Spain today?
> LF: We are all different. When the feminist movement became important in Spain in the seventies and many women came out to protest their living conditions, I published several feminist magazines. It was prestigious to be called a feminist. The truth is that they have backtracked quite a bit. Now these women have ideological doubts. In a man's world they have to be respected by a male boss, a male director of personnel, a male lover, a husband, and in the end it it very difficult to resist. If you follow this line of thought, if you don't give in, you will miss out on many opportunities. You take the risk of remaining marginal, much like the black writer, the proletarian writer, or the man or woman who is defending the cause of the oppressed. (135)

While not oriented specifically to women writers, Gazarian's volume provides insight into the thinking of one committed feminist writer, a significantly broadening the availability of information on Spanish women writers' views.

III.C.4. DAVIES - *SPANISH WOMEN'S WRITING* - 1998

In a more recent publication Catherine Davies, like Anny Brooksbank Jones with her *Women in Contemporary Spain*, expands the horizon of Women'Studies in hispanism and renders to Lidia Falcón the position among Spanish women of letters which her works merit. In her *Spanish Women's Writing, 1849-1996* Davies argues that while a "steady stream of excellent critical studies have been published in English since the late 1970s (mainly by female academics in the United States), [...] there is a dearth of studies on the history of women in Spain" (1). The book's "broad objective" is to "situate Spanish women writers and their writing lives within their often dramatic historical contexts" (1)[24]. In this work Davies strives "to foreground a distinctive pattern of literary practice motivated in part by the feminine tradition itself and by the

development of the women's movement in Spain" (1). Davies recognizes Falcón as both historical and literary figure.

Davies views Falcón as a "clear exception" among authors admitted to the Spanish canon because Falcón considers herself feminist (4). Davies also mentions Falcón for her publications in the early 1960's on women's civil and labor rights, and for the 1969 *Mujer y sociedad.* The seminal works of Maria Lafitte and Maria Aurèlia Capmany are cited, as are those of Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvior, for their launching of the feminist movement in Spain "after an interlude of forty years" (182).

Davies dedicates seven pages to discussing Falcón's writing, giving an overview of her essay and fictional works. She focuses particularly on the play *Calle, pague y no moleste señora* which constitutes "one of Falcón's most aggressive representations of the male conspiracy theory" (250). She also analyzes the novel *Camino sin retorno* whose interest, in Davies' view, lie in its testimonial value and not its literary style (251). Davies' taste for the historical in literature allows for the inclusion of Falcón among great Spanish women writers.[25]

III.D. FALCON'S TESTIMONIAL LITERATURE

III.D.1. VOSBURG - 1995

In 1995 the editors of *Monographic Review/Revista Monográfica* dedicated their eleventh issue to *Hispanic Prison Literature.* Recognizing the centrality to Western thought of the prison and the experience of banishment, and rendering to prison literature the attention it demands in the contemporary era "because of the explosion of prison populations, producing worldwide writing of and from confinement," (10) this volume presents twenty-eight articles which range in

subject matter from Fray Luis de León's prison poetry to a rewritng of *El beso de la mujer araña*. Among those articles which take into account feminist writings are two essays addressing the prison writing of Lidia Falcón: Nancy Vosburg's "Prisons With/out Walls: Women's Prison Writings in Franco's Spain," and John P. Gabriele's "Towards a Feminist Reality of Women's Prison Literature: Lidia Falcón's *En el infierno: Ser mujer en las cárceles de España*." Falcón wrote two volumes of prison memoirs: *En el infierno* relates the experiences of her prison-mates in *Yeserías* during her confinement in 1975; the other text, *Viernes y trece en la calle del Correo*, recounts historical events relative to her own detention on charges of terrorism, and is a vindication of her innocence as well as a condemnation of her accusers.

Vosburg's analysis works with both these texts by Falcón and also with two prison memoirs by her aunt Carlota O'Neill, who was incarcerated at the onset of the Civil War.[26] Underscoring both the cruciality to feminist studies of examining the disciplined body,[27] and the important studies of women's experiences in Franco's prisons which reveal "a two-pronged and interwoven repression, fascist and sexist, the latter of which has not been fully confronted, let alone adequately addressed" (121), Vosburg sees both Falcón and O'Neill as unraveling "the relationship between the social control of women outside the prison walls and their treatment within" (125). These writings rebel against specific texts imposed on them: O'Neill's against the "official history" of the Civil War, Falcón's against *franquista* discourse, particularly with respect to women. Both authors are involved in a "humanizing process," making the encarcerated bodies visible and, "perhaps more imporantly, making them 'readable' to those outside the prison walls" (128).

Viernes y 13 also works against a text imposed on Falcón by Eva Forest, whose declarations to police interrogators implicated Falcón in ETA terrorist acts, for which she was detained and confined in Yeserías. In *Viernes y trece* Falcón's feminist philosophy "clashes head on" with the doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist discourse of Forest (131). For Vosburg, while the struggle waged in O'Neill's texts is "a discursive one over the control and accuracy of the historical record, [...] Falcón's autobiographical text goes a step further as it enters into a critical and historical discussion, focused primarily on gender issues, over women's participation in organized resistance movements" (132). Both writers work in their memoirs to subvert not only the "dominant political apparatus," but also the "conventions of the historical literary tradition", where "traditional male enclaves, the prison *and* the text, become the theater in which the political debate is staged" (132).

Through her analysis of Falcón's prison memoirs, Vosburg inserts Falcón into the ever broadening critical discourse of hispanism and that of literary and cultural studies in general. In her treatment of *Viernes y 13* Voksburg also demonstrates how Falcón's texts can be read as the intromission of a feminist discourse over and above the subversion of the dominant historical discourse.

III.D.2. GABRIELE IN *HISPANIC PRISON LITERATURE* - 1995

John P. Gabriele's approach to Falcón's prison writing, "Towards a Feminist Reality of Women's Prison Literature: Lidia Falcón's *En el infierno: Ser mujer en las cárceles de España,*" is in a sense more limited than Vosburg's: he treats only one author and focuses on only one text, Falcón's *En el infierno.* Gabriele observes that *Viernes y 13* dwells on the political activities that lead up to

Falcón's implication in the assassination of Carrero Blanco," and *En el infierno* "is set exclusively within the prison and addresses more directly and in greater detail the day-to-day effects of female institutional oppression" (95). In his article he uses the latter to elucidate the universality of the feminist discourse of Falcón's prison writing.

With a superabundance of references to (many now canonical) feminist texts (de Beauvoir, Cixous, Gilbert and Gubar, Irigaray, Kristeva, Millett, Moi, Rich, and Showalter, to name a few) Gabriele situates Falcón firmly in the center of international feminist/textual issues. He underscores the "double marginality" (social and literary) of womens' prison texts.[28] For Gabriele *En el infierno* is "paradigmatic of the general sub-human status of women," and the focus of Falcón's critique is ultimately "the oppression of women in the larger social context" (96). According to Gabriele, three topoi (enclosure, silence, and the body) enable Falcón to elaborate a critical feminist discourse in this text.

In this text enclosure is laberinthine in both its physical and psychic dimensions; Falcón's discourse "functions as a means for creating a consciousness of feminine entrapment" (97) on both these levels, as she describes the reality of Yeserías' seemingly endless confines, and relates the inmates' struggle to maintain a sense of dignity or, perhaps more crucial, the ability to "distinguish between reality and illusion" (100), both of which equate with a sense of self (*entereza* is Falcón's term for this). Hence the body, as *carne y hueso* and as symbol, "serves Falcón as the primary site of women's inhuman social condition," for it "assimilates at once the notions of enclosure and suppression of the feminine self" (101). Moreover, for Gabriele, Falcón's use of her own particular body, to write, "infers the theory of feminine writing associated with *l'écriture*

feminine" (102). The act of writing is one of "breaking with female silence" (99), a form of metaphorical entrapment. Her writing gives voice to those whose sufferings may not have otherwise entered into public consciousness and discourse. But the impact of her writing is not limited to the scope of the space she describes.

In Falcón's case the body is a writing subject, "which permits her to move beyond the physical confines of the prison and posit a feminist critique" (102). She goes outside the limitation or boundary which the body is; her words become external to her suffering psyche, and her writing is smuggled out and into the world. "As a result, she succeeds in creating a text where the individual and the social converge, ultimately converting woman into the subject of a feminist discourse that is both personal and political in scope and universal in objective" (102). It is the fusing of "the representation of real woman's experience with a transcendental concept of woman as 'sign'" that places the body at the "very center of Falcón's critical discourse and represents the point at which woman as text and context come together" (102). As object of the male gaze, as the female prisoner's most prized possession, as mechanism for childbirth, as menstruation, as pregnancy, as abortion, as bruised, poked, burned, shaved, drugged, or electroshocked, the female body is the point of departure for Falcón's feminist message.

In the context of feminist Hispanism, Gabriele's article is highly significant in the trajectory of exegesis of Falconian texts. He integrates principles from a broad historical range of feminist writings, including current theoretical constructs such as *l'écriture femenine* and Gilbert and Gubar's demonstration of "how structures of enclosure reflect metaphorically a 'distinctly female

experience'" (87). With Nancy Vosburg and John P. Gabriele, the writings of Lidia Falcón become more intricately enmeshed in the current of critical discourse in hispanism. The texts are viewed as literary phenomena within literary contexts, analyzed in light of contemporary trends in literary criticism. *Hispanic Prison Literature* was published in 1995 and marks a significant broadening of the range of acceptance of Falcón's work into the literary canon.

III.D.3. CAVALLO IN *DUODA* - 1996

The following year another commentary on Falcón's prison literature by an American Hispanist was published, in *Duoda: Revista d'Estudis Feministes*. In "Autobiografía, testimonio, y ficción en la literatura carcelaria femenina: Lidia Falcón, Tomasa Cuevas y Eva Forest" Susana Cavallo surveys the theoretical field of testimonial literature, addresses very briefly the texts of Forest and Cuevas, and assesses Falcón's prison literature in light of these preliminary considerations. Overall this essay eulogizes Falcón's writing, asserting of *En el infierno* that "Como todo gran testimonio, es una obra de arte" (95). Like Vosburg and Gabriele, Cavallo recognizes the place that Falcón's text merits in diverse literary fields: "*En el infierno: Ser mujer en las cárceles de España* representa una aportación única a las letras españolas, a su propio corpus literario [el de Falcón], y al nuevo campo de la literatura carcelaria femenina" (93).

Borrowing from work of Caren Kaplan, Barbara Harlow, John Beverley, and Elzbieta Sklodowska (Foucault and H. Bruce Franklin, for whom "el preso es axiomáticamente masculino" [87], are secondary), Cavallo underscores the notion that testimonial literature replaces the universal "I" of Western humanist discourse (a metaphor for the patriarchal subject: masculine, white, educated,

bourgeois) with a collective "I", which speaks metonymically in name of a community of the oppressed (88). She also stresses the chameleonic nature of the genre, offering as examples Eva Forest's *Onintze en el país de la democracia*, where the "forma melodramática de la narración prohibe que los lectores la tomen en serio," and Tomasa Cuevas' "valiosísimo" *Cárcel de mujeres* (90).

Cavallo observes that Falcón's prison texts exhibit aspects of both the testimonial novel and oral history. But while *En el infierno* centers exclusively on the special situation which the victims live as women, *Viernes y 13* makes manifest the "strategic essentialism" adopted by Falcón in the last days of the dictatorship: "un cambio de postura desde la doble militancia –socialista y feminista–, a la militancia única –feminista" (91). The reasoning behind this change in political posturing is spelled out in the text where "se presenta una denuncia de la izquierda, una postura insólita y poco popular en una mujer cuyas credenciales revolucionarias siempre habían sido intachables" (91). Far from a text like Eva Forest's *Onintze*, where "los personajes son absolutamente uni-dimensionales, los buenos y los malos" (89), Falcón develops a sophisticated denunciation of all perpetrators of terror, however intense or subtle, blatant or covert. Cavallo argues in the end that Falcón's mastery of rhetorical strategies allows for the articulation of a feminist critique which demonstrates "la línea borrosa entre el mundo de dentro y el de fuera, sugiriendo que para la mujer bajo el patriarcado, el mundo entero es una cárcel" (95).

III.D.4. FALCON'S ESSAY WRITING

VOSBURG ON *EL ALBOROTO ESPAÑOL* - 1998

Another recent work of criticism indicative of the broadening of the horizons of hispanism, includes Falcón among Spanish women writers. *Spanish Women Writers and the Essay. Gender Politics and the Self*, edited by Kathleen M. Glenn and Mercedes Mazquiarán de Rodríguez, was published in 1998. This collection of essays on the essay includes Nancy Vosburg's "On Post-Transition Politics, *Picardía*, and Power. Lidia Falcón's *El alboroto español*" (198-211). The article looks at Falcón's *alboroto*, a scathing critique of "the state of the Spanish union in the aftermath of the transition from dictatorship to democracy" (Vosburg 199). Vosburg analyzes Falcón's collection of essays on the *Transición* in light of Falcón's feminist activism, her stylistic particularities, and the exercise of *ninguneo*[29] perpetrated upon her by some elements of Spanish society. The term *ninguneo* connotes "the practice of treating someone as if she or he did not exist" (Vosburg 205). Vosburg argues:

> [O]ne has to admit that Falcón's omission from, among other things, a 1982 book on Spanish feminism published by Editorial Cero and the feminist bibliography published by the government-sponsored Women's Institute (*Instituto de la Mujer*), demonstrates clearly that there has been a concerted effort from certain sectors within Spain to dismiss her through the Spanish practice of *ninguneo*. (210)

Is *ninguneo* to blame for the paucity of information on Lidia Falcón evident among literary critics?

III.E. CRITICISM OF FALCON AS PLAYWRIGHT

Another arena of literary criticism where Falcón's name has appeared is drama. Thanks to the efforts initially of Patricia W. O'Connor and subsequently

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of John P. Gabriele, Falcón is recognized among the ranks of contemporary women dramatists both national and international. It is largely through the efforts of Patricia O'Connor that so many Spanish women playwrights have been introduced into the scholarly literature. Gabriele's book *El teatro breve de Lidia Falcón* (1997) is unique among all the resources brought to bear on the present study: to date it is the only book published whose entire subject matter is the work of Lidia Falcón. As feminist playwright, Falcón numbers among those who have participated in the International Women Playwrights Conference of 1988 in Buffalo, New York.[30] She also organized and directed the *Primera Muestra Internacional de Teatro Feminista* in Madrid in 1987 (Gabriele, *El teatro* 58).

III.E.1. O'CONNOR IN *ESTRENO* - 1984

Patricia O'Connor's frankly feminist article "¿Quiénes son las dramaturgas españolas contemporáneas, y qué han escrito?" is self consciously the first "viaje al exótico terreno marcado 'mujeres dramaturgas'" for that American critic as well as for hispanism in general. At the time O'Connor wrote: "Respecto a la investigación sobre las mujeres dramaturgas, basta decir que el territorio es estrecho y esencialmente inexplorado" (12). O'Connor discusses Spanish women playwrights from the first half of the twentieth century (Dora Sedano, Julia Maura, Ana Diosdado, Mercedes Ballesteros, María Isabel Suárez de Deza, Carmen Troitiño, Luisa-Maria Linares), generalizing that these women "han seguido los moldes impuestos por sus predecesores masculinos," their works more comparable to men's than to those of other women:

> Por lo visto, las dramaturgas nacidas antes de 1930 han internalizado las normas de su sexo, o las han aceptado tácitamente con un propósito práctico. No infrecuentemente, por ejemplo, sus

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> obras ridiculizan a las mujeres intelectuales o profesionales, e idealizan a la hembra sumisa cuya ambición más elevada es el matrimonio. (9)

There was no audible feminist voice in the theater, claims O'Connor, before the death of Franco. In a related article María-José Ragué-Arias of the Instituto de Experimentación Teatral, Barcelona concurs, stating that even in 1984, "La verdad es que en España no puede hablarse de la existencia de un teatro feminista ni siquiera apenas en embrión"[31] (*Estreno* 47).

According to O'Connor, what is most widely known as feminist theater is associated principally with Barcelona and written in Catalan, with the exception of Falcón (9). Focusing in her article only on works in Castilian, O'Connor cites Carmen Resino, Lidia Falcón, Concha Romero, María Manuela Reia, Lourdes Ortiz, and others with minor incursions into the world of theater. Of Falcón, "la feminista más relevante y conocida de España [...] abogada, novelista, ensayista, periodista y aspirante a dramaturga" O'Connor observes: "Al igual que muchas de sus manifestaciones públicas, las obras teatrales de Falcón [...] funcionan como vehículo de su militante feminismo" (11).

III.E.2. O'CONNOR - *DRAMATURGAS ESPAÑOLAS DE HOY* - 1988

In her 1988 *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy: una introducción* O'Connor takes her investigation further. This groundbreaking work includes: O'Connor's original essay "La difícil dramaturgia femenina española," commentary on *dramaturgas* writing both during and after the Franco years, seven one act plays from the 1980s,[32] and a useful bio-bibliographical index of Spanish women playwrights of the twentieth century. In the essay O'Connor employs Falcón's research on the historical roots of patriarchal ideology (from *Mujer y sociedad*) in

explicating the primordial concept of woman's space as interior space, in contrast to drama/theater, the most verbal and most public of the literary arts (12). Among various other educational, cultural, arquitectural, beaurocratic, and economic obstacles to which O'Connor attributes the absence of women among Spanish playwrights today, the attitude "el teatro, como ciertas novelas, es 'sólo para hombres'" prevails today (13).

Commenting specifically about Lidia Falcón, O'Connor writes that during the Franco era the activist's dramatic works remained peripheral to commercial theater interests "ya que sus obras, poco convencionales, no respondían a los gustos burgueses" (41):

> [L]as obras de Lidia Falcón, como su producción mejor conocida (artículos, ensayos, novelas), sirven para atacar la opresión de la mujer. Los blancos específicos de su crítica son [...] los hombres en posiciones de poder que no han sentido la necesidad de comprender el punto de vista femenino. (41)

With respect to feminist theater in particular, O'Connor confirms that various feminists have utilized the stage to foment consciousness raising (52). She also points out that at the time of the book's publication the only representations of feminist theater in Spain had been *Dones i Catalunya* in Barcelona in 1983, and the previously mentioned *Primer Festival de Teatro Feminista* in Madrid in 1987, where Falcón's *Tres idiotas españolas* was the only Spanish work performed, the others being Italian, French, and Brazilian plays (53).

III.E.3. O'CONNOR IN *SIGNS* - 1990

In her "Women Playwrights in Contemporary Spain and the Male-Dominated Canon," O'Connor expands her explication of the tendency among women dramatists to eschew openly feminist themes, although "a new

awareness and pride in women increasingly pervades the plays of the new women playwrights and the nonconfomist writers of the Franco era" (377). Thus the "disappointing trajectory of Ana Diosdado" (385) is reviewed in detail, and the middle 1980s phenomenon in which "several women playwrights began to take a more woman-centered focus, to forge consciously a female discourse in theater" (387) is also convered, somewhat more superficially.

Falcón, author of "[n]oncommercial and feminist plays of the seventies and eighties" (385) falls somewhere in the middle, not only on account of her avowal of radical feminist themes, but also because her works appeared prior to the emergence of the "[n]ew women dramatists of the eighties" (387). O'Connor argues that Falcón's established reputation in other areas facilitated her still limited access to theater, and that Franco's relaxed censorship in the 1970s allowed for her works to reach minority audiences (385-86). She also uses Falcón's dramatic career as counterpoint to that of other women playwrights:

> Falcon's plays, most of which remain unperformed, serve as vehicles for her militant feminist position. The year she spent in prison for allegedly collaborating with Basque terrorists seemed to harden her criticism of lawyers, policemen, jailors, and doctors who are unsympathetic to women. Battered women and abused children also abound in her plays, as do scenes that propose contraception, divorce, and abortion as viable alternatives for women. More than a decade of church/state separation and considerable social progress notwithstanding, Falcón's point of view remains unpopular, just as the feminist label continues to be counterproductive for writers who seek performance of their work in mainstream theaters. (386)

Again, Falcón's name is associated with "the only public and semiprofessional productions of feminist theater since the Civil War" in Spain: *Dones I Catalunya* of 1983 and the International Feminist Theater Festival of Madrid held in July of 1987, since her works were performed on both occasions (386).

III.E.4. GABRIELE - *EL TEATRO BREVE DE LIDIA FALCON* - 1997

In the wake of the pioneering work done by Patricia O'Connor, this book dedicated solely to the dramatic work of Lidia Falcón appeared in 1997. In addition to the texts of four one-act plays (*¡No moleste, calle y pague, Señora!*, *¡Parid, parid malditas!*, *Tres idiotas españolas*, and *Tu único amor*), this publication includes "Mi historia teatral" and "En defensa de un teatro feminista" by Falcón; "Lidia Falcón habla de su teatro," an interview with Candyce Leonard; and Gabriele's essay "Hacia una dramaturgia feminista española."

Of the two commentaries by Falcón, the first relates the centrality of theater to her life (her parents met while collaborating in the *Teatro Proletario*) and provides details of her theatrical career such as locations of performances. The second commentary addresses the questions, Why do women write theater? and Why feminist theater? Her responses are, as is typical, incisive and mordant. [33] For example, Falcón laments the current state of affairs in Spanish theater:

> Se trata sobre todo de divertir al público, y por lo visto, el público adulto ha entrado en una fase de infantilismo cada vez más acusado, que le impide prestar atención a las palabras, seguir una trama compleja, interesarse por un argumento. [...] la obra estructurada alrededor de un argumento que se desarrolla a través de las palabras y de la actuación de sus actores, apenas tiene sitio en los escenarios españoles. (15)

Each of the four plays made available in this new volume had been published previously.[34] What is really new in this book is Gabriele's insightful critique of these works.

Recognizing Falcón as "la fuerza motriz principal del naciente movimiento feminista" during the 1960s, Gabriele also points to her untiring work throughout the 1970s, "época en que se da a conocer el trabajo de Falcón en un contexto nacional," and in the 1980s, "cuando su labor alcanza el reconocimiento

internacional" (33-34). Gabriele sees in Falcón's theatrical works "la misma postura crítica y militante que en su obra en general" (35). Developing a typology of feminisms, he situates other Spanish women dramatists in a continuum, locating Falcón within the parameters of "feminismo radical" (39). In radical feminist theater, he argues, "la intención es descubrir y sacar a la luz la pura y auténtica experiencia femenina desde una perspectiva exclusivamente femenina para el beneficio exclusivo de la mujer" (38). Gabriele recognizes the difficulties inherent to the enterprise of categorizing "teatro feminista" generically, but he nevertheless confirms ("la variedad temática, ideológica y formal aparte") that:

> [T]odo teatro feminista cumple con tres objetivos generales: documentar la realidad desde la perspectiva femenina, sondear la dominación patriarcal --no siempre visible-- de las mujeres y asentar una perspectiva revisionista de la situación social de éstas (39).

Thus Gabriele provides contextual grounding for his discussion of Falcón's four plays.

The careful analysis which Gabriele offers of each work is informed by his broadly based academic understanding of feminist issues, as exemplified by his insights into the polarization of the sexes as represented in both the characterization and the scenographic detail of *¡No moleste, calle y pague, Señora!*. Moreover, he asserts that Falcón's *mensaje principal* in this piece is a universal one, since the women share common experiences. This communal consciousness (this consciousness-raising, this class consciousness) is an integral aspect of feminist theater. All these considerations place Falcón squarely in the currents of contemporary feminist concerns.

In *¡Parid, parid malditas!* Adela is arrested by the police midway through an abortion and is then incarcerated, forced to bear the child. For Gabriele, in this piece Falcón is writing the body, "según viene propuesta por *l'ecriture feminine*":

> El cuerpo [...] sirve metafóricamente como símbolo de la clausura femenina y medio de escape de su encarcelamiento a la vez. [...] En *¡Parid, parid malditas!*, el cuerpo femenino es el signo artístico de la ideología feminista de Falcón, en términos visibles y concretos tanto como simbólicos. (51-52)

In delineating certain features of *Tres idiotas españolas* Gabriele cites Judith Butler, Gilbert and Gubar, Marilyn Frye, and several lesser known feminist critics; his analysis of *Tu único amor* is equally current and informed.

While integrating currents and themes from global feminist thought into his analysis of Falcón's *teatro*, Gabriele situates Falcón in her local context as well:

> Entre la dramaturgia femenina española contemporánea, la obra de Lidia Falcón se destaca por la perseverancia de su crítica, la profundidad de su visión y el vigor de su compromiso con la cuestión femenina. No hay en Espana otra voz feminista de semejante resonancia. (74).

He compares her works with those of some twenty-five international women dramatists. This comparison serves to situate Falcón, once again, within a larger context: "A fin de cuentas, el teatro de Lidia Falcón forma una parte integral de la dramaturgia feminista mundial" (76).

Gabriele also develops a Brechtian analysis, which discloses other political dimensions of Falcón's work:

> La construcción visual o bien la reconstrucción de ciertas facetas de la realidad en cuadros independientes pero conectados era de importancia crucial para el comentario político y objetivo crítico del dramaturgo alemán. [...] El uso de cuadros, es decir episodios, en los textos de Falcón sirve para alcanzar una unidad narrativa que enmarca una faceta social y filosófica particular de la realidad. (52-53)

The ultimate purpose of dramatic representation, for Brecht, was to present the audience with the immediate problem, create in the audience a consciousness, and establish a critique from the social point of view (52). Does it work in the case of exposing sexual politics? This goal for the feminist dramatist is one which, in Gabriele's assessment, Falcón accomplishes.

IV. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS TOWARD A JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

This section highlights two articles which put out calls for research to which the present study responds.

IV.A. FRANCO - "OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES" - 1979

Jean Franco's 1979 "Opportunities for Women's Studies in the Hispanic Field" explores lacunae in the field and suggests fruitful areas for future study. Calling for textual and critical work to be done, Franco argues: "We need, first of all, a preliminary survey of the field of Hispanic women's literature and of the availability of the works of women writers. Then we need a series of guides to the critical writings on women in each of the Hispanic countries or societies" (164). The present study fulfills these directives with respect to Lidia Falcón.

Aniticipating the broadening of the field of women's studies witnessed in hispanism in the last half decade, Franco remarked at the time that "as scholars in every field of women's studies realize [...] more interdisciplinary work is needed" (167). Polarization within disciplines limits a wholistic or global understanding of feminist issues. Similar to the social sciences, where research

tends to ignore important cultural aspects of women's condition, "literary studies traditionally ignore social and political contexts" (167). Interdisciplinary work provides elements of "a comprehensive theoretical base" (167) by which the women's studies edifice may be fashioned. It is the case that Falcón's work cannot be studied outside the historical frame in which she lives and to which she refers continually in her fiction. Hers is testimonial literature. Allusions to historical, social, political, and feminist referents are ubiquitous; they are the stuff of which Falcón's fiction is made. Moreover, the intensity of her political posturing requires awareness of the political reality to which her characters are subject. One cannot read Falcón and "ignore social and political contexts," for they are woven inseparably into the story. Indeed, Falcón's writings are prime examples of interdisciplinary practice.

Franco also addresses "Opportunities for Publishing in Spain and Latin America. " She asserts that "[t]he need for detailed information about potential publishers is evident; we have to identify the editors who are receptive to women's studies scholarship" (169). As director of both Vindicación Feminista and *Poder y Libertad*, Falcón has encouraged and enabled the publication of women's writing and is always interested in copy matter.

It is interesting to note that when Jean Franco compares feminist movements in Spain and Latin American, Falcón is central to her characterization:

> Contemporary Spanish feminism has been distinguished by the emergence of the journal *Vindicación Feminista* and by the appearance of an active group of feminist critics and writers, one of whom, Carmen Conde, has become the first woman elected to the Spanish academy. Two other major writers, Carmen Martín Gaite and Lidia Falcón, are active feminists. (160)

Certainly a figure as central to the history, ideology, and practice of feminism in Spain as Falcón is should be made more visible to scholars interested in women's studies in hispanism.

IV.B. OTERO VIDAL - "UN TESTIMONIO A VECES MOLESTO" - 1994

One of the many collaborators at Vindicación Feminista, Mercè Otero Vidal speaks eloquently of the need for more research and dissemination on the writings of Lidia Falcón. She registers surprise, offers explanation, and pleads for a reversal of the lack of serious attention paid to such an important writer:

> Hay otro hecho que merece también ser tenido en cuenta referente al conjunto de la obra de creación de Lidia Falcón: se trata de la sorpresa que provoca, a estas alturas, el que no ocupe lugar, su merecido lugar, en la historia de la literatura española. Pero lo cierto es que sus novelas son un testimonio a veces molesto, ya que últimamente la literatura comprometida no ha estado bien vista, la crítica social no se ha cotizado, los sentimientos han resultado ser una manipulación, el realismo se ha visto como una imposición y la utopía como un engaño.
>
> Por otra parte, si la literatura se utiliza como documento histórico, algunas de las páginas de Lidia Falcón son un material documental de primera mano porque no puede negarse que elementos autobiográficos evidentes aparecen en todas las novelas a grandes rasgos o en los pequeños detalles. (64)

With the changes seen in the contours of women's studies in hispanism within the last few years, the historiographical elements inherent to Falcón's work may well become more appreciated. The present study is designed to further this vision, and it is hoped that through its interdisciplinary approach this work may contribute to the "comprehensive theoretical base" which Jean Franco envisioned for the field of women's studies in hispanism twenty years ago.

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLY NOVELS

CLARA AND *ASESINANDO EL PASADO*

In the following five chapters, Falcón's seven works of fiction are examined chronologically according to when they were written. *Clara* and *Asesinando el pasado*, written in 1958 and 1960 respectively, are her earliest works. The first remained unpublished until 1993, when it was released by Vindicación Feminista. Falcón says that the second novel was presented in 1960 for a literary prize "cuyo nombre he olvidado y que naturalmente no me concedieron" (*Asesinando* 5). It was not published for circulation until 1997. *Es largo esperar callado*, "gestado en su totalidad en 1971," (*Es largo* 10) came out in 1975, the *Año Internacional de la Mujer*. Falcón's other four works of fiction, *El juego de la piel* (1983), *Rupturas* (1985), *Camino sin retorno* (1992), and *Postmodernos* (1993) were conceived and published after the author's periods of incarceration, the publication of her major philosophical tract *La razón feminista*, and the eruption of the second wave feminist movement in Spain. Several themes which are important in the later works appear in her earliest two novels. Hence this chapter, in treating the first two, lays the groundwork for an examination of the trajectory of Falcón's fiction, which extends into the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

FALCON'S FIRST NOVEL: *CLARA*

> [H]e querido resucitar mi 'Clara' [...] para que nadie ignore más lo que fuimos, lo que hicimos, y cómo sobrevivimos las mujeres de hace casi un cuarto de siglo.
>
> Lidia Falcón, 1980[35]

In 1958 a generation brought up in compliance with the dictates of the *Sección Femenina* was coming of age. Yet not everyone conformed to the rule of National Catholicism, or the romance plots of the *novela rosa*. While the national campaign was waged to channel women's energy into the sustenance and aggrandizement of the male in both the public and private spheres, some were struggling to survive against ideological constructs which worked to construe the meaning of women's very existence. It is from within the confines of the omnipresent cultural web of *franquismo* that the pen of Lidia Falcón, still relatively timid and cautious in the Spain of the late 1950's, forged a ground breaking path. Although she was to become the prolific writer and vociferous protagonist of the feminist movement so well known today, when she wrote *Clara* she was only twenty-two, and what there was of the feminist movement in Spain had with little exception died with the II Republic.

Clara is the sixth fictional work published by Falcón. Penned in 1958, it was the first novel of length she wrote. Having tossed the manuscript in a drawer to be forgotten, she never destroyed it "por cariño nostálgico." It was not published at the time because, as Falcón explains:

> [E]n aquellos años ninguna editorial estaba dispuesta a editarme una obra literaria. Con muchas dificultades conseguí sacar a la luz, varios años después, mis primeras obras de tesis. La publicación de novelas estaba reservada, en aquellos tiempos, a los ganadores de los premios que se otorgaban cada año en los cenáculos literarios y a los autores ricos que se pagaban la edición. ("Prólogo 1980" 11)

In retrospect, Falcón denominates *Clara* the first feminist novel written in postwar Spain, and dubs it "la contra-novela rosa, o si se quiere la novela contra-rosa"[36] ("Prólogo presente" 4).

In order to appreciate the "contra" aspect of this work, a brief determination of the principal aspects of the *rosa* genre is in order. The *novela rosa* is recognized generally as the romance novel. In defining the genre Carla Olson Buck includes among its "superficial elements" those of "glamorous characters, glimpses into upper-middle-class life and the requisite love affair between an innocent young woman and an older, more sophisticated man" (28). Typically these novels follow a simplistic linear plot whose episodic sequencing culminates in a happy ending for the female protagonist, whose life becomes complete through the fulfillment of what is presumed to be every woman's ultimate desire: finding the perfect husband, with marital and family bliss on the horizon. For José María Díez Borque the "essence of the *novela rosa*" lies in the idea that "Si hay algo digno de ser vivido . . . es el amor"[37] (Buck 31). The stylized romantic ideal of love requires total surrender, so that "the relationships portrayed in a *novela rosa* require a submissiveness on the part of the woman that helps to maintain the double standard of male-female behavior" (Buck 30).

Gonzalo Navajas characterizes the romance novel genre by looking at its philosophical and ideological premises. For him the constitutive and most general trait of novels of this genre is "la desmaterialización de los hechos, figuras humanas y circunstancias [la cual les priva] de sus componentes específicos que les confieren una naturaleza real" (365). In this "dematerialization" referential reality is used only as a stepping stone into a

world of fantasy, where the contradictory complexity of reality is reduced "a una naturaleza idiosincrática" (365). Reality is made to look more beautiful. Fictional reality, a "realidad sin fisuras" (370) supersedes actual referential reality. In the elision of antagonistic concepts all difference is erased. The division between subject and object, between reality and desire, disappears, for they are fused into a oneness of satisfaction and delight: "En el mundo de la novela rosa los conflictos antinómicos han sido eliminados. En su lugar se ha establecido el dominio de los sentimientos puros y claros sin confusión alguna" (369). Life follows the dictates of the sentiments, without contradictions. The ideological ramifications of such a craftily honed fissureless reality are unmistakable: "a disolución general de la diferencia como categoría hermenéutica del mundo conduce a la negación de las oposiciones sociales y culturales" (372). Opposition is thus silenced.[38]

Falcón would be loathe to create such a model. Instead the protagonist of this *novela contra-rosa*, Clara, in her path through love, responsibility, and work in the Spain of the late 1950's, is forced to see reality in its most painful dimensions, confronting the failure of her pretensions and the hostility of her contemporaries.[39] The appropriation of Clara's sexuality by various men is central to her experience, and while she has the lucidity to recognize her position, she lacks the means to overcome it, and so remains within a repeating pattern of exploitative liaisons. In each of these relationships, Clara mentally enters into a *novela rosa* plot, or mode of conceiving of her experiences, only to be shaken out of it by the reality confronting her.

The discourse on sexuality in this work, as in all of Falcón's fiction, discloses a keen sensibility to the ubiquity, multifariousness, and dynamics of

power as revealed in the arena of sexual relations. In *Clara* this discourse takes the form of patterns of pressure and resistance between characters, the analysis of which divulges the complex of factors at play when sexuality is used to gain and/or maintain control. The present examination of these dimensions of *Clara* borrows from the later work of Michel Foucault.[40] For Foucault, the "deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power" (*History* 106). The relations between these elements constitute an "apparatus of sexuality" whose "major function at any given historical moment [is] that of responding to an *urgent need.*" Thus the apparatus has "a dominant strategic function" (Confession 194-95). It is the "strategic function" of the apparatus of sexuality and the "urgent need" it satisfied in postwar Spain which the following analysis of the discourse of sexuality in *Clara* reveals.

A brief synopsis of the plot is as follows: Clara is in her early twenties when her widowed father remarries, to Gabriela, a woman much his junior. Upon returning from their lengthy honeymoon, Clara's father informs his daughter of impending doom: "Gabriela está embarazada. Es grave, ¿sabes?. Parece que tenía una lesión en el corazón y además... son gemelos..." (20). That evening sets the tone for Clara's immediate future, for soon thereafter her father dies, leaving only his daughter to tend the weakling Gabriela and the twins. So in addition to the drudgery of endless domestic strain Clara is forced to find outside employment. First as secretary, then as bookkeeper, she manages to keep food on the table for her baby brothers and Gabriela, but she finds herself compromised by her employers. Later, an encounter with the alluring Ramón Nesweda promises passion, but ends dismally as she is forced to see her own

meager existence for what it really is. In addition, throughout the story, her suitor Arturo is on the scene. The novel ends with an honest appraisal of the mythology of romantic attraction, replete with invocations to Spencer Tracy, Humphrey Bogart, and other media icons.

The first of Clara's lovers is Arturo, who visits her home regularly. For two years he and Clara have been waiting to get married. In his arms Clara seeks respite from the gloom which has settled over her life. As his advances become more intense she wonders at her own lack of desire, for she feels none at all, yet she lacks the strength to put him off. Her reluctance to do so leads to her unwilling defloration:

> Quiso protestar, pero ya la indiferencia se había trocado en deseo, y no opuso resistencia al ser aprisionada bajo el corpulento cuerpo del hombre. Cuando lo intentó al sentir el dolor, no pudo desasirse de aquella fuerza que le penetraba rompiendo su carne, sirviendo sólo a su deseo. (23)

This initiation teaches Clara that while her own desire can indeed be aroused by a man, it will not be satisfied. She wonders, Is that all there is to love?, Is this how it is in marriage? Arturo interprets her disappointment as "frialdad" and the chasm between the two begins to broaden.

In this episode Clara's conscious antipathy toward Arturo's passion ought to lead her to dismiss him. He has become a source of agitation; his demands are little more than annoying impositions. Her compliance, then, begs explanation. Indifference plays a role: "Y ella se abandonó a las caricias con indiferencia, con desgana casi" (23), as does desire, once it is stimulated. Her head strong, independent spirit tells her that she needs to concentrate and pool her personal resources in order to adjust to the new demands of her situation. Nevertheless it will take her a while to recognize the extent to which Arturo seeks her in service

of his own pleasure, at her cost. So instead of resistance to Arturo's domination, Clara exhibits ignorance, indifference, and temporary collusion.

Clearly the precept of feminine submission is one of the "mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power" (Foucault, *History* 106) which compel Clara to continue her involvement with Arturo in spite of the obvious disinclination she feels. As Gallego Méndez points out, in accordance with the long tradition dating back to Genesis and popularized in Christian thought throughout the ages, the ideological wing of the *Sección Femenina* strove to universalize stereotypical norms of male and female characteristics, whose quintessential aspects were dominance and submission (177). The norm of female submission was interiorized on an individual basis and then actualized en masse as behavioral conditioning. The *novela rosa* served as one technique among many for the dissemination of these normative values, reinforcing female submissiveness and maintaining a double standard. Clara, born not insignificantly in the year 1936, collaborates with the determinants of this conditioning, insofar as she submits to Arturo's domination of her body. Her resistance will eventually overcome the pressure to conform, as this is after all a *contra-novela rosa*, but only after further developments lead her to the requisite critical mass.

One of these developments is the episode of Rondero & Co. Clara, now a commodity in the labor market, takes a job as secretary, one of the most widespread professions in the *postguerra* and recommended by the *Sección Femenina* as particularly suitable for women (Martín Gaite, *Usos* 145). Its danger lay in the potential for confidential intimacies between the boss and his "humilde sombra en el despacho grande."[41] Initially Rondero repulses Clara, but this soon

changes. As the two become more intimate, Clara dismisses her step mother's ingenuous comment, "¡Yo he conocido muchas secretarias que se casaron con su jefe!" (35). Clara considers herself too shrewd to fall into this trap: "Creía que no se engañaba como Gabriela con sus quimeras de novela rosa. Bien sabía la clase de hombre que era su jefe... " (39). Nevertheless, Rondero slowly succeeds in his conquest of the ingenue.

Clara's awareness of the truth of her boss's intentions is insufficiently strong to protect her from this exploitative liaison. The romance plot takes over: enticing "glimpses into upper-middle class life and the requisite love affair between an innocent young woman and an older, more sophisticated man" (Buck 28) are written into the script of Clara's life. Her mounting displeasure with Arturo feeds her fantasy of Rondero: "Y se veía a sí misma amada por el poderoso, el ilustre, el millionario señor Rondero. Que podría ofrecerle una vida de comodidad y lujo a ella y a su madrastra y a sus hermanos..." (47).

As the inevitable consummation of their relationship takes place Clara, in a cloud from too much rum, imagines that their late night tryst is actually a demonstration of love: the lascivious repugnant *macho* is transformed into a man at once "obsequioso, complaciente, enamorado, incluso" (50) and his touch provokes "el doloroso encanto de sentirse deseada por él" (51). No sooner does Rondero jump up and dress than the disparity between his guile and Clara's naiveté becomes clear. Her overpowering need to discuss her most intimate thoughts are met with "No, por favor, no me cuentes nada. . . Yo prefiero no saber nada" (52).

Clara's final musings on Rondero reveal the lesson learned:

> Todo había sido tal como ella se lo imaginaba y nada la había satisfecho.
>
> Porque no había sentido ningún placer. Porque había asistido indiferente a la exaltación y al goce de él. Y había tenido un gran alivio cuando todo concluyó. Como cuando hacía el amor con Arturo y sólo deseaba que terminara cuanto antes. (52)

She is unmistakably aware of his selfish intentions, but again, she suppresses her knowledge with prefabricated fantasy: "otro día... cuando él me quiera más, porque él me irá queriendo poco a poco cada vez más" (52). This "some day" never comes. Now the butt of cruel humiliation by her co-workers, Clara quits her job, and finds herself unemployed once again.

Clara's fresh incursions into the labor market are unsuccessful at first: she refuses a job as a nude photo model and again as waitress in a seedy café whose owner is loath to keep his hands off the young beauty. Then Jaime Soler, sculptor and importer of goods, offers Clara work as bookkeeper. Out of utter hopelessness and lack of options, she takes the job. The aging Soler, absurdly and hopelessly in love with Clara, is kind to her. But eventually his passion becomes uncontainable:

> [L]os labios masculinos buscaron ávidos los de la muchacha, y se apretaron a ellos, succionándolos, mordiéndolos.
>
> El beso no duró más que unos segundos, tan pocos que no le dio tiempo a Clara a reaccionar. La sorpresa, el asombro, el asco la dejaron indefensa ante la brusca acometida del hombre. Luego él mismo se apartó con miedo. Ella se limpió la boca con un gesto de repugnancia y Soler se sintió entonces más solo, más pequeño, más desgraciado que nunca... (100).

Afraid of losing her position Clara allows herself to become the object of Soler's desire. He supplies her with extra cash, and so the relationship slips into a form of prostitution. When he offers to provide her with tuition money to pursue her education, her choice is clear:

> Se sentía cada vez más apremiada por arrancarle la promesa de su ayuda. Era su ocasión y no debía dejarla escapar. Por alcanzarla estaba dispuesta a ceder a sus pretensiones. Había encontrado la última y definitiva causa por la que no vacilaría en acostarse con Soler. (123)

She knows she can get what she wants from him, and she sees how to do it. Now the tables have turned. Whereas normally the woman is subject to *nubes de rosa* this time Clara consciously makes the situation work to her own advantage, with Soler caught up in a hopeless passion. At this juncture a full reversal of the romance plot is anticipated, as part of Clara's maturation. However since this novel offers first hand documentary material of Spain in the late 50's (Otero Vidal 64), the notion that Clara could actualize her "will to convert herself to an autonomous human being, free of male tutelage" (Castro 61) is anachronistic. "En definitiva, resulta evidente que la vida de las mujeres españolas de los años 50 se les convertía en un infierno si no disponían de la protección de algún hombre, por más cara que ésta les resultara" (Falcón, "Prólogo presente" 8). Given the limits of her own historicity, Clara is unable to follow through to liberation.

Just as Falcón's young protagonist is moving into a narrowly defined sense of autonomy (having understood the ramifications of her relationship with Rondero and willfully choosing it for her own benefit) she becomes involved in yet another sordid affair. Clara is not yet sufficiently schooled in disillusionment. And this time the trappings approximate more closely the archetypal form of the *novela rosa*. When Soler and Clara travel to the country for a brief vacation, she encounters the classic hero of the romance genre: Ramón Nesweda.

With respect to the first encounter between the two, the *rosa* genre, as Martín Gaite points out, is characterized by a particular literary recourse consisting of the deployment of certain constant and more or less analogous elements aimed at enveloping the initial meeting between the protagonists/future lovers with an air of exceptionality ("Espejos" 11). That special encounter is infused with a quasi-magical, mysterious quality signaling the start of something really big. In the moment when the protagonists pass from being unknowns to knowing each other the reader, already primed by previous textual clues, recognizes the qualities in them which will fortify and make eternal their love and which, struggling against all forms of adversity and contraindications, triumph by the final chapter.

Clara's encounter with Ramón Nesweda follows this pattern, up to a point. Clara first sees the enticing stranger on a train. Amid the raucous animation of the travelers it is only the figure of this unknown man, silent and aloof, which hits a discordant note in the bustling ensemble (155). When pronounced by the porter, the stranger's name sounds familiar to Clara. As they find themselves in the same guest house, her curiosity is piqued as he uses a pseudonym to register. His taciturnity envelops the stranger in mystery, intrigue, and intense attractiveness.

Finally they meet, when Clara takes a walk one day dressed in pants and is stoned by the local children for it, and he offers aid. Annoyed, she accedes to the stranger's overture to escort her: "Estaba condenada a tener que aceptar siempre la protección de uno u otro hombre" (167). Nesweda is much like the classic *novela rosa* hero: he appears at a moment of distress, and he is an enigmatic character associated with certain attitudes revealed in the way he

looks at her and in his solicitous and amiable conduct (Roger 125). Clara is enamored instantaneously:

> No podía hablar. Se encontraba tan desconcertada y tan atraída al mismo tiempo por las palabras de él... Deseaba oírle durante mucho rato. Para conocerlo, para comprenderlo... Para consolarle de su sufrimiento... Y todo ello en unos pocos minutos... Por unas frases, unas palabras, un tono de voz, una mirada... Penetrante, comprensiva, intensamente azul. (169)

The magical moment is upon her, and the naive Clara thinks her life is changed forever.

While the reader is painfully aware of Clara's entrapment, the protagonist's thoughts reveal her hopeless gullibility. Her discourse is hyperbolically sappy: the night Nesweda charms her is "La más hermosa noche estrellada de mi vida" (171); her response to his revelation of his past marriage is "[e]l Universo había perdido su armonía" (172); and an all-night walk leaves her speechless: "vivía el sueño más hermoso de su vida" (175). There is foreshadowing of the inevitable as Clara "[s]e dejaba llevar de la iniciativa de él, sabiendo que nunca podría negarse a nada de lo que él le pidiera" (175-6). The consummation of their attraction reveals the antagonistic forces simultaneously operant in Clara's mind:

> Clara comprobaba que las suaves manos redondas, tan viriles y tan hermosas, sólo habían sabido desabrochar, a tirones, la blusa y levantarle bruscamente la falda... La rudeza de él sólo le había proporcionado molestia y dolor.
>
> Y sin embargo cuando Ramón se incorporó, metiéndose la camisa dentro de los pantalones, sin un rebozo de vergüenza, y dijo alegremente que debían irse, Clara se sintió feliz. Al fin y al cabo él había obtenido placer y eso era suficiente para ella, que lo amaba. (188)

She is conscious of her own disillusionment on account of his brusque rudeness, but still she is naive enough to excuse it and think that his pleasure is all that matters.

Precisely at this point of wholesale appropriation of Clara's sentiments into the paradigmatic web of the romance plot there is a turnaround, for on their return to the guest house she becomes cognizant of the fact that Nesweda shows no real interest in understanding or even listening to her. Disillusionment gives way to the realization of her own foolishness. As if Clara's misjudgment of Nesweda weren't enough, because of their rendezvous she is late for her ride back to the city, and that stormy night she and Soler are involved in a car crash. Clara wakes up in the hospital, barely alive, slowly recovering, condemned by her step mother for promiscuity, rejected by Arturo, dismissed by Soler, and again unemployed. On account of her investment in a fantasy hero she has now lost everything. The denouement of this love story is very far from happy. Thus this *contra-novela rosa* proves to be part of what Martín Gaite calls the "subversive project" of women's literature in the *postguerra*:

> Es precisamente la puesta en cuestión de las historias de final feliz otra de las características comunes a muchas novelas escritas por mujeres a partir de 1944, que proponen una relación nueva, dolorosa y dinámica de la mujer con el medio en que se desarrolla su formación como individuo.[42] (Buck 28)

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS - *Clara*

It was stated at the outset of this examination of *Clara* that any apparatus of sexuality has "a dominant strategic function" and that this function, "at any given historical moment," is that of "responding to an *urgent need*" (Foucault, "Confession" 194-95). Hence the question remains: What is the "urgent need"

satisfied by the dominant strategic functions of the apparatus of sexuality as Falcón portrays it in this novel? The apparatus consists of the relations between the mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power inherent to the relationships Clara maintains with men: Arturo, Rondero, Soler, and Nesweda. To what need does their functioning respond?

With Arturo Clara finds respite from her troubled life. Her indifference and ignorance are overcome first by the desire his closeness arouses, and then by his sheer physical force. Her submission is engendered by cultural cues codified in the ethics of the status quo: the fiancé is central to every woman's future happiness. Rondero wields different forms of power: Clara is a commodity in the labor market and he is the consumer. Her exploitation is tied to her job security, but in her ingenuousness she is seduced not so much by Rondero himself as by her fantasies of where the relationship might lead. The cultural norm vis-à-vis the romance plot is stronger than her own self-awareness or knowledge.

Soler, like Rondero, wields economic power over the destitute Clara, but he is more pitiful than crudely exploitative. While taking advantage of the opportunities this relationship affords, Clara falls under his protection but is defenseless in the face of his forceful advances. Compliance is her ticket to freedom. Yet she never gets there. Again, cultural patterns which determine her thinking undermine her nascent feminist consciousness. Inadequately schooled in disillusionment, Clara allows the charisma of the emblematic Ramón Nesweda to engender in her emotions powerful enough to overcome her reason. Again, her insufficient knowledge gives way to submission, and she loses everything as a result.

The power relations inherent to the alliances formed between Clara and the men in her life are conditioned doubly: by Clara's economic situation (that of a woman in the labor market of late 1950s Spain) and by men's ability to arouse desire (even though they do not satisfy it). When desire is insufficient, they hold the dominant position by sheer physical force and/or economic strength. Clara is subject to these techniques of power due to the capacity of cultural codes to mold her attitudes and behavior, to trigger fantasies in her, and to provoke interpretations of her experiences which put her in a subordinate position. While these codes are fabricated elsewhere, that is, they are not her own, to the extent that she allows their operation through her, she is complicitous in her own submission. While the *Sección Femenina* did have a very strong propaganda wing and romance novels were universally read and assimilated, it was and is the individual who embraces these codes, and it is only the individual who can free herself from their influence. However, this kind of consciousness raising was historically speaking yet to come. So too were the structural changes which enabled women to be gainfully employed without such a high degree of personal compromise. At this stage Falcón seems intent on exposing the functioning of cultural codes which serve as techniques of power.

Another and related facet of the nexus of power relations is the predominance of Clara's emotions over her reason. In order for Clara's reason to determine the extent to which her emotions rule her choices, she would have to understand just how these emotions had been prefabricated. In Spain of 1958 this consciousness, this kind of critical analysis, had yet to be developed; it was still forthcoming at the time of Clara's inception.

Is it possible to target one urgent need satisfied by the functioning of the apparatus of sexuality in the *postguerra*? For the men, it was the satisfaction of carnal frustration, obviously, but also the need to fulfill their side of the dominance-submission paradigm. Women, equally complicit, albeit unconsciously, enabled and reinforced this paradigm insofar as they assimilated the rhetoric of submission, pain, and silence propagated by the omnipresent cultural web of *nacionalcatolicismo*.[43] As Martín Gaite concludes,

> Se trataba de exaltar el amor, la belleza y la bondad [...] oponiéndolos al odio, la maldad y la fealdad. Pero nunca de preguntarse por las causas del odio y la fealdad. En primer lugar porque "en las mujeres el conocimiento analítico puede perturbar las finas arterias de su feminidad,"[44] y además porque una pregunta como ésa hubiera lindado escabrosamente con un terreno que en la postguerra convenía esquivar: el de *la lucha de clases*. (*Usos* 159, emphasis added)

The very real modes of thinking and acting fictionalized in the *novela rosa* and brought into question in *Clara* are what maintained women as a subordinate class whose labors and exhaustions maintained the machinery of the state throughout the postguerra and beyond. Falcón's extensive analysis of ways in which women as a class supported the needs of the state would come later. This *contra-novela rosa* serves as an important document in feminist history of the era prior to the eruption of second-wave feminism in Spain. It also shows Falcón's avant-garde position relative to the new consciousness.

FALCÓN'S SECOND NOVEL: *ASESINANDO EL PASADO*

The first edition of this novel came out in 1993 at the insistence of Falcón's cohorts at Vindicación Feminista. It had been penned in 1960 and, like *Clara*, was forgotten in a drawer while Falcón dedicated herself to other activities. In the

early 1990s the group at VF created another small press, "Kira" of Madrid, whose initial series, "Las Asesinas," features detective novels whose principal motif is "que todas las criminales sean mujeres" ("Prólogo" *Asesinando* 6). Kira together with VF co-edited *Asesinando el pasado*, which initiated this new series. For the updated version Falcón made some changes in the manuscript. While she retained basic plot elements (particularly the story's suspense and the role played by women which demonstrates her "sempiternas inclinaciones feministas" [6]), the ending was reworked. The details of this revision are made explicit below.

SYNOPSIS OF *ASESINANDO EL PASADO*

The story is about Felix and his involvement in the life of Elena, his brother Pablo's wife. Suicidal at the sudden departure of his own wife Silvia, Felix goes in search of a pistol to Pablo and Elena's home, where Elena's sister Estrella also lives. When Elena reveals to him the blackmail being perpetrated upon her by the villanous Arturo Bloch, Felix becomes embroiled in an effort to release her from his clutches.

Bloch, an unseemly underworld character, has suddenly resurfaced in Elena's life. She was purchased by Bloch from the madam who raised her; he later used her as "gancho" for his business, a cabaret which served as a front for both prostitution and illicit drugs. Unknown to everyone else, who thinks Estrella is Elena's sister, she is actually the offspring of this early marriage, born when Elena was sixteen. After having disappeared for fifteen years, Bloch now demands that Elena pay him over 100,000 pesetas or else he will reveal the truth of her past to Pablo. Elena knows that the revelation of her actual bigamy would mean the end of her marriage with Pablo.

To resolve the crisis, Elena kills Bloch with a particularly strong dose of rat poison. Felix is at the hospital while an autopsy is performed on Bloch, so he knows Bloch is dead. Elena's subsequent confession of the crime to the authorities is rejected, for mysteriously there now is no cadaver nor any record of its existence. Enter the merchant Cavany, who explains to Felix and Elena that Bloch's disappearance was disastrous for his own plans: Bloch was to concert a deal that evening with some of Cavany's *mafioso* connections. Word of his death would have made it impossible, so the cadaver disappeared, conveniently for Elena.[45]

Much as Elena had feared, news of these events provokes a violent reaction in Pablo. In the habit of carousing each night with his well accommodated bourgeois friends, Pablo is as unaware of Elena's current dilemma as he is of her past marriage. His reaction to the news is to beat Elena on account of her being unreformable; he then throws Elena, Estrella, and Felix out into the street, indignant at the thought that he should have to support them any longer. Having recovered from the whole ordeal Felix and Estrella marry, and travel with Elena to Guinea, where Felix will resume his medical career. Pablo is left to his own devices. So there is a happy ending for all, except of course for Bloch.

PRINCIPAL THEMES

With respect to style *Asesinando el pasado* reads like a soap opera. In the introduction Falcón comments upon the period in which she wrote the novel; the "ideological pressures of those black years," may be responsible in part for the simplistic tenor of this novel. Falcón's not yet mature authorial style may be

equally at issue. Notwithstanding, this detective novel does include themes which recur in Falcón's later work. Some of these are prostitution, violence against women, and justice for women, which begs the question of the injustice that women were subject to in Franco's 1960 Spain, and that to which women are always subject as "the second sex." Social and political themes, probably added in the 1997 revision, include critique of the bourgeoisie and of the new order inaugurated with the fascist ascendancy to power. While in this novel these themes are developed rather superficially, they are in evidence, and can be regarded as early essays. Each has been subsequently developed by Falcón profusely and profoundly in her radical feminist writings.

The theme of prostitution is introduced in the principal character Elena, who was raised in a brothel where as she says, "me tenían prisionera" (70). She never knew who her parents were. Sold to Bloch at the age of sixteen she soon bore Estrella. Elena's function was to be an adjunct to his business, where she worked first as coat-check girl and later, "a instancias de la clientela, pasé al salón a alternar" (71). In her naiveté she did not understand why Bloch left her "en las garras de los asiduos al local" (72). Subject to jokes, propositions, and violence, Elena later discovers the truth of Bloch's intentions relative to her own. She managed to survive, and to avoid serving as a prostitute to the customers of the cabaret. This period of extreme danger and moral compromise was, however, short-lived. She made her escape and found ways to survive by her own wits. Her newfound independence was uncompromised, since Bloch disappeared on the tails of a police crack down and thus liberated her from his clutches. So while the theme of prostitution is introduced, Elena manages to refrain from engaging in the practice.

The issue of justice for women is raised in Elena's crime. Bloch's return after an absence of fifteen years puts Elena in a bind: she must either raise and hand over large sums of money, or have her bigamy revealed. Her solution, murder, may lead to imprisonment. There can be no justice for her either way – she cannot be blamed for her past: what happened to her was not the result of free choice. She stands to lose either way. Falcón asks her readers to reflect: "Como dice 'Vindicación Feminista': ¿Pero es que nunca se han cometido crímines justificables? [...] ¿o la venganza personal, cuando los instrumentos de la justicia se han mostrado tan parciales en contra de las mujeres, es siempre repudiable?" (7-8). She challenges her readers to consider "la justicia y la injusticia con que se trata a las mujeres" (8).

The central question is this: Is the crime of murder justifiable when the defense of one's own liberty is at stake? In Falcón's original version of *Asesinando el pasado*, Elena is locked up in prison, abandoned to desolation. In the revised version, Elena is liberated, by her own machinations, from Bloch's threats. A key to Falcón's authorial motivation is found in her comments on the first version of Elena's fate:

> Inducida, sin duda, por las presiones ideológicas de aquellos negros años, abandonaba a mi protagonista a un triste destino, encerrada en prisión, para hacerme perdonar del jurado y de los criticos literarios la osadía de haber creado una mujer valiente dispuesta a defender su libertad... a costa de lo que fuese. (7)

The implication of this change is that in 1997, in the absence of Francoist pressures, Falcón could create a heroine disposed to kill her enemy, just as men have always been free to do. Such an equalization of power, resulting in the justification for murder, is asserted as a positive value in this novel. The

question raised, that of the gaining of power by taking on the morality of the oppressor, was to preoccupy Falcón in subsequent works.

From within her difficult position, Elena defends one freedom: liberty from the threatening presence of Arturo Bloch in her life. She does so at the loss of another freedom: that of being free from incarceration. In an act of courageous defiance she loses her past but jeopardizes her future. In the end, thanks to the efforts of Cavany and company, justice is served, in a limited sense. Elena cannot be charged for murder where no cadaver exists. Justice is served in another, ironic, way: Pablo's throwing her out of the house, and out of his life, affords her the opportunity of a fresh start. Liberated from an unsatisfying marriage, she is free from male tutelage.

SOCIAL/POLITICAL CRITIQUE

Even though Elena does not go to prison for her deed, there is mention of what would have happened had she been arrested. Felix, thinking Elena is in the hands of the police, calls an attorney and finds out that Elena will remain incommunicado for three days. Detainees have no recourse to legal assistance, and face interrogation alone. Felix's presumption that she would be treated as if she had some civil rights provokes quasi-political comment, yet it is of the most dilute kind. When he objects that "yo he visto en todas las películas cómo se le designa un abogado a los detenidos" the attorney responds: "Esto no es Hollywood, amigo. Esto es España" (160).

Falcón makes other mention of the political order, but again mildly, and in the most veiled way. It comes out through the character Cavany, who justifies his drug trafficking by pointing his finger at the government's takeover of

business within the country: "[H]ablaba de las dificultades que comenzaba a tener la empresa por la competencia con advenedizos bien situados en el régimen político que nos gobernaba" (177). Falcón goes further in pointing out the government's role in the takeover of part of Cavany's enterprises. The merchant says:

> [A]hora las concesiones, las subvenciones, las licencias, se obtienen mediante recomendaciones políticas, y nosotros que siempre fuimos gentes de orden y temerosos de Dios, sin embargo no... —hizo una pausa buscando las palabras— bueno, yo diría que no fuimos capaces de predecir el nuevo orden de cosas que se implantó al terminar la guerra. (198)

While on the surface Cavany is talking strictly about his transportation and warehousing business, his discourse implicates the government in illegal drug trafficking. As to why Cavany does not fear anyone's going to the police over the whole matter, he explains: "A la policía tampoco le convienen las investigaciones. Estuvo muy contenta de que todo se resolviera en una infantil historia de ama de casa frustrada. Al fin y al cabo ellos también perderían unos buenos ingresos..." (207). Falcón comments in the prologue that "me atreví no sólo a torcer el destino de mi protagonista, sino también introducir temas políticos y sociales que en aquel entonces hubiesen sido impensables" (7). Cavany's comments on the political order are probably the "political themes" interjected into the revised version.

One of these "temas políticos y sociales" is a motif which underlies all of Falcón's work: class struggle. The primary class antagonism in this novel is depicted between Elena and the people who take her in. With unknown parentage, Elena is tantamount to an orphan. Sold to Bloch at fourteen, she was fooled into thinking that this "marriage" would save her. However she soon

realized that she traded one form of vassalage for another, even more sinister than the first. Later, having escaped Bloch's clutches, she falls into the tutelage of Pablo. Initially the sincerity of his love and his interest in protecting the young Estrella win Elena's heart. But with time he becomes increasingly more engrossed in other interests. She becomes his domestic servant and part-time bed partner, as she had been waitress and "gancho" for Bloch. In the case of this marriage, the role she plays of decoration piece and social anchor, necessary for any self respecting and respectable bourgeois, is certainly not as exploitative as with Block, but is nevertheless a form of vassalage.

The critique of the bourgeoisie, and particularly Pablo's aping of their lifestyle and values, is seen through the eyes of Felix. One evening, in an attempt to obtain funds to palliate Bloch, Felix searches for Pablo and finds him among friends at a bar, but Pablo's preoccupation with them overrides his interest in what his brother has to say. Shrouded by "varias señoras vestidas con una elegancia chillona y extravagante" (64) and their companions whose liquor-induced obsequiousness revolt Felix, Pablo trades consideration for his wife's well being for the seduction offered by these high society buffoons. Later, an even more desperate Felix finds his brother in the Roselló home:

> Dentro, se oían risas, voces, música. Pablo continuaba de sarao en sarao y de fiesta en fiesta. Su trabajo era alternar con aquel atajo de cretinos que lo iban entonteciendo paulatinamente. [...] Por fin, apresurado y visiblemente disgustado, apareció mi hermano. Vestía de smoking con exquisito gusto, pero andaba con un leve balanceo y le olía el aliento a alcohol. (81)

The drug of choice for Pablo and his socially sanctioned crowd is alcohol, while others find opiates more attractive.

This is where Cavany and friends come in, to supply certain segments of Spanish society with their drug of choice. He has been well compensated for his efforts. Replete with the trappings of the old bourgeoisie, Cavany, whose name and company were his father's and his grandfather's before him, is exceedingly well dressed, with his "estómago bien alimentado, reloj con cadena de oro y gafas doradas" (164). This successful merchant is repulsive to Felix on account of the trafficking he engages in. The cabaret run by Bloch where opium is sold and consumed is a "nido de los mafiosos." To Felix, the justification offered by Cavany for needing to engage in the trafficking of opiates is repulsive. As Falcón points out, not only the government but also members of the old bourgeoisie engage in black market activity. Albeit developed only superficially, the outline of a critique of class struggle is presented through these characters.

But the deeper critique of class war is to be found in the feminist themes.[46] Primary among these is violence against women, a central and recurrent issue in Falcón's writing.[47] Violence is perpetrated against Elena by both her husbands. For Bloch Elena existed solely as an adjunct to his business. In her youthful naiveté she thought there was something "normal" about the arrangement: she met him through a well meaning neighbor, he courted her at her bedroom window, and she saw marrying him as a way out of her destitution. However when she threatens the security of his business, she is beaten into submission:

> No sé cómo se las arregló con mi ama ni cuánto dinero le dio, pero no tardamos ni un mes en casarnos. Al principio fue amable y cortés. Primero me destinó al guardarropa. Allí estuve tranquila unos meses. [...] Comprendí la verdad el día en que le pegué una bofetada a un cliente. Arturo acudió como una fiera. Se disculpó con el agredido y me arrastró hasta nuestra habitación... Después estuve en la cama varios días, pero había aprendido bien la lección. (72)

She subsequently escapes the *infierno* of life with Bloch and moves to a cheap rooming house, but has absolutely no security. She finds work as a domestic, but is terminated as soon as the family learns of her past. She ends up working at a café which is like a franchise to Bloch's cabaret.

The imminent danger of her situation presents a very real threat to her and the child Estrella's safety. It is no wonder that when Pablo shows interest in her and invites the two into his home, she accepts. It is better than staying where she is, and as for Estrella, "se la llevaría cualquier chulo de los del barrio, o si su formación moral era lo suficientemente fuerte, trabajaría en la fábrica hasta que se le deformaran los brazos, las manos y envejeciera de privaciones" (74). But this arrangement also turns ominous, due to the incursion into her life of the depraved Arturo Bloch.

Pablo's reaction to the predicament occasioned by Bloch is intense: suddenly everything changes meaning. All the years of harmony and loyalty which Elena offered, which had been "signo inequívoco de su bondad, de su fidelidad," are reduced suddenly to corrupt motives on her part: "¡estaba dictada por el recuerdo de su sucio pasado!" (147). The patience she had shown during his interminable nights away from home, when he was out entertaining other lovers, once meant that he had an ideal wife. Now her impassive acceptance of his infidelity amounts to some grand scheme elaborated by Elena to justify her exploitation of Pablo's beneficence. The revelation that Estrella is Elena's daughter provokes him to denominate her *puta* and to reduce their many years of married life to a facile formula: "¡Todo, estúpido, todo! Me ha engañado en todo, me ha convertido en un cornudo, en un marido estúpido, en un cabrón...!"

(150). Felix is obliged to strong-arm his brother in order to prevent him from beating Elena in a mad fury.

But this is not the end of the violence. In the final episode, when Pablo orders them all to leave his home, neither Felix nor Estrella understand the full meaning of his brutal words. In marked contrast to their incredulity, Elena reacts as if familiar with such outbursts, and her behavior indicates that she has experienced similar episodes. Terrorized, she starts packing her bags. In a high pitched hysteria of insults and threats, Pablo strikes her, but again he is restrained from doing further harm as Felix and Estrella hold him back, with difficulty. The violent language Pablo hurls at them points to the myth of her *putería* which he creates in order to come out on top.

Elena explains her position to Felix:

> Pablo no ha sido para mí más que una escala en mi díficil travesía vital. Le estaba agradecida porque me había protegido a mí y a Estrella, en los momentos peores, pero hacía muchos años que él no tenía ningún interés por mí. Aguantaba como tantos maridos por salvar su situación social, pero en cuanto ha encontrado una excusa. . . (211)

The excuse that Pablo finds is Elena's sordid past. He defines her identity, encapsulating her within parameters chosen by him because they fit his purposes. He claims that she has not changed in all these years, that reform is impossible, for she has been in his care all this time, yet remains the same. Hence she must go. Directing himself to his brother, Pablo screams:

> ¡Esta es mi casa y no la de nadie más! ¡Fuera de aquí inmediatamente todos! ¡Tú el primero, que estás haciendo de alcahuete de la puta de mi mujer! ¡Y esa hija de pacotilla que me ha salido también! ¡Y la zorra con quien me casé, antes que nadie! (209)

Clearly Pablo is using the reappearance of Bloch in Elena's life as a convenient way to justify the ever widening distance between himself and Elena, which is a product of his own creation. Elena becomes the scapegoat for his own unhappiness, as if getting her out of his life would untangle the web of misery he has woven for himself by choosing the life he now leads. Hence the marriage fails, but instead of owning up to his own part in its dismantling, his strategy is to create an identity for her which suits his purposes: she is a whore. To round out the picture his brother is a pimp, and Estrella is nothing more than extra baggage which he can now toss overboard with impunity. This mythos is expressed in marked contrast to the attitude of Felix, whose compassion and love for both Elena and Estrella belie the opportunistic and false attitude adopted by his brother.

The creation of identity which is imposed from without onto another for the purpose of controlling the other is, in Foucauldian terms, a technique or "form of power which makes individuals subjects" (Foucault, "Subject" 212).[48] For Foucault this sense of the term *subject* has two meanings: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (212). His elaboration of this theme throws light on ways in which both of Elena's husbands attempt to subject her:

> This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. (212)

Bloch sought to categorize Elena euphemistically as "alternanate," i.e., prostitute, motor for his profiteering. This is the identity he sought to establish in her; she

would thus become subject to him by lack of control and economic dependence, internalizing her sense of self or self knowledge as tied to him, revolving around his business and his bed.

In the case of Pablo the subjection of Elena is two-fold. Initially she is his wife and they have a "normal" relationship: "Elena [era] buena ama de casa, fiel, sencilla, amable, era sumisa y obediente con Pablo" (41). This description echoes the dictates of the Sección Femenina and its ideal for women: submission (Gallego Méndez 200). Elena's value as wife is measured in these terms. She vindicates herself and Pablo vis-à-vis the expectations of the social milieu by following this model. However, after twenty years of marriage during which Pablo has developed his predilection for womanizing among the bourgeoisie, Elena becomes a different subject for him: the whore. So she is either *santa* or *ramera*, whichever suits his purposes.

Elena, however, is unwilling to allow herself to be subjected in this way. She rejects the attempts by both men to minimalize her according to their modes of understanding women. She is neither *santa* nor *ramera*. Rather than *sumisa y obediente* and willing to be exploited for someone else's economic gain, Falcón's heroine is free, by virtue of her choices and her acts. She will neither whore for Bloch nor accept Pablo's identification of her as prostitute. Thus Falcón creates a model for women which exists outside the dictates of the men in her life and beyond the social determinants of the omnipresent Sección Femenina.

NOVELA ROSA MOTIFS

Other feminist themes elaborated in *Asesinando el pasado* have to do with the *novela rosa* motif. As in the novel *Clara*, it is the drama of the main

protagonist which unfolds along these well known lines. Felix, ready to kill himself at the outset, ends up on the threshold of a new life with his glowing bride at his side. Throughout the story his love for Estrella evolves. He recalls that when she and Elena came to live with Pablo, he loved his new sister-in-law and would have fallen in love with her sister too, "si no hubiese conocido a Estrella cuando ésta tenía trece años" (28). Later, having determined that Estrella has no current love interest, Felix senses himself charmed by the young woman:

> Tenía a mi lado a Estrella. Percibía el ligero olor a colonia que exhalaba su cuerpo. Terso, joven. Que brindaba entrega, salud, deseo. Veía su expresión concentrada. Podía adivinar sus pensamientos. La sabía serena, profunda. Como el agua mansa de un lago transparente.
>
> Y la quise y la deseé con todas mis fuerzas.
>
> Me sentía cada vez más atraído hacia ella. El deseo de ella llegó a hacerse tan fuerte en mí que temí que lo notase. (143)

The impetus driving the love he feels for her takes on dimensions of perfection, which stirs up fear: "Había captado plenamente mis pensamientos. Sentí tan bien comprendidos mis ilusiones y mis deseos, que tuve miedo. Me había enamorado de ella y me asusté. El dolor hizo presa en mí y creí volver a la primitiva desesperación" (144-45). As the feeling that his love is reciprocated grows, Felix gives in to the fantasy:

> La imaginaba a mi lado. Dirigiéndome frases de amor, de consuelo. La imaginé mi guía. La meta que necesitaba alcanzar en la vida convergía en ella. Los años harían indisoluble nuestra unión. Juntos empezaríamos de nuevo, donde nadie nos conociese. A donde no llegase la maldad, la envidia, el engaño. En la patria que eligiésemos formaríamos nuestro hogar. Formaríamos la familia. Tendríamos hijos a los que enseñaríamos la verdad de la vida. Aprenderían a nuestro lado a ser buenos, valientes, desinteresados, constantes, leales, a vencer los sufrimientos y las amarguras, con el ánimo alegre y la esperanza en el corazón. (145-46)

These illusions culminate in the final scene where Felix goes to Guinea with Estrella (and her mother) at his side, aware that his challenge will be to show her that "no todos los hombres éramos iguales" (213). He promises to compensate her for the losses she has suffered, and she pledges her faith in his promise. She is passive vis-à-vis the active role of Felix.

The discourse of romantic idealization exemplified in the above quote (which has to do with Estrella) stands in sharp contrast to the actual examples of marriage presented in the text (which are Elena's). Elena's union with Bloch makes a complete mockery of the institution of marriage. It is a material representation of what according to Falcón has traditionally been the basis for marriage: economic exploitation. The alliance between Pablo and Elena turns out to belie the idealized image of marriage propagated by the *novela rosa* genre as well, as he violently rejects her in the end.

Hence *Asesinando el pasado* reinforces and then subverts the *novela rosa* nearly as much as does *Clara*. Elena's depiction as "buena ama de casa, fiel, sencilla, amable, [...] sumisa y obediente" (41) is interrupted only by Bloch's intervention. It can be reasonably conjectured that had this not happened, Elena would have remained such a wife to Pablo. But then there would have been no crime, no novel, and no liberated heroine. Since *Clara* was written first, it seems plausible that while Falcón certainly could write a counter-genre piece, *Asesinando el pasado*, prepared for presentation to a panel of judges in a literary competition, falls short of the full scale rejection of social dictates which has come to be expected from Falcón. If it is true that "un libro es toda una batería de artillería" (Falcón, "Escritura" 7) it can be said of *Asesinando* that in spite of the pistol and the poison, it is not quite as heavily loaded as *Clara*.

CHAPTER 3

ES LARGO ESPERAR CALLADO

> "[H]oy la polémica planteada en mi libro, la tensión entre dos concepciones antagónicas del avance social, se ha agudizado al máximo. Es precisa la opción sin excusa, la batalla ha comenzado y no se detendrá."[49]
>
> Lidia Falcón, 1975

In the years immediately prior to Franco's death, while dissent splintered the Left and groups like the PCE-ml, GRAPO, and FRAP drew up designs for the overthrow of fascism, Spanish women were on the move with a revolution of their own. The *Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres* (MDM), the *Unión Popular de Mujeres*, the *Seminarios Colectivos Feministas*, and other organizations were making the feminist movement a reality, even while women's meetings other than those of the Sección Femenina were outlawed.[50] It is a small but highly significant piece of this clandestine history which forms part of the material narrated in *Es largo esperar callado.*

Falcón's personal experiences of life within the Left, and her critique of sexual politics practiced in "la clandestinidad española dentro y fuera del país"[51] are part of this history. Insofar as it recounts events of the early Transition,[52] *Es largo* is a chronicle of the decadence and decline of the PCE (*Partido Comunista de España*) during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Falcón has overtly stated her interest in depicting historical events in this novel:

> Tenía que escribir parte de la historia de las traiciones e indiferencias de los que habían llevado al Partido Comunista de España hacia su perdición, debía retratar a tantos y tantas mujeres que lo habían dado todo, libertad, patria, bienestar y hasta la vida, por el progreso y el socialismo, y no habían hallado más que el exilio, la cárcel, el campo de concentración y el olvido y la indiferencia, cuando no la expulsión y el desprecio. (*Monográfico* 8).

In *Es largo* Falcón poses a weak intellectual Leftist male figure to a militant woman, also of the Left, whom the impositions of clandestinity cannot silence (Starcevic, *Monográfico* 54). This narative of *intrahistoria* is the inside of the external struggle facing all women within the Left as they confront the patterns of patriarchal power so deeply ingrained in their comrades and in the organizations of Leftist politics. In turn this "external" is the inside story of the outward struggle of the *izquierda* in fascist Spain. Falcón's embracing of feminism as the only viable political course can be considered the result, in part, of events such as those narrated in *Es largo esperar callado.*

The story of this novel reflects the turbulence of the years during which it took its final form. In the prologue Falcón states: "Esta obra se gestó en su factura completa en el verano de 1971. [...] Pero el original se olvidó durante dos años por falta de confianza mía en la posibilidad de publicación" (10). Perhaps *Es largo* would have suffered the same fate as its predecessors *Clara* and *Asesinando el pasado,* languishing in a drawer hidden from public view for some twenty-five years, had not Carmen Alcalde encouraged Falcón to carry the work through to publication. Alcalde wrote to Falcón:

> Conseguiría formularte que este libro debe publicarse a toda costa, no sólo por su posible –creo– grandeza literaria, sino por la denuncia –LA PRIMERA– formulada con inteligencia sobre un mundo que es urgente denunciar... Aquí hemos sufrido todos mucho, y cada cual ha reaccionado, pensando y obrando según sus propias capacidades. Tu libro es el mejor testimonio de muchas indecencias, y sólo alguien poseído de tu increíble lucidez ha podido escribirlo... (Epigraph, *Es largo esperar callado*)

These words of encouragement came to Falcón while she was in Madrid's women's prison of Yeserías in December of 1974. In 1972 she had been arrested

and incarcerated for publishing and distributing antifascist literature. She left La Trinidad prison of Barcelona after six months, her mother having committed suicide. Two years later she suffered torture at the hands of Madrid's infamous DGS (*Dirección General de Seguridad*) and then was detained in Yeserías on charges of collaboration with ETA (Basque terrorist organization) in the bombing of the Café Rolando in central Madrid (Waldman, "Apreciación" 11). The writing of *Es largo* spanned this entire period. It was published in September of 1975, shortly after her release from Yeserías.

The dynamics between politics and *intrahistoria* are ever present in Falcón's work. As philosopher and critic Carlos París signals, *intrahistoria* is the term with which Miguel de Unamuno vindicated "[l]a historia callada y profunda de las multitudes y de la cotidianidad [...] frente a la historia convencional" (Puñado 64). In this work the dynamics between politics and *intrahistoria* bring home the notion that the personal is political, "one of the founding assumptions of contemporary feminist theory and practice" (Weedon 74).[53] While narrating the *intrahistoria* of a few key figures, Falcón demonstrates why and how a radical feminist politics developed in Spain. This chapter concentrates on narrative strategies employed by Falcón in accomplishing this end by analyzing the character Athenea, her experience in political militancy, her lover Rubén's impotence vis-à-vis her radicalism, and Ruben's relationship with his wife Pilar. Pertinent historical and philosophical references are introduced. The final section treats the structure of the plot, and some political ramifications of both the form and content of this highly charged ideological text.

The narrative voice in *Es largo* is third person omniscient, and tells the story from the perspective of Rubén. Not insignificantly, all of Falcón's

subsequent novels are narrated from the female point of view. The events of Rubén's life are recounted in non-linear time sequencing: stream of consciousness writing, multiple series of flash-backs, letters he saved and rereads, people from the past unexpectedly reentering his life, and memories relived in the effort to make sense of the events of a single day in his life all point to his inability to separate his past from his present, revealing the extent to which the past informs his experience of the present.

The narrative structure of *Es largo esperar callado* corresponds to what David Herzberger has called "novels of memory" which he defines in the following way:

> By novels of memory I mean, in the largest sense, those fictions in which past time is evoked through subjective remembering, most often by means of first-person narration but not held exclusively to that perspective. [...] Though by no means single-voiced in its propositions or tied to a precise set of literary canons, the novel of memory includes those fictions in which the individual self seeks definition by commingling the past and present through the process of remembering.[54] (66-67)

It is Rubén whose identity is in formation throughout this narrative. The motif of self definition is contingent on the memories stirred up by the particular circumstance in which he finds himself embroiled: are they a temporary infringement on his comfortably fashioned present, or are they constitutive of the nagging voice of conscience which he must confront all the days of his life? The question remains unanswered in the text. What is clear is that Falcón characterizes Rubén "consistently upon a bimodal correlation: the self in search of definition, the definition of self perceived always within the flow of history" (Herzberger 67).

Briefly stated, the plot is as follows: Rubén, a highly successful journalist and television personality, lives comfortably on *Velázquez* street in the Salamanca area, a well established neighborhood of high repute in Madrid. His wife Pilar appears to be the perfect compliment to his important position in the political life of the country. Yet his past is clouded with the memory of Athenea, his former lover of fourteen years. His erstwhile involvement as a militant of the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) has been mitigated by two series of events: the ascendancy to power by members of the PCE's inner circle, and his marriage to Pilar. The story takes place during the years prior to the death of Franco, not indicated precisely, but probably the early 1960s to the early 1970s.

As the story opens Rubén is visited by powerful personages, members of the elite inner circle of leftist politicoes, who mandate that he go speak with "her" and set things straight. The reader is left to wonder who the mysterious "her" is, but as the tale unfolds the identity of Athenea is revealed. A pamphlet which is revelatory of misdeeds by the PCE inner circle and acerbically critical of their betrayal of revolutionary principles has been widely distributed in Madrid, and Rubén is charged with silencing the voice which produced it. As it is believed that he alone can succeed at such a task, the onus falls on Rubén, weighing heavily on him as in his mind he relives the years of relationship carried on with Athenea, his estrangement from her, his marriage to Pilar, and his disgust at himself and his current condition.

After a long night of procrastination he arrives at the home address given to him by party figureheads, but finds only Athenea's daughter Marcia and his own younger sister Celina living there. Athenea has long been gone, living in Barcelona, for three years. The mystery of the authorship of the pamphlet

remains unsolved, but the establishment of a younger generation of independent, radical, militant women is evident to Rubén's eyes. As they challenge him to use this opportunity to show the world that he has not sold out, they know that he is incapable of such a move. This is the difference between him and Athenea: for her this brand of integrity constitutes what is most important in life. Resigning himself to his fate, he returns to the familiar comforts of Velázquez street.

The principal themes that emerge in this novel are two: the evolution of the Spanish feminist movement out of political organizations of the Left, and the "selling out" of the Left to the establishment and the concomitant integrity of the feminist alternative. These themes, while intimately related, can be viewed and understood separately due to the identification of each with a single main character: the development of second wave feminism is represented by Athenea, whereas Pilar is symbolic of the establishment. Rubén's vacillation between the two brings to the fore the issue of complicity, and the reaction of those in the inner circle of the party regarding Athenea establishes the propriety of her alternative solution.

ATHENEA AND PARTY POLITICS

As an examination of Spanish feminist history reveals, apart from the work of a few intellectuals writing in relative seclusion or working together in the university setting, the seeds of the second wave feminist movement in Spain germinated in political activity of the Left.[55] While women always numbered in communist and socialist groups, the place accorded to them by men was negligible. Falcón offers an example of the model of male expectations of "militant" women in the character Maruja, who stands in sharp contrast to

Athenea. Invited to Paris on party business, Athenea is led to the apartment of comrade José. In his wife's absence it would appear that someone should prepare lunch; presumably Athenea will avail herself of the kitchen. Taking note of her refusal to cook, José commences to make a racket in the kitchen, only to be interrupted by Maruja's arrival. Athenea relates the episode in a letter to Rubén:

> [A]penas la vio aparecer, el marido soltó la sartén encima del fuego y ella, sin ni siquiera quitarse los zapatos, se puso un delantal y continuó la obra comenzada por José, que vino a sentarse a mi lado estirando las piernas con satisfacción. Luego me enteré de que Maruja también es miembro del partido, pero lo supe por casualidad, porque en cuanto nos reunimos, ella sale de la habitación y sólo entra para traernos café o la cena. (242)

Maruja is there to serve her husband and his political contacts, but she herself is marginalized from political discussion.

Similar sexist practices exist between the couple Antonio and María Rosa. Since his release from jail, Antonio's wife has taken care of their shop, and for the moment he does not plan to reenter the business world: "Tenía grandes proyectos, estaba decidido a liberarse de las necesidades materiales para poder seguir la lucha, entregado completamente a ella" (12). After responding to her husband's command to serve them drinks, María Rosa runs back down the narrow staircase to attend to clients in their shop. After talking all afternoon, Rubén "[c]enó en su casa, una buena cena casera, guisada y servida por M.ª Rosa, mientras bañaba los niños y hacía las cuentas de la tienda y acostaba a los más pequeños y repasaba las lecciones de los mayores" (113). In this division of labor, designed to free up Antonio's time to better serve party interests, the contradiction is glaring.

Another example of women struggling within the party is Athenea's friend Nani, whom she describes in this way: "[T]iene un miedo a exponer

críticas de sus nuevos dirigentes. Tiene miedo de todos y de todo, no puede fiarse ni siquiera de mí, porque arrastra una amarga experiencia de delaciones de todo tipo" (243). Party leaders have intimidated her to the point of silencing her, preventing the airing of any criticism she might proffer, thus rendering her ineffectual as a militant.

Athenea has little patience for sexist politics within the party. Her experiences in Budapest at the *Consejo Mundial de la Paz* foreground the reality of the party's attitude toward women militants.[56] She complains about her comrades' comportment in a letter to Rubén:

> Carlos se ha cuidado en seguida de advertir a todos los camaradas que estoy algo chiflada, amén de tener un carácter insufrible, y de que más o menos se tapen los oídos cuando yo abra la boca. Y todo por cuatro comentarios entre jocosos y amargos que he hecho ante varios camaradas [...] que ante mis confidencias, no han perdido ni un minuto en ir a chivarse a sus jefes, sin siquiera pararse a pensar un momento en lo que yo decía. (240)

The preference for blind loyalty to the party's leadership over and above accepting the notion that a woman might actually have something of significance to say is portrayed as endemic to communist/socialist politics. So too is a complete disregard for the pains undertaken by women in order to forward the struggle. When Athenea rushes to Paris, at considerable personal inconvenience, to meet with Manolo and communicate important information from Rubén, he brushes her off and says he would prefer to hear it from Rubén. Upon arriving to Budapest, she is subject to the same lack of respect, as no one meets her and she loses an inordinate amount of time finding her so-called comrades, while the men sit comfortably at the hotel sipping cognac. Athenea irately observes: "Y cuando les pregunté por qué no habían ido a buscarme al aeropuerto, me contestaron que hubieran tenido que coger un taxi..." (253).

Athenea does eventually attend several sessions of this interantional conference, where she encounters comrades from various delegations; as they animatedly enter into discussions of injustice in their countries she observes that "un costarricense y un salvadoreño [...] aparte de todo en aquel momento sólo pensaban en acostarse conmigo" (251). This happens time and again: "Los italianos habían piropeado continua y obsesivamente a Athenea y sonreían con beatitud ante sus desplantes" (265).

Setting out to meet younger delegates with whom she could talk in her own tongue, she again meets with frustration:

> Quiso encontrar a los jóvenes dirigentes para no oír las inevitables quejas de los viejos, pero todos tenían la boca llena de salchichas y la mirada abstraída en la contemplación de una u otra camarera o intérprete. Pudo hablar con el dirigente de los sindicatos bolivianos, pero no llegó a enterarse de la situación del proletariado de su país porque sólo le contó su historia sentimental, con innumerables referencias a su soledad actual. (269-70)

Having desisted from the plenary sessions where the discourse varied little from the facile denouncement of imperialist aggression against the people, Athenea enters into dialogue with the Cuban Pedro. She describes him as "el único mentor del Consejo" (270), since he is knowledgeable about and willing to discuss Spaniards active in the Communist Party. She is intrigued by what she might learn of her compatriots; she meets nonetheless with the same disillusion, as she comments to Rubén:

> Me habló de las mujeres que había conocido, un montón de vulgaridades... Que las mulatas eran las mujeres que mejor sabían amar a un hombre; que se entregaban completamente a él sin pedir nada a cambio; que eran las únicas que sabían mimarlo y adorarlo - Y eso que decías que era un hombre inteligente. (275)

The redundancy of such behavior is so alienating to Athenea that, in spite of her unusual strength, she gives up: "Estaba cansada, ésa es la verdad, me sentía

absolutamente sola en un mundo extraño y hostil" (267). It is little wonder that she decides to find another outlet for her revolutionary zeal, where her intelligence, her preparation, her vitality and energy, and her profound commitment might be appreciated and put to good use.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: SECOND WAVE FEMINISM IN SPAIN

Falcón alludes to the tension dramatized in Athenea's trip to Budapest in her Prólogo to the original 1975 edition of *Es largo*, as cited in the epigraph to this chapter:

> [H]oy la polémica planteada en mi libro, la tensión entre dos concepciones antagónicas del avance social, se ha agudizado al máximo. Es precisa la opción sin excusa, la batalla ha comenzado y no se detendrá. (10)

The tension to which she refers is the choice between militant stances: the communist/socialist approach to social change, or the feminist approach. The polemic over the question of *doble militancia*, so evident in the characterization of Athenea, has occupied the second wave feminist movement from its very first days.

The first group of women to organize en masse in Spain, the *Movimiento Demócratico de Mujeres* (MDM) (Democratic Women's Movement), came into existence in 1963. According to Durán and Gallego, "The leading members were women of the Communist Party, and the initial activities were related to the problems of political prisoners and workers" (210). The MDM gradually expanded in membership and by 1965 "a group of Communist and Catalan socialist women convened the first general meeting [...]. At a time when SF [Sección Femenina, or the Feminine Section of the fascist government] and the

Church dominated almost all women's organizations it spread quickly across the northern half of Spain" (Jones 4). The MDM had the following principal objectives: unity among women visitors of male political prisoners, augmentation of their organization, solidarity in material and financial support of prisoners, the incorporation of greater numbers of women in political activity, and concern for the conditions under which women live (Moreno 29). While the MDM is not considered to have been feminist in principle, "it did devote special attention to women's problems and gradually attracted the support of younger women from the universities and trade unions" (Durán and Gallego 210).

Historian Monica Threlfall argues that in general, interest among women in forming their own political front arose early on: "[T]he first meetings of women to discuss the situation of women date back to the late sixties [...]. They were concerned with both consciousness-raising and the need for women to carry on a separate political struggle" (45). As the movement grew, this polemic became more pronounced, and "parties of the left tried to bring dual activists back into line 'with arguments about political priorities, backed up by dogmatic analyses that women's liberation was a deviation from the more urgent task of building democracy and socialism' " (Jones 7).[57] While they were marginally successful with these tactics,

> Most feminists were sensitive to the fact that without a complete overhaul and renewal of the political system, the deeply ingrained structures of sex discrimination would not begin to be eradicated. [...] [T]hey struggled to establish themselves virtually as an *opposition within the opposition*, in argument against the Left's entrenched theoretical notions and paternalist practice. [...] Debate in this pre-democratic period therefore centered on the notion of the specificity of women's oppression, over and above the division of class, and the need for an autonomous organisation independent of the political parties. (Threlfall 46)

Within women's groups, contention over the issue of doble militancy took on increasing force so that by 1975 an ever widening cleavage was quite pronounced.

Las Primeras Jornadas por la Liberación de la Mujer held December 6-8, 1975 are considered generally to be "el primer paso hacia el desarrollo de un amplio movimiento feminista en España" (Moreno 21), or as Jones puts it, "[t]he first major milestone for contemporary feminism" (7). As could be expected, the polemic over separatist political organization was pronounced at these meetings:

> En esas Jornadas se empezaron a marcar las dos tendencias más importantes de los grupos feministas españoles: la que aboga por una acción política simultánea a la acción feminista y, por lo tanto, la doble militancia; y otra que considera el feminismo como una alternativa global a la sociedad dominada por el hombre. (SESM 32)

Rosa Pardo recognizes the same two currents as "feminismo socialista" and "feminismo radical" respectively, and points to their ramifications for the future:

> Es en estas jornadas donde se explicita por primera vez en España la existencia de corrientes de opinión feministas que en esos momentos se concretan, en lo fundamental, en dos grandes corrientes: feminismo radical y feminismo y lucha de clases o feminismo socialista. Dentro de estas dos grandes tendencias hay importantes diferencias de matiz que darán lugar, en los años posteriores, a la aparición de diversos grupos en el seno de cada tendencia. (136)

More than a decade after the founding of the MDM, other women's blocs associated with Leftist political groups came into being, some prior to the *Jornadas* and some afterward. The *Asociación Democrática de Mujeres* (Women's Democratic Association) was associated with the Labor Party of Spain; the *Unión Popular de Mujeres* (Popular Union of Women) was a branch of FRAP (Antifascist, Patriotic, and Revolutionary Front); and the *Frente de Liberación de la Mujer* (Front for Women's Liberation), whose members "ranged from moderate socialists to

communists," allowed women the option of choosing membership in organized party politics or not (Durán and Gallego 210-11). Apart from these associated groups, various exclusively feminist organizations sprang up, including the *Seminario Colectivo Feminista de Madrid* (Feminist Collective Seminar of Madrid), LAMAR (Anti-authoritarian Struggle of Antipatriarchal and Revolutionary Women), collectives formed among members of specific professions, and special interest groups "like Self-Help, Independent Conscience and Lesbian Collective" (Durán and Gallego 211). Per force only a few of the staggering number of groups formed during this explosive period are mentioned here.[58]

Falcón was released from Yeserías in time to attend the *Primeras Jornadas*, and was a key figure in the polemic over double militancy. During the *Jornadas* the MDM took the socialist feminist line, affirming that "*la liberación de la mujer pasa por la conquista de las libertades democráticas*" (Moreno 24). The radical feminist sphere was centered around Lidia Falcón and fellow attorney Cristina Alberdi, who was based in Madrid. The radical feminists,

> basándose en el análisis de que la mujer constituye la clase más explotada de todas, propugnaban la creación de un partido político feminista y que las mujeres militasen únicamente en él, en lugar de colaborar con los restantes partidos que tienen asumida una postura machista. (Moreno 25)

Falcón has maintained the same radical position for twenty-four years, and is currently active as the leader of the *Partido Feminista de España*, which she and others founded in 1978, and which was "officially recognized in 1981" (Davies, *Spanish* 249). In its introduction, their manifesto *Partido Feminista: Tesis* succinctly expresses the philosophical positioning of the party under the rubric "Por qué nos constituimos como partido":

> Porque un partido es la fuerza organizada de una clase social. Porque las mujeres somos una clase explotada, y para luchar contra esa explotación precisamos de nuestra organización de clase, teorizada y dirigida por nosotras mismas. (7)[59]

Athenea, "la audaz heroina, [el] 'doppleganger' para Falcón" (Waldman, "Apreciación" 11) represents this moment in Spanish feminist history: the crystallization of the single-militancy feminist. While she is not seen directly in the role of feminist organizer, the discomfort and frustration she experiences in her efforts to work side by side with fellow militants is patent, as delineated above. Her reasons for leaving party politics are clear; what she does after making her decision remains unseen, clandestine. This aspect of "opposition within the opposition" experienced by women is explicated by Sara Iribarren in *La liberación de la mujer*:

> La falta de una igualdad de oportunidades dentro del combate político crea una posición incómoda en muchas mujeres que han alcanzado un cierto grado de preparación y el desánimo en otras menos conscientes. Teóricamente se les asegura la libertad de participación, incluso se las promueve dentro de las organizaciones [...], pero luego existen ambigüedades, prejuicios, se las mira con recelo si son activas, si intervienen demasiado en las reuniones. Muchos camaradas no comprenden que las mujer [sic] pueda ser una militante activa y que pueda desempeñar un papel de vanguardia en la lucha. Una posición clara del Partido a este respecto facilitaría la actividad de las mujeres que desean participar plenamente en su seno en las tareas revolucionarias. (Moreno, *Mujeres* 37)[60]

Athenea is intensely conscious, so her reaction is not one of dispiritedness, but rather exasperation and hostility. The prejudices and mistrust which she experiences alienate her from further party activity.

RUBEN VIS-A-VIS ATHENEA

Time and again Athenea is subject to her comrades' underestimation of her abilities, while Rubén is keenly aware of what her capabilities are. The contrasts between what he knows of her, and what the others think of her, are rendered obvious. Rubén is blind to the mechanisms by which his fellow comrades turn him away from her, and so they succeed in altering his perception of her. He is equivocal, ambiguous, hypocritical. For example, those of the inner circle, Carlos, Manolo, José and the rest are convinced that one person alone could not have completed all the work involved in the authorship, production, and distribution of the infamous pamphlet. Rubén smiles to himself at their underestimation of Athenea's capabilities:

> Comprobaba una vez más lo poco que sus amigos conocían a Athenea, y al mismo tiempo la impotencia de aquel partido que precisaba montones de hombres, de dinero, de recursos, para realizar lentamente una mala labor. (217)

At one point he naively thinks that they have invited her to the Budapest congress because "habían apreciado en toda su dimensión la inteligencia, el saber, la claridad mental de su mujer" (247). He is very far from understanding the political intentionality in their treatment of her.

Rubén, fully conscious of Athenea's greatness, cannot bring himself to express the truth about her talents to those in the inner circle:

> Rubén sin embargo hubiera querido hacer una declaración de principios, explicar que estaba de acuerdo con su compañera, pero no se le ofrecía la ocasión. Nunca encontraba el momento de plantear el tema, de enfrentarse con la oscura presencia de Carlos, o con los inquietante [sic] ojillos vidriados de Salvador. (264)

Eventually his cowardice allows them to gain even more ground in their encroachment of the emotional terrain that he shares with Athenea. In

discussing the issue with her, Rubén reveals the mechanism by which they manipulate him:

> Carlos intentó la noche de la despedida convencerme ... ¡de que me dejaras! No exactamente, pero sí de que te indicara ..., y como yo intenté explicarle que te daba la razón, me parece que he caído en desgracia también ... Tú también ... ¡qué verguenza! (276-77)

At the *Consejo Mundial de la Paz* these politicoes manage to separate the two lovers completely, symbolized by their forming a physical barrier, a wall of men encircling Rubén, especially Carlos, as he maneuvers himself into position "moviendo el voluminoso vientre entre las mesas" (278). The men appeal to the aggrandizement of Rubén's ego, making him think himself all important, central to party business. They keep him apart from Athenea, and he is sick over it, yet he remains blind to the reasons for their machinations. There is a silent male ethic which keeps him from crossing the line and declaring himself to be on her side. Falcón's depiction of this *intrahistoria* demonstrates the deployment of technologies of exclusion on the part of these party leaders. Rubén becomes central to the exercise of power by the members of the inner circle, inasmuch as power "is the operation of the political technologies throughout the social body" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 185). He is their unwitting agent, part of the political technology used in suppressing women.

The measure of their success is Rubén's equivocality, his ambivalence. Sometimes he swings to the extreme of rejecting Athenea. When invited to the party congress in Budapest, which for him is "la entrada en el círculo de los elegidos," he ponders the distance which has grown between himself and his comrades, and then suddenly imagines that Athenea is the agent of discord: "¡No te fíes; no es segura; en cualquier momento puede engañarte...!" (246). There is a

corner of his mind where this feeling is stored, and he holds on to it as if holding on to a piece of himself. Her strength of character sometimes overwhelms him; his friends consider him a hero for living with a woman of such unbearable *genio*, and even he feels that she will be his ruin:

> Por su culpa arruinaría su porvenir político, tantas veces contabilizado primero por Jaime y luego por Carlos para atraerlo a sus respectivas filas; su porvenir profesional, empeñándose en escribir aquellas crónicas negras de una España que practicamente estaba superada. (296)

Clearly Rubén is ambivalent about the relationship; he loves Athenea, yet the smear campaign carried out by his comrades carries more and more weight every day, influencing the way he thinks and feels about her. When definitively he moves out of their living space, he does it without making a clear choice, because he is unable to come to a determination which Athenea has demanded of him:

> Ella deseaba que se comprometiera, que dijera aquel sí que significaba entrar en el duro camino de la defensa de la verdad, esa que el pueblo tiene derecho a conocer, la que le han excamoteado siempre, haciéndole aceptar lo inaceptable. (177)

Clearly for Athenea politics is lived with heart and soul and hard work. Responding to Athenea's demand Rubén, in characteristic fashion, "no dijo que sí. Tampoco se negó" (177). He is unable to commit himself to what she requires in terms of politics, defending "la verdad" for the people. Not only does he not commit himself; he finds a way to not even reply:

> [P]idió tiempo, explicaciones, dilató el trabajo, dudó, manifestó dificultades, opuso inconvenientes de todo tipo, morales y materiales, aseguró que no era el momento, que hacía falta prudencia, que no quería precipitarse, que le faltaban todavía elementos de juicio. (177)

Rubén is caught indecisively, allowing for more conservative interests to take hold.

PILAR, OR THE BODY POLITIC

The selling out of the Left to the establishment and the concomitant integrity of the feminist alternative is represented by Pilar, inasmuch as she is the vehicle for Ruben's complete transformation, and insofar as she stands in radical contrast to Athenea. Whereas Athenea is svelte, with piercing black eyes, dark skin and long silky hair, Pilar is fashioned as particularly undesirable physically:

> [T]an sosa... y tan gorda... con aquellos azules ojos redondos, insípidos y sin vida, y una tez blanca que se ponía encarnada por cualquier requiebro de los merluzos que la rodeaban. Y además bajita, mofletuda, y con los tobillos del mismo tamaño que las pantorillas. (89)

Pilar's "caderas redondeadas" and "abundantes pechos" (83) might otherwise be considered attractive, but in her they serve to accentuate her corpulence, as do her "labios carnosos" (96), las redondeces de [...] su vientre," "las hondonadas de la carne oprimida por la grasa y la piel," and "el antebrazo [que] mostraba las indudables huellas de las edad en las exageradas turgencias producidas por el engrosamiento" (285). She is grotesque, hence repugnant. The continual reference to her blue eyes and blond hair associate her with the Germanophile tendency which resonated so acutely in certain sectors of Spain's social fabric, especially throughout the Civil War and the early 1940s.

Pilar's character is equally repulsive: she listens to conversations behind doors, and pokes around in Rubén's pockets, wallet, and drawers. A profound conservatism runs through her: "No me gustan los cambios. No hay por qué. Una vez instalada una casa los nietos viven en ella sin que se haya movido un

sillón de su sitio. Mi madre me enseñó muy bien cómo se ordena y se conserva..." (57). A fervent Catholicism was cultivated in her youth: this "hija de María" was "educada en el Sagrado Corazón" (89), and her faith has never been shaken. She sends her daughter to convent school. Inflexible even under the influence of Tolstoy, Dostoyevski, Gorki, and Gogol she declares: "Mantengo mis creencias religiosas, pero estoy segura de que no son incompatibles, sino todo lo contrario, con la lucha contra las injusticias y por la defensa de los oprimidos" (142-43). She offers up her reasoning for rejecting Ruben's premarital amorous advances:

> Ya sé que pensarás que soy tonta, atrasada y ñoña. [...] Hace mucho tiempo que te dije que mantenía mis creencias religiosas, y las sigo manteniendo, aún a riesgo de perderte de nuevo, que es lo que más quiero en el mundo. Respétamelas igual que yo respeto las tuyas. (145)

Evidently he respects her beliefs, for the two do eventually marry, in spite of the fact that prior to his marriage he objected to his friend's praise of her by saying of her disparagingly "Pero es católica ferviente..." (149).

Pilar's care for her husband is maternal, provoking in him frequent confusion between the two women; for example they both fill him with the same "asqueroso régimen de papillas y lácteos [...] merengues, flanes y cremas" (63). While his recurrent bouts of indigestion may well be symptomatic of existential *nausèe*, he chalks it up to his marriage: "Rubén podía comprobar que la figura de Pilar siempre se hallaba ligada, en una u otra forma, a la ingestión de alimentos" (229). The other side of Pilar's cloying attentiveness is a bitter and spiteful envy, especially if she feels threatened. Manipulative and vindictive, she encourages Manolo to incite Ruben to intimidate Athenea. She bears a particularly vehement hatred for Rubén's former lover, fueled by her own jealousy and fear,

and conditioned by Oriol whose hatred for Athenea is typical of party leaders who have been humiliated by her.

There is a decided lack of sexuality to Pilar. She married at thirty, still a virgin. Her religious beliefs prevented any moments of intimacy, which she "parecía más bien rehuir" (146). While the existence of their daughter Rebecca is evidence that the marriage was indeed consummated, Pilar's lack of sexual attractiveness is dominant. When she does offer herself to him for comfort in his time of need, "Los labios carnosos, con sabor a pintura, le parecieron a Rubén más insípidos que nunca y le costó un verdadero esfuerzo fingir emoción en aquel breve momento de entrega amorosa" (96). When Rubén can no longer avoid going to speak with Athenea and he is at the point of leaving to go see her, Pilar becomes coquettish, pleading with him to make love to her; she is after all "una mujer de carne y hueso" (284). Rubén refrains from quipping "más carne que hueso" and about the would-be tryst Falcón states simply that "Rubén no tenía ganas" (285). He opts for hiding in the bathroom, feigning illness. Once inside, he can think only of Athenea, "oyéndola suspirar y gemir, sin recato alguno" (286), as his mind drifts back to a highly charged erotic moment from the past, a moment of extreme splendor and intimacy. Pilar interrupts, knocking to see if she can help him, and Rubén "se echó a llorar"(287) for he realizes that his most heartfelt desire is not for the woman he married.

Pilar's unattractiveness begs the question of why Rubén married her, and herein lies the seduction to which he is subject and which reveals the extent to which his desires are conditioned by his political masters. Clearly he does not want her. Rubén is profoundly irritated with his newspaper boss who assigned him to cover the social debutante's gala music recital; but her father is the

primary advertiser for the paper and their four other magazines, so Ruben's objections fall on deaf ears. Rubén resists Pilar's traditional ways, her Catholicism, her lack of talent, and her blandness. He even has the chance to revitalize his relationship with Athenea and Marcia. "Pero ninguno de los tres sabía lo que pueden las virtudes tradicionales de la mujer española. Porque la verdad es que ni Pilar ni Petra [his mother] desistieron jamás de conseguir lo que al final..." (92). Here the narrative voice verbalizes the power of entrapment exercised by Pilar, which eventually proves itself dominant over Rubén's love for Athenea.

The symbol for this entrapment is "la tela de araña que Pilar tejía y tejía incansablemente" (151). These words are verbalized by Rubén himself, and his choice of linguistic operator to signal the process of courtship, engagement, and marriage indicates the triumph of Pilar's will over him. Pilar waited patiently for ten years after meeting him to marry him. Their first encounter occurs during his year of isolation in the military. As a soldier he is allowed to cover stories in nearby Valladolid; his assignments gain him admittance to events and access to interesting women whom he would not otherwise meet -- for free. His dire economic straits do not phase Pilar:

> Planteaba el problema a la primera ocasión, temiendo y esperando que tal obstáculo desanimase a la pretendiente, e indudablemente conseguía que ésta le asegurase que era una mujer moderna y que estaba dispuesta a pagarse su gasto e incluso el de él, mientras no mejorase su situación económica. (87)

When his mother and brother visit Rubén in Valladolid, they meet Pilar and her family. Rubén is fully aware of his brother's attraction to their wealth; he also recognizes his mother's veneration for the girl "que era más joven que su hijo, que había sido educada en monjas, que era soltera y seguro virgen y que tenía

una bonita voz y una presencia agradable y señorial" (91). Due to their wealth and reputation, the situation takes on a different tenor.

No longer is Pilar alone in her conquest of Rubén. She has an ally in Petra, Rubén's mother. Five years after first meeting Pilar, and immediately after moving out of the loft where he lived with Athenea and Marcia, Rubén spends a week in bed at his family's home. To their eyes he is love sick. Since he shows no signs of improvement, they plan a "surprise" trip to Valladolid, under the pretense of going to visit relatives. Yet no sooner do they arrive than Pilar makes the scene: "Calzaba altos tacones y bambolenado unas espléndidas caderas ceñidas por la corta falda, casi mini, como se llevaba en Madrid, era objeto de la admiración de todos los vallisoletanos" (136). The family members (with the important exception of his sister Celina) consider Pilar highly desirable, and in spite of his own objections to her profound Catholicism and lack of class consciousness, Rubén seeks her out. Upon his return home the astute Celina proffers a warning:

> –¿Qué ha pasado con Pilar?
> Rubén se sintió incómodo en el primer momento. Estuvo a punto de que le venciera la timidez, pero después se dejó llevar por la necesidad de confiarse a alguien, y hubiese deseado abrazar a su hermana y llorar en su hombro, agradecido por la ocasión que le ofrecía.
> –Nada; somos buenos amigos, después de haberle soltado unos cuantos sofiones...
> –No te dejes enredar ahora. No puede comparársele, ni para atarle los zapatos...
> –Ya lo sé. No te preocupes. Ahora ya me encuentro mejor y me vuelvo a trabajar. No cometeré una tontería semejante.
> –Ojalá. (138)

He makes a commitment to not become involved with Pilar, for Athenea still looms large in his psyche. Additionally, the text reveals that Rubén would have liked to do other than he did, as is characteristic of him.

Upon his return to Madrid, he wishes he could be with Athenea, but "El ático [...] estaba cerrado para él, y en todo Madrid no había casa ni palacio que pudiera ofrecerle la décima parte de lo que había dejado allí" (139). It is unclear as to why Athenea's home is closed to him. He frequents all the places where he might run in to her, but with no luck. He adopts a quasi-bohemian lifestyle to satisfy his need for self castigation, to feel "mucho más abandonado de lo que aún estaba" (140). But at the same time, "a pesar de la sórdida pensión y del descuidado vestido, se mantenía en el límite de lo corriente, de lo permitido, sin destruirse en una apoteosis final como él esperaba" (140). Again, the battleground for hegemony over Rubén's consciousness is established: in his miserable state he covers the "gala de prensa" and another recital by Pilar. A month later she is installed in Madrid, and definitively takes up the battle for conquest of Rubén.

Pilar takes up residence in one of the "barrios distinguidos," her apartment replete with "[t]erciopelos verde oscuro, gruesas alfombras, sillones de cuero y algunas tablas, imitación de los holandeses" (143-44). Rubén easily gives in to these comforts, and eventually their relationship becomes more serious. She has long since claimed independence from her family, but this does not mean that she is alone in her will to dominate Rubén. In fact she now has an even more powerful tool at her disposal: the politicoes of the inner circle. After a year of incommunication between himself and Rubén, Manolo appears at the newspaper office to request that he return to writing pieces for the PCE. He comments upon his own meeting with Pilar:

> He estado primero en tu casa y me he encontrado con Pilar. Me ha dicho que os casáis el mes que viene. Quiero felicitarte, es una buena chica, y avanzada de ideas, de las que se puede sacar algo

> bueno. [...] Es una muchacha muy inteligente y muy comprensiva. Está de acuerdo en todos nuestros planteamientos [...] Dice que ha cambiado mucho en los últimos años. Y es natural, porque antes era muy joven y no conocía nada de la vida. Ha madurado, se ha dado cuenta de cosas que ignoraba. Creo que puede serte un auxiliar de gran valor, e incluso, dentro de un tiempo, una verdadera camarada nuestra. (148-49)

Seduced by Manolo's return into his life, which appeals to his sense of self importance, Rubén becomes more and more intricately enmeshed in the web (150).

THE REPRESENTATION OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION[61]

Clearly Pilar is a highly politicized representation; she is "closely linked to historical and cultural factors and indeed cannot be understood outside of history" (Davis 107).[62] In the characterization of Pilar, Falcón has rendered the image of a distinguished bourgeois triumphalist, living elegantly on the *calle Velásquez*, daughter of a rich industrialist and wife of an important political figure. Her "virtudes traditionales" are nurtured by her deep seated Catholicism and conservatism. Her name echoes that of Pilar Primo de Rivera, leader of the Sección Femenina of the Falange, major ideologue, practitioner, and enforcer of the rule of the submission of women to men in every facet of life. Her life-style reinforces the primary patriarchal organizational unit, the family. Ideal daughter, wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, Pilar epitomizes what were considered sacrosanct values for women in Spain during the Franco era. Indeed, Pilar is the embodiment of Francoist norms for women.

This chapter began by pointing out that in Falcón's fiction dynamics between politics and *intrahistoria* are omnipresent. The notion that political

persuasion is present in the act of representation itself has become a truism among poststructuralist literary critics, from Frederic Jameson's defining "the political perspective" as "the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation" (17) to Linda Hutcheon's proclamation that "every representation always has its politics" (168). It is important to make some distinctions. Lennard J. Davis distinguishes between "all novels [which] are inherently ideological and in that sense are about the political and social world"; "the overtly political novel" (which is often "only so in content"); and literature which "begins at the end of ideology" in the Iserian sense that "it questions or recodes the signals of external reality in such a way that the reader himself [or herself] is to find the motives underlying the questions, and in doing so he [or she] participates in producing the meaning" (224-26, brackets in the original).[63] The question is where to locate Falcón's novel in this continuum.

To understand how "the personal is political" in *Es largo esperar callado* does not call for a full scale "reconsideration [...] of the politics of representation" (Hutcheon 161). This novel is neither metafictional, postmodern, nor self-consciously subversive. It is about how history is made, not about how events are represented. It is an ideological novel with overtly political content. It is about people involved in political activity and it shows ways in which ideology functions in the battleground of the human mind and in the field of human interaction. Its purposes are didactic. Like a good investigative reporter Falcón seeks to expose certain aspects of a particular moment in Spanish history, and to display the functioning of ideological mechanisms which serve "the working of power on behalf of specific interests" (Weedon 41). This kind of work is necessary for "a general and tactical reason that seems self-evident: power is

tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Foucault, *History* 86). Falcón's impetus is that of the social revolutionary writing near the end of the dictatorship; she unmasks the mechanisms of power. As Foucault has made clear in his analysis of power:

> [O]ne of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn't localised in the State apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed. (*Power/Knowledge* 62)

Es largo esperar callado shows the mechanisms of power on the minute, everyday level, and in so doing seeks to undermine their agency.

The principal apparatus of power represented in *Es largo* is discourse, and the principal site of struggle is Rubén, i.e., his positionality as subject. As Weedon explains:

> Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (41)

The discourses vying for power are those of two women: Athenea and Pilar. That they are oppositional forces is made obvious in their corporeality: Pilar is short, corpulent, blond, blue eyed and fair skinned, with hair coiffed at the beauty parlor. Athenea is youthful, slender, and muscular, with piercing black eyes, dark skin and long black hair. Paradoxically Athenea fits the stereotype of the exotic, romantic Spanish beauty while Pilar seems more "extranjera." Pilar exemplifies the traditional mold of womanhood, preserving her virginity until marriage (to point to just one aspect), whereas Athenea is completely unconventional, giving birth to her daughter Marcia out of wedlock and raising

her alone. Pilar is identified with *franquismo* whereas Athenea exhibits tendencies which are radically critical of hypocrisy and traditionalism, and might best be called anarchic.

It will be recalled that in terms of form *Es largo* fits the definition Herzberger offers for the novel of memory, where "the individual self seeks definition by commingling the past and present through the process of remembering" (67). Rubén is remembering. Athenea exists for Rubén in his memory. He thinks about her, and in the span of the twenty four hours in which the novel takes place he is haunted, beaten, and seduced by her memory. But she has been living in Barcelona for three years and he never sees her in the present. She exists strictly in his memory, and in what he encounters through Celina and Marcia. Pilar, on the other hand, exists in the present, but also in the past, as he remembers the ten long years she waited to marry him and the six years of their marriage. Hence both women live simultaneously in his memory, and both live in the present, although Athenea lives on only in the presence of the younger generation, and perhaps in the existence of the pamphlet.

Rubén's subjectivity is defined in terms of these two women. His identity is in flux as the discourses of the two women alternate in his mind. An example is when Rubén takes a momentary reprieve from his mother and Pilar, disgusted at the insipid boredom of his routine: the food, the furniture, and their meddlesome prying into his affairs during their five years "en el sólido piso de la calle Velázquez" (58). Alone in his bed, memories of Athenea come to him: "Escúchame, Athenea, no es posible estar moviendo los muebles todos los días" he argues, and she rejoins: "Anda, no seas tan gandul. A mí me fastidia ver siempre las cosas en el mismo sitio" (58). The scene demonstrates

synecdochically Atehenea's dynamism and willingness to initiate change, in stark contrast to Pilar's desire to leave unaltered what has been established, just as Ruben's mother and grandmother before him.

At times the voice of Athenea interiorized in Rubén takes on qualities of a conscience. He reproaches himself, but the words he uses to do it, or the image he sees which he imagines emitting words, are those of Athenea. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in this depiction of the first time he allows himself to be taken up by Pilar's attention:

> Salía con Pilar todas las tardes, en el descanso del periódico, y a veces también al terminar de madrugada [...]. Y la dolorosa quemadura por la ausente adorada se calmó un poco, y quedó en el fondo, sorda, amortiguada, soportable, ante la ingenua adoración de aquella chiquilla. Sólo en algunas ocasiones, cuando la comparación hacía evidente la vacuidad de aquella personita y los negros ojos se alzaban burlones riéndose de él, de Pilar, de todos, y llamándole vanidoso, pedante, pueril, se sentía harto de aquella compañía y la detestaba [...]. (90-91)

He does not conceive of this self critique as his own, but rather it is Athenea's discourse which recognizes the foolishness of his actions.

Another example of the Janus-like representation of Rubén's consciousness is when he relates to Pilar the many difficulties aroused by the dissemination of the pamphlet. He reports that important people are perturbed:

> La alarma encendió una llamita en los azules ojos y esta vez no había el más mínimo fingimiento en su ansiedad.
> –¿El ministro?
> Athenea se hubiera echado a reír, indudablemente contenta, y hubiese exclamado: '¡Ya era hora de que el ministro se asustase por algo, en vez de ser vosotros los que andáis siempre como conejos escurriéndoos por los rincones y haciendo reverencias!' (230)

Rubén needs time to think over the reaction of those of the inner circle before he decides whether or not to obey their dictate. The response of Pilar (fear for the worst) versus what he imagines would be the response of Athenea (will toward

further chaos) are equiponderant in his mind, and he is incapable of decision: "Rubén no tenía el mecanismo cerebral a punto para tomar una determinación importante en el momento preciso" (193).

This indecision rules in his personal life as well, as Rubén's comrades are keenly aware. The tension between discordant discourses in his mind is especially acute when his friends strive to convince him doubly: that he should follow party dictates and commit himself more fervently, and that concomitantly he must drop Athenea in favor of Pilar:

> Antonio le había recomendado, con algún circunloquio, pero muy serio, como atormentado por el problema, lo que a ti te pasa es que estás influido por Athenea, deberías dejarla, en cuanto puedas; te despista, porque sus ideas anarquizantes que, claro, ya le vienen de su padre, del que conocemos toda la historia... [...] Por otro lado, su vida no es clara, y no me refiero sólo a la niña, sino a sus historias posteriores, porque tú ya sabes, [...] tenemos la mirada de nuestros enemigos clavada siempre encima y pueden acusarnos de inmorales... De verdad, no es mujer que te convenga. Tienes un porvenir brillante, no puedes arruinar tu carrera política por una aventura... porque ni siquiera os habéis casado... Claro que somos comprensivos y si de momento no puedes resolver tus problemas económicos continúa con ella hasta que te encontremos una solución, pero después hazme caso, déjala... (127-28)

The arguments used by Antonio reveal the patriarchal loyalties embraced by the party and embodied in Pilar, which encroach upon Rubén's judgment and eventually take over his life.

Rubén's inability to determine his own subjectivity by means of free choice stands in sharp contrast to the clearly delineated subjectivities of the women. The speech and demeanor of Pilar and Athenea constitute discursive elements revolving around ideological center points. From these center points ideology emanates in the material form of language. And it is on the level of language that the battle is waged. In her analysis of poststructuralist thought

and feminist practice Chris Weedon has theorized the mechanism of discursive struggle in the formation of individual subjectivity:

> As individuals we are not the mere objects of language but the sites of discursive struggle, a struggle which takes place in the consciousness of the individual. In the battle for subjectivity and the supremacy of particular versions of meaning of which it is a part, the individual is not merely the passive site of discursive struggle. The individual [...] may resist particular interpellations or produce new versions of meaning from the conflicts and contradictions between existing discourses. (40)

The term "interpellations" employed by Weedon in this citation is derived from the seminal text of Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" (Weedon 29). Given the extent of the influence of Althusser's thought, it is worth taking the time to examine briefly his original use of the term "interpellation" and how its definition illuminates the process of subjectification which is a principal aspect of the fictional works of Lidia Falcón.[64]

Althusser points out that in its "ordinary use" the term "subject" means: "(1) a free subjectivity, a centre of initiative, author of and responsible for its actions; (2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission" (169). Foucault also recognizes a dual usage of the term: "There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" ("Subject" 212). What is missing in Foucault's characterization is the notion that the subject freely chooses that to which he or she is subjected. This difference underscores an observation which is of primary significance in Althusser's work: his idea of the subject

differs from the "ordinary use" of the term. For Althusser "free choice" is limited, since for the subject all options exist only within ranges of ideologies:

> [I]deology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always already subjects.* (164)

The struggle appears to be that of an individual subject choosing between alternatives. But each alternative is part of an ideology and subjects the individual, thus the individual as subject is always already enmeshed in a power grid. As Foucault explains:

> This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. (Subject 212)

Individuals become subjects through interpellation.

In Althusser, the process whereby the individual is interpellated into subjectivity is likened to "hailing":

> [I]deology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey, you there!" (163)

The individual recognizes him/herself as one who is being hailed, and thereby becomes a subject. The moment of recognition ("Yes, it really is me!") is central to the process of interpellation, and is "specular" (168). That is, there is a mutual recognition between the hailed individual (subject) and the ideology (Subject). This instantaneous mirroring or recognition is constitutive of interpellation.

Althusser illustrates the process with the example of Christian religious ideology, where the Subject, the ideological center, the unity of ideological principle, is represented by the word God. Other Subjects or ideological centers might be patriarchy, *franquismo*, nationalism, party politics, marriage, or the family; each has a principal idea and set of activities by which it is identified, recognized, known. Once the subject recognizes herself in the Subject, identifies with it, she is subjected to that ideology, and that ideology exists in the fact of her subjectification. Ideology and subjectification are coexistent.

According to Althusser's analysis the mechanism of subjectification, the "duplicate mirror-structure of ideology," has four parts:

> 1. the interpellation of "individuals" as subjects;
> 2. their subjection to the Subject;
> 3. the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself;
> 4. the absolute guarantee that everything is really so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right [...]. (168-69)

Of especial significance in the fourth step is the issue of behavior. For the most part people willingly subject themselves to the dictates of ideological apparatuses, once they recognize themselves in, or identify with, the Subject. Here we find Althusser's particular and ironic use of the term "free":

> [T]he individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection "all by himself." There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they "work all by themselves". (169)

The reference here is to the idea of collaboration or collusion in one's own subjection.

An almost textbook example of this set of phenomena is seen in Rubén. During the period of his involvement with Athenea his ideological commitment was with the Left: his journalism centered on the plight of the poor, the struggles of clandestine labor organizations, the sufferings of political prisoners, the goals of a global communist/socialist vision. As subject he was producer and disseminator of information congruent with these realities, and he was subjected to teachings from the Left. His seduction by more conservative elements, i.e., Pilar, his family (except sister Celina), and the party bosses subjugate him to their loyalties; as his collusion with them evolves he becomes subject as producer and disseminator of their brand of information. Pilar influences him in the selection of topic material for his writings and she edits what he writes. He thus ceases to concern himself with "la España negra" as they call it, i.e., the plight of the destitute, the encarcerated, the exploited. In this way he is "recruited" and transformed through interpellation: he recognizes himself in the image of himself which they project to him, and he reflects back to them in print and on the television the image they wish to see of themselves and their commitments. He is an ideal example of collusion in his own subjection.

Returning to Althusser's ideas, it must be noted that there do exist "bad subjects": persons who do not obey, i.e., move, act, speak, or otherwise comply with the determinants of state ideological subjectification. Instead these people "provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (repressive) State apparatus" (Althusser 169). This is precisely what happens with Athenea, and Rubén is given the task of suppressing her: "debía verla, para hacerla callar de una vez por todas" (301). It is suggested that he threaten her, find her Achilles' heel (her daughter Marcia? physical aggression? turning her in?) The party will

silence her in whatever way it can. What happens when Rubén seeks her out in an effort to do this forms the central focus of the final section of this chapter.

PLOT STRUCTURE AND TELEOGENESIS

In *Resisting Novels* Lennard J. Davis introduces the term "teleogenic" to qualify plots which are not arranged in "apparently linear or causal sequence" (206). In teleogenic plotting,

> the element of 'and-then-and-then' is overridden by the various plot points and ultimate ending of the work. Such works are generated by the end (*télos*), hence 'teleogenic.' [...] [T]he revelation of information directs the reader to the end which then reshapes the information already read. [...] [T]he teleogenic model implies the transformation of past events by subsequent ones (Davis 206-07, 213).

It is not the narrative style, i.e., the fragmentation of memory interlaced with present actions, states of mind, and emotions that is at issue here, but rather the plot. In *Es largo*, the plot transpires within a matter of twenty-four hours: after the widespread dissemination of the pamphlet, Rubén is visited by Party members who impel him to meet with Athenea in order to silence her, and he goes to see her, ostensibly to do just that. When a plot is teleogenic, the ending transforms what came before it; the information already read is reshaped by knowledge gained in reading the final pages. Hence what happens when Rubén goes to find Athenea must change the meaning of what transpired during those twenty-four hours.

So what new information is gleaned when Rubén goes to the street address given him by party bosses? When he arrives at the flat Rubén finds Celina and Marcia, a new generation of women who are on their own, making their own revolution. The place where they live is alive with vibrant colors, its

terrace brimming with foilage and blossoms encroaching upon every inch of available space. It is very similar to other places where Athenea has lived, except that there are now four women living there, each thriving and independent, pursuing her life's work: Marcia with her doctorate in psychiatry from the Sorbonne, Celina heading a school for young children, their roommates Elena and Carmen staffing the child development department at the hospital. It is evident from their lifestyle that a feminist movement has gotten under way, advancing into the future and transforming people's lives. The domicile and its inhabitants are much like the plants thriving where Athenea once planted seeds.

Notwithstanding, Rubén does not realize at first that Athenea is gone, nor does he comprehend the dimensions of the revolution before him. He presumes that these young women are being guided by a maternal presence; in his ignorance he interprets what he sees based on an old model, and thinks about Athenea in the same mode. The disparity between the reality before him and his antiquated ways of thinking is evident in the following passage, which narrates his thoughts upon first entering the flat:

> Marcia llevaba el pelo largo, negro y brillante como siempre. Como la Athenea de las tertulias de la calle Santa Ana, y quién sabe si como la Athenea de hoy, aunque Marcia era mucho más joven que Athenea, ¿no?, porque los negros ojos de su amada no habrían tampoco perdido intensidad y las manos morenas, delgadas, llenas de venas azules se moverían con los mismos gestos, nerviosos, precipitados, y el cuerpo, tan delgado como siempre, vibraría al compás de la energía interior de aquella mujer que mantenía la juventud, la actividad, la pasión de sus años adolescentes y si no, ¿cómo comprender que las dos muchachas que le miraban con ironía y pena a la vez fuesen imagen y reflejo de ella, y conviviesen juntas al amparo y bajo la tutela y la dirección de Athenea que pertenecía a la otra generación, a la de las Pilares, de movimientos lentos y aristocráticos y miradas opacas, de frases sentenciosas y miedos ancestrales...? (330)

Rubén presumes that these women are dependent on Athenea, revealing his grounding in traditional conceptions of familial order, Athenea playing the role of the patriarch in his conceptual scheme. The comparison drawn between Pilar and Athenea reinforces the distinction between old and new models of concpetion and lifestyle.

His sister Celina, well aware of his blindness, strives to delineate the parameters of this new way of being:

> [La figura] de Celina se proyectó hacia él, diciendo no estamos dirigidas y observadas por la protección materna, nadie aquí tampoco la llama mamá, y ella y nosotras somos entidades diferentes, y todas y cada una de nosotras formamos una conciencia unida y distinta, [...] y nos necesitamos y nos apoyamos y somos puntos en conexión, nunca ramas del mismo tronco que precisan *la savia común* para sobrevivir, porque Athenea está en Barcelona desde hace tres años y nosotras somos seres independientes y libres, que colaboramos en la construcción de algo que sabemos imprescindible y justo, sin obligaciones enojosas ni obediencias ciegas [...] (331 emphasis added)

Here there are two distinct moments of new awareness: the first is Celina's explanation of the relationships she and her roommates constitute, which flowers with no *savia común* ; the second is Celina's revelation of the crucial fact that Athenea has been living in Barcelona for three years. The first moment demonstrates that in spite of the fact that Rubén lived with Athenea for many years, he has never come to understand her ways of being. His fixity in the patriarchal mode of conception, and the principle of order and obedience which he presumes to be determinant in this household, are telling of the primordial unitariness, the basic singularity, of the male imaginary based on the preponderance of what Irigaray would call "the dominant phallic economy" ("This sex" 100).[65] Rubén seeks to group the women before him under the rubric

of "Athenea" as unitary guiding principle but, as Celina insists, they are a multiplicity of "puntos en común" without the benefit of "la savia común."

Regarding the second moment, the most obvious upshot of Athenea's having moved to Barcelona three years ago is that she cannot and will not be silenced. Responsibility for the creation and distribution of the pamphlet cannot be pinned on her. The logistics of authoring and distributing the pamphlet all the way from Barcelona make holding her singularly accountable for the deed impossible. There are now too many voices to be silenced. Collectivity of intent and purpose among the group is a reality; the movement has been spawned, it is too late for silencing and control. In a sense this renders useless the whole enterprise of the party's efforts to engage Rubén for this mission. There is no single focus for their antipathy, no single means by which they can cover up that which has been revealed by the pamphlet: their own corruption. The true authorship of the pamphlet is never revealed in *Es largo esperar callado.* It remains shrouded in clandestinity. Hence for Rubén the entire day has been an exercise in futility.

Furthermore, Rubén realizes that his concept of the omnipotence of the politicoes is fallacious: "¿Y dónde estaban los talentos que le mantenían a él sujeto a no se sabía qué fidelidades falseadas, cuando ni siquiera se habían enterado de que Athenea no vivía ya en Madrid?" (331). With this awareness comes the disintegration of the fiction, which he has created or which has been created in him, of the moral rectitude and political efficacy of the party. Concomitantly, ther is an alteration in the assessment of Rubén's character, both for the reader and for Rubén himself. The reality of his current condition is mirrored to him by the reaction of Marcia and Celina.

When Marcia says "te encuentro muy gordo Rubén" (329) his complete sell-out becomes obvious to the reader. Here Falcón again employs the technique of signaling loyalties through body forms. He even identifies himself as a "[g]ordo y avejentado Rubén que era un traidor que pactaba" (331); he is more like Pilar that like anyone else. The women press him to see himself even more clearly: "No comprendo cómo te han encargado que vinieras a vernos... [...] Te habrán enviado a asustarnos, ¿verdad? [...] ¿Han amenazado con agredirnos físicamente?" (332-33). They recognize in him a traitor, and clarify an elementary revolutionary principle for him:

> Cuando se traiciona las ideas siempre que es oportuno para obtener cualquier ventaja momentánea y material, es difícil morir por una causa. [...] Al final los traidores, por la propia mecánica de la constumbre acaban por traicionarse a sí mismos (336).

Now it is up to Rubén to judge how far he has betrayed himself.

Although they know that it is too late, Celina suggests to Rubén that for him there still exists the prospect of redemption:

> Puedes demonstrar ahora que no estás vendido, ni siquera dormido, aprovéchala... Pero yo sé que no lo harás... ésa es la gran diferencia entre Athenea y tú... y para ella eso es lo más importante. (337)

Perhaps this is the greatest lesson Athenea has taught these women. They have embraced it as what in Foucauldian terms is denominated a practice or technique of the self. For Foucault technologies of the self are one kind[46] of a set of "specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves":

> [T]echnologies of the self [are those] which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, "Technologies" 225)

The specific technique of the self which Celina urges Rubén to employ entails a moral standard, the "formation of one's self as an ethical subject" (Mc Nay 52).

This principle of ethical self formation is elaborated by Foucault as part of his inquiry into morality and practices of the self in the ancient world.[67] As Lois McNay points out:

> Foucault identifies a principle called the "determination of ethical substance" which refers to the way in which the individual chooses to focus on a part of the self or mode of behavior as the prime material of his/her ethical conduct. (52)

With respect to *Es largo*, one mode of behavior which manifests Marcia's, Celina's, and Athenea's "ethical substance" is the establishing of social/living space apart from the determinants of paternalistic order, be they the patriarchal family, unitary authority, or party politics. These women have separated themselves, at least in their physical living space, from these foci of power. This is the only way they can be true to themselves. Thus it can be said that in *Es largo* Falcón establishes a feminist ethic, or rather, she lays the groundwork for such an ethic, which is more fully developed within the trajectory of her fictional works. While the delineation of her feminist ethic may be underdeveloped in this work, one foundational principle is clear, as Celina informs Rubén at the close of *Es largo*: "Para todos nosotros, *ser fieles a nosotros mismos* ha sido la única meta de toda la vida y ahora es tarde para cambiar" (335, emphasis added).

The key to understanding Rubén's betrayal lies in his relationship with Athenea, and in their breakup, and here he will learn something he did not previously know. Up to the final chapter the reason why the relationship terminated is not made explicit. There were, over the course of fourteen years, separations and reconciliations. But throughout the novel Rubén is equivocal as

to why their partnership broke up. The influence of his comrades in the party plays no small role, and his boasting of having thrown Athenea off on account of the political expense the affair entailed belies his assurances to Pilar that "fue ella quien me dejó" (65). What is made clear is that there was some definitive rupture, and that he has not seen his former lover for several years, despite his desire to do so and his efforts to run into her coincidentally.

The final dialogue between Rubén, Marcia, and Celina reveals that it was not Athenea's wish to abandon Rubén definitively: Pilar was manipulating the situation to her own ends all along. Celina tells him of Athenea's grief after the final separation, grief over the fact that Rubén chose not to see her:

> Decía que Athenea le había llamado varias veces al periódico, que le dejó recado de que quería verlo, que incluso, cuando ya se había trasladado al estudio que Pilar le montó, estuvo allí y habló con Pilar, y ella le prometió que se lo diría a Rubén y después le escribió una carta quejándose de su silencio, más tarde se convenció de que no quería saber nada de ella y no lo intentó. Mejor dicho, no siguió importunándole... (327)

This news hits Rubén like a bombshell. The reader, less naive perhaps, or not as disposed to delusion, is not so surprised. The reader has had the benefit of "sub-reforming units" since, as is characteristic of most teleogenic plots, "the reshaping of past information will happen all along at strategic plot points and not just at the end" (Davis 207). Pilar's manipulation is arguably rather obvious, and the fact that Rubén is unaware of it attests more to her sly craftiness than to any feeblemindedness on his part.

"Comprendo que te moleste tener que admitir que Pilar se ha constituido en tu espía y en tu tutora, pero es verdad..." (329). As Marcia say this to Rubén, she evinces the same look, ironic smile and gestures, the same demeanor as her mother. In effect, her presence is a flashback for Rubén to the first day he met

Athenea at the School of Journalism. Her daughter says what he has never had the ears to hear. Now he must confront the truth of his wife's guile, and the women's incredulity at his naiveté. "Pero llegaste hasta casarte con ella... superaste los pronósticos de Athenea... Lo siento y ella lo sintió mucho entonces. Al fin y al cabo creía que eras un poco como ella te había querido..." (335). Having met himself in the mirror which dialogue with these women has provided, Rubén accepts the truth:

> Rubén había averiguado en aquellas últimas horas que Pilar hizo con él todo lo que podía hacer, sacó todo lo que sabía que era susceptible de obtener de él. Todo lo había obtenido Pilar.
> –En eso hay que reconocer que ha podido más que todas nosotras. Es muy inteligente. (334)

The upshot of Pilar's maneuverings and Rubén's falling prey to her deftness at deception is simple: Rubén has been a dupe. The reader grows to despise him, and this is the response which Falcón sought to provoke. She wanted to temper the reading public's infatuation with "los mandarines de la cultura, entonces muy dirigida y mediatizada por el PCE y sus afines" (Falcón, *Monográfico* 8). Also, as stated at the outset of this chapter, Falcón strove to make manifest the struggles of women

> que lo habían dado todo, libertad, patria, bienestar y hasta la vida, por el progreso y el socialismo, y no habían hallado más que el exilio, la cárcel, el campo de concentración y el olvido y la indiferencia, cuando no la expulsión y el desprecio. (Falcón, *Monográfico* 8)

Is this the fate of Athenea? There is no more news of her. Celina says only that she has been living in Barcelona for three years, has practically dropped active journalism, is preparing her second novel, and continues her collaboration with the same magazines as always (331). Given that these characteristics sound very

much like those of Falcón herself, it is doubtful that in the future Athenea will be relegated to the annals of the forgotten ones.

SUMMARY COMMENTS - *Es largo esperar callado*

It was stated earlier in this chapter that the final section would treat some political ramifications of both the form and the content of Falcón's highly charged political text. Form and content are inseparable, for they imply and inform each other simultaneously. The political ramifications of the content are fairly clear: Rubén, a weak intellectual of the Left, is caught in an ideological struggle between Athenea and Pilar. He sides ultimately with Pilar and all she represents, abetted by members of the party and her manipulative astuteness. Athenea absents herself from Rubén's world, and in her place is found a thriving feminist community in embryo. It is within the confines of this community that Rubén is forced to confront himself. His ethic proves to be other than the age old "to thine own self be true." So he is sacrificed to the world of triumphalist bourgeois comfort -- the classic sellout. Clearly Falcón is able to penetrate the machinations of ideology, and she lays them bare in this novel for all to see.

This leaves the question of the political ramifications of the form. As has been pointed to, the teleogenic plotting employed in *Es largo esperar callado* "implies the transformation of past events by subsequent ones" (Davis 213). The information revealed directs the reader to the end, i.e., Rubén finally arrives at the domicile of Athenea. What happens there gives meaning to the rest of the story. While party leaders are busy convincing Rubén to stave off Athenea, she is otherwise occupied, building a feminist revolution, which she has been doing

all along. The presence of the younger generation in what was once her home attests to it.

The reader realizes that while others have been busy accommodating the Left to Francoist bourgeois values, the feminist movement has been constructing itself in clandestinity. One glaring fact in this apparently true-to-life scenario is that the story of what Athenea has done as a feminist remains untold. Her history remains a clandestine history. Bearing in mind that this book was written in the 1970s and published late in 1975, the reason for the lack of knowledge about Athenea's activities becomes clear. Feminist activity was suppressed in real life, just as Falcón suppresses information about it in this novel. The fact that neither the words "feminismo" nor "feminista" appear in the text at all is highly significant. The form of the plot mimics reality, and only at the end do we really find out what has been going while Rubén has been struggling with the ultimatum to silence Athenea. It cannot be done. Had the reader known this at the outset, *Es largo esperar callado* would have been a completely different story.

In this way the reader is confronted with multiple meanings. The liberatory impact of this form of reading has been alluded to by Weedon:

> Knowledge of more than one discourse and the recognition that meaning is plural allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual and even where choice is not available, resistance is still possible. (40)

The understanding that "the real story" may be other than what one has been lead to believe is the lesson that Falcón's teleogenic plotting offers. Moreover, it is apparent that in *Es largo* the groundwork for the delineation of a feminist ethic is laid. That it is just a beginning may be due to the fact that a great deal of work

remained to be done by feminists in order to elaborate a coherent set of principles. It is more likely, however, that the limitations of Francoist censorship and the concomitant suppression of alternative ideologies prohibited their expression, as it restricted the development of the feminist movement until the dictator's death.

Later writings by Falcón demonstrate the evolution of her ideas of a feminist ethics. What are the determinants of feminist ethics for Falcón? Surely the "mixing of the political with the sexual" and the concomitant "politicization of the personal" (Hutcheon 144, 161) is primordial to this ethic. Athenea breaks away from the love affair with Rubén because of his political cowardice. Falcón makes it explicit that Athenea wanted Rubén to commit himself to "la defensa de la verdad, esa que el pueblo tiene derecho a conocer, la que le han escamoteado siempre, haciéndole aceptar lo inaceptable" (177). But he will not. He shows himself to be other than "fiel a sí mismo." It is not the case that for Athenea there is a move toward autonomy where as woman she rejects object status to become a self-determining subject, as was the case with Clara. Nor is Athenea dissatisfied with worn-out models of (mis)understanding her own sexuality so that she changes her attitude, partner, and/or entire orientation to her own sexed body, as shall be seen through analysis of Falcón's later protagonists.

The case presented in *Es largo* is rather that of a model of revolutionary zeal whose discontent with male politics, in both public and private life, leads her to establish an alternative. What the alternative in private life is is not stated. However, the alternative in public political life is made manifest: the feminist movement gets under way. That the political is political means that the Partido Feminista has taken root. That the personal is political means that Athenea

dismisses Rubén: making bedmates with the enemy is not in her repertoire. Just who constitutes an adequate bedmate, which is central to the determination of a feminist ethic, remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 4

EL JUEGO DE LA PIEL

> Only excuse for this tired death route is THE KICK when the junk circuit is cut off for the non-payment and overdose of time and the Old Skin has forgotten the skin game simplifying a way under the junk cover the way skins will.... A condition of total exposure is precipitated when the Kicking Addict cannot choose but see smell and listen....
>
> William S. Burroughs[68]

El juego de la piel is the fourth novel written by Lidia Falcón, her second to be published, following *Es largo esperar callado*. *El juego* came out in 1983 but the story takes place in 1975, for the most part outside Spain's borders. In this narrative of the hippie generation, female sexuality is part of the free love movement and is expressed within an ambiance of endless searching and the ubiquitous use of drugs, as women's bodies are deployed in various roles from contraband mules crossing the border barely eluding authorities to the experimental playground of fanatical heroin-pushing advocates of the drug revolution. Unlike many of her peers, the protagonist Elisenda reclaims her body from the clutches of both heroin and the aimless men who shape her destiny, and in so doing liberates herself from the ubiquitous apparatus of power which these disparate elements form. In the end Elisenda turns to the Feminist Movement, having regained bodily health and (tentative) freedom from addiction, with the promise of self-actualization on the horizon. Falcón's depiction of the hippie revolution exposes its discourse as another "apparatus of sexuality,"[69] and the contrast created between Elisenda and certain other women

who populate these pages serves to underscore the futility of this purportedly alternative lifestyle.

The epigraph to this chapter, a translated version of which appears in Falcón's text, is taken from *Naked Lunch*, William Burroughs' 1959 underground classic. It is quoted by one of Elisenda's companions in a eulogy as it were to the most important writers of the Beat generation. Burroughs' work has been called a trip through hell by several critics; Elisenda's experiences within the counterculture and into drug addiction are equally infernal. The archetypal journey through hell is of course that of Dante Alighieri. Certain structural similarities between the pilgrim's trek through the nine circles of the *Inferno* and Elisenda's tale lend themselves to a comparison between the works. Thus a three-way intertextual relationship exists between these works, which shall be explored in this chapter. The concept of salvation in particular serves to demonstrate important differences in the world view and literary project of each of these writers.

As is true for all of Falcón's work, the development of a feminist ethics is a vital component of this novel. In the trajectory of her fiction, there is an evolution of this ethics, developed in *El juego de la piel* through the characterization of female role models and anti-models for Elisenda. These comprise the discourse of a feminist ethics and the counter-discourse to a feminist ethics (or the discourse of a counter-ethics) respectively. Central to the contrastive juxtaposition of ethics and counter-ethics is the issue of female sexuality. The sexual relations described and carried out by Elisenda and other women she meeets are part of the apparatus of sexuality operant at this particular historical juncture. In an effort to outline the dimensions of the

apparatus exposed by Falcón in *El juego de la piel*, part of the project of this chapter is to analyze these sexual relations. This analysis of Falcón's exposition shows not only the breadth of her feminist vision, but also her commitment to educating her readers. The feminist alternative is not only described in this work, it is made concrete by the revolutionary analysis which Falcón serves up for her readers to make their own.

SYNOPSIS OF *EL JUEGO DE LA PIEL*

The beginning of the tale finds Elisenda Verdiell living in a commune in London in the year 1975, September 22 to be exact, the day after three militants of FRAP and two from ETA[70] were executed at the hands of Francisco Franco in a final display of absolute authority, in spite of widespread international outcry, the intercession of Juan Carlos de Borbón, and a plea for clemency by the dictator's own brother Nicolás Franco Bahamonde (Ramírez 203). In the shadow of this political nightmare Elisenda inhabits a commune in London, living in exile with her friends Ramón, Asun, and Helmut. While it appears that she is Ramón's lover, the ethic of the commune is such that everything is shared; all things are common property and "los cuerpos de todos son de todos" (10). While dope is plentiful, at neither Elisenda's commune nor that of the politicoes or the "gurus" is she able to find food, so she is reduced to allowing anyone who will feed her to do with her whatever he may choose.

Her fantasy of escaping from the London scene is fulfilled when Oscar offers her the chance to earn her ticket by traveling to France carrying several kilos of hashish. Crossing over to France she meets Gina, a fellow Barcelona hippie who, importantly, is not a heroin user. Narrowly escaping the police

whose net envelops Oscar, Elisenda makes her way to the Louvre and settles in at the gardens. There she is picked up by José Luis, a fervent advocate of the drug revolution whose modus vivendi is shooting and selling heroin. He wants her to push for him, and in spite of her lack of interest in such an undertaking, she takes her first taste of *caballo*. After several absolutely fruitless attempts to make her way, she returns to José Luis hungry, cold, and broke, and agrees to make his rounds for him dealing out little packets of junk on the junkie circuit which he supplies. He requires her to shoot up, and consequently become dependent on him, thus ensuring that she will not run out on him. Elisenda's friend Isabel Fortuny comes to the rescue, convincing her to return to Barcelona. Escaping by train with Isabel, Elisenda absconds from the harrowing clutches of José Luis, making off with several of his packets of heroin which she hides in her suitcase.

While it appears hopeful that Elisenda will follow Isabel's lead and return to take up some semblance of normal life, given that Franco has died and the hope for such a possibility exists, the drug has by now perverted her thinking and decision making processes. She is addicted; she has grown a new skin, to put it in Burroughs' parlance. She sees Isabel's efforts to help her find employment as attempts to control her, and refuses to cooperate. Meanwhile José Luis's fellow junkie and pusher Katy, who lives in Barcelona, seeks her out for payment for the heroin Elisenda stole from them. She engages Elisenda to sell for her, and as Elisenda sinks deeper and deeper into the pit of addiction she takes up prostitution to help support her habit.

When international outcry at the pandemic proportion of heroin addiction and related deaths emanating from Amsterdam results in police crackdowns,

heroin becomes scarce. Katy and Elisenda are thrown into the agony of withdrawal. After several days José Luis appears with a supply, but when he injects too much into Elisenda's vein she goes into a comatose state. Fearing her imminent death, the two junkies hail a cab and send Elisenda off to the hospital, where her life is saved by medical intervention.

Isabel, having been called to the hospital by medical personnel, is there to welcome Elisenda back to the world of the living. She tells Elisenda of their friend Elisa's release from prison as a result of "el indulto de diciembre" (186). Hearing of Elisa's political activism and that of Elisa's husband and so many others gives Elisenda a feeling of remorse at the seeming uselessness of her life. Also she gains a new respect for Isabel, one of admiration for this woman who has done precisely what she has wanted to do with her life. Gina, the woman she met on the boat to France, joins Elisenda and Isabel in the hospital room. Gina plans to travel to Brussels in March for the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women where there will be virtually no men to hinder the women in their process of consciousness raising and political action. Gina invites Elisenda to accompany her, and when Elisenda agrees to go she thinks, "Quizá todo cambiará a partir de entonces" (200). Thus the novel closes on a note of optimism and potential feminist triumph over the vicissitudes of Elisenda's nightmarish trip through the hell of drugs, exploitative sex, and aimless wandering that Falcón portrays in *El juego de la piel.*

Much like *Es largo esperar callado* and Falcón's later novels, *El juego de la piel* documents a specific period in Spanish history, in this case the year of Franco's death. The aimless wandering of the young people depicted in this work is a function not only of the post-1968 hippie era in western Europe and North

America, but also of the alienation of exile predicated on Francoism. But Elisenda's family are not Republicans searching for an alternative to Francoism. On the contrary, they are comfortable bourgeois Catalans whose political aspirations reach little beyond the espousal of leftist rhetoric at the university on the part of two of her four brothers. Nor does Elisenda relate intellectually or culturally to the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, although she certainly gets caught up in tangential activities and is subject to the ideology of the love generation in its most profane and exploitative dimensions.

INTERTEXTUALITY: WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS AND ELISENDA IN HELL

There is another piece of Spanish history which plays a central role in the articulation of developments in *El juego de la piel*: the introduction of Burroughs and *Naked Lunch* into Spanish letters. The first article about Burroughs to appear in Spain was published in 1969.[71] Burroughs' work was not translated until 1972, however, as noted by Eduardo Tijeras that year:

> William S. Burroughs [...] llega por fin al área de la lengua española en varias traducciones realizadas en Argentina y en España y que recogen por azar lo más antiguo y lo más moderno de este autor crecientemente debatido. (639)

The same year Domingo Pérez Minik, writing in *Insula*, recognized the geographical spread of Burroughs' cultural progeny:

> Ya era hora de que llegara a España William S. Burroughs, este personaje de la 'beat generation', donde él no quiere estar situado por miedo a las clasificaciones zoológicas, pero que con indiscutible aproximación hemos de colocar en su sitio, ya da lo mismo que viva en San Francisco como el nucleo inicial o en París [...]. (Perez Minik 5-6)

Burroughs enjoyed some popularity in Spain after the translations of his works first became available; Antolín Rato comments that "Fueron trece años en los que,

según opiniones más o menos autorizadas, Burroughs se puso de moda en España -lo mismo que en casi toda Europa-, especialmente entre los individuos de lo que se llamó 'contracultura'" (33). As to the duration of Burroughs' popularity, Antolín Rato comments that his passing out of style is an indication that Spanish readers are "los nuevos analfabetos narrativos [...] asustados ante el complejo mundo sujuntivamente reflejado en las narraciones que se remiten al presente":

> Sí, para ésos Burroughs está pasado de moda (exige esfuerzo), para ésos Burroughs no se entiende (las novelas policiacas son más fáciles), para ésos Burroughs resulta demasiado urbano y violento (el Imperio Inglés era más exótico y educado). (36)

The inference is that among literati Burroughs maintains a certain following; those with a taste for envisioning "la arqueología imaginaria de un universo caótico sobre el que ejercerá la radicalidad de su escritura más demoledora" keep up with his work, for "el combate contra el sistema -de escritura o de lo que sea- no se ha interrumpido" (Antolín Rato 36).

Indeed, Burroughs is recognized world wide for his genius as a literary innovator in North American letters.[72] Because of his intellectual influence on the Beat Generation, he is considered something akin to the grandfather of the social revolution/hippie movement/counterculture, from the Beatles, Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters, The Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Timothy Leary, Ram Dass, Bob Dylan, and Alan Watts to the New Age movement, Patti Smith, Kurt Cobain and Nirvana, R.E.M., and NPR commentator Andrei Codrescu, among a host of others (Ash 293-96).

Burroughs' literary style has been commented upon at great length by scholars from many different fields and countries, and while it is not the purpose

of the present study to examine in depth the corpus of criticism dedicated to his work, a brief overview is offered for the reader who may be unfamiliar with Burroughs' prose. Of particular interest are observations of Spanish commentators. In a 1978 review of *Almuerzo desnudo* critic Asis Colonje points to what is perhaps the most salient feature of Burroughs' style:

> En el discurso burroughsiano no existe esa sumisión dieciochesca a la palabra o a su valor de diccionario, puesto que ha dejado de ser la célula unitaria del sentido. [...] La imagen y la mimésis sobrepasan la descripción aristotélica, dispuestas por una lógica espacial en una prosa lanzada a través de fragmentos y bloques frásicos que adquieren un increíble sentido poético. (95)

In the *Insula* article Pérez Minik signals some of Burroughs' principal influences:

> La admiración de William S. Burroughs por Joyce, Michaux, Melville, Kafka y Genet fue siempre bien acentuada. El ha dicho que su escritura hay que imaginársela como si estos maestros bien drogados y poseídos de un delirio erótico se pusieran a redactar una novela de ciencia-ficción mecanografiada por Samuel Beckett. (6)

And Eduardo Tijeras details techniques utilized by Burroughs which, by 1972 when his works were translated, were already in vogue among some sectors of the reading public in Spain, thanks to writers of the new novel:

> La dificultad de Burroughs [...] proviene de una técnica que altera el suceder lógico y desmesura la interpretación de la realidad y utiliza, como no tenía por menos, la escritura automática y los presupuestos generales del surrealismo, hace montajes, corta, yuxtapone, delira, desfundamenta el devenir, tijeretea, pega, silencia nexos y suministra al cabo una técnica literaria –ya bautizada en su aspecto formal y de ejecución *(folding-up, cut-up)*– que tiene por objeto principal conservar la espontaneidad y servir como de muestrario puro del irracionalismo [...]. (641)

Burroughs' technique is not based solely on flights of the imagination which break down referentiality like a cubist's geometrical dissection of the quotidian. Rather, this cutting up *is* the referent, as Colonje recognizes:

> Burroughs muestra una fragmentación de la escritura que produce un giro en el pensamiento para dar cuenta de la verdad de lo discontinuo, del caos de ausencias y apariciones que nos envuelve. (96)

Burroughs' most famous technique for communicating his vision of the real is what he called cut-ups, a method whereby "one literally cuts up texts and rearranges them"[73] (Ash 45). The cut-ups mixed spontaneity with unexpected juxtapositions, yielding little in the way of discernible plot. "Believing that consciousness, as we know it, is a fiction having only the appearance of linear continuity, Burroughs sought to disrupt the flow of expectation and jar the reader into some sort of realization" (Ash 45). Jürgen Ploog suggests that "[t]he fragmentary structure of *Naked Lunch* that allows us to enter it at any point allows us to break through our conditioning to linear thinking" (139). Cut-ups are not the only method employed by Burroughs to impel his readers to altered states of consciousness. Timothy Murphy states that "Burroughs did not 'discover' and begin using the cut-up method until 1959-60, after *Naked Lunch* had been published" (11), and Ihab Hassan suggests other methods by which Burroughs breaks through the veil of illusion:

> In *Naked Lunch* the cut up method is used sparingly; Burroughs relies more heavily on the literary techniques of metamorphosis and the hallucination. Both serve to destroy the objective reality of the world, the separate identity of things. This is in keeping with Burroughs' vision of chaos and disintegration. (Hassan, "Novel" 251)

The literary technique employed by Lidia Falcón does not approximate Burroughs' style. In Burroughs mimetic representation is supplanted by a logic of space in a fragmented prose which is more poetic than descriptive, designed to alter logical succession and provoke breakthroughs in the reader's conditioning to linear thinking. His words metamorphose what we refer to as

concrete reality, approximating hallucination and assimilating the procedures of surrealism: montage, juxtaposition, cut-and-paste, the suppression of normal syntax. His inclination to adopt the perspective of famous (drugged and "possessed") literary forebears linked to his insistence on infusing erotic energy into every page seeks purposefully to disconcert the reader and precipitate in him/her some sort of realization. There is a marked tendency towards science fiction. Burroughs' writing can only be considered referential with the proviso that the reality referred to is always already cut-up: the discontinuous, the chaos of absences and delusion.

Falcón on the other hand writes literature which is descriptive, mimetic, and referential without provisos. Her logic is feminist, designed to provoke specific sequential reasoning and to motivate breakthroughs in patriarchal modes of thought. Her words describe concrete reality so that the real, everyday oppression of women is rendered more visible. If she adopts the perspective of any forebears, they are the feminists who also strove to depict the specific nature of women's condition in a male dominated context. The erotic energy infused into the pages of *El juego de la piel* is frustrated female energy seeking outlet through female orgasm where there is none to be had. The realizations towards which Falcón seeks to move her readers is the understanding of the plight of women. While these differences in style and technique put Burroughs and Falcón on opposite ends of the spectrum, thematically the two are not so disparate.

As mentioned above, the words "*juego de la piel*" employed by Falcón in her title come from *Naked Lunch*. They enter Elisenda's reality when, prostituting herself to keep up with her habit, she is picked up one day by Juan, an

intellectual type who challenges her on her use of hard drugs and her illusions about the hippie lifestyle, "de ese rollo de vibraciones y de amor universal que degrada al sexo femenino obligando a sus ligues a tragarse todas estas chorradas" (161). He hopes to enlighten her by reciting, in a solemn tone, a quote from Burroughs, "alguien que lo sabía todo sobre las drogas":

> La única excusa para esta agotada ruta de muerte es la sensación cuando el circuito de la droga se cierra por falta de pago y la piel drogada se muere por falta de droga y sobredosis de tiempo y la Piel Vieja ha olvidado el juego de la piel acortando el camino cubierto por la droga como hacen las pieles... Se precipita un estado de exposición total cuando el Adicto Golpeante no puede sino ver, oler y oír... (161)[74]

The reader will recognize this as the Spanish translation of the epigraph to this chapter. This doubly enfolded corporeal metaphor for the junkie in withdrawal is an apt one for the story of Elisenda, for the layers of self she exhibits/manifests/becomes are multiple and resonant with use of "la droga, *hard drug* concretamente" and what it entails (Colonje 94).

The person who initiated Burroughs into heroin use was Herbert Huncke who has been described as "a 'sort of Virgilian guide to the lower depths'" (Charters 145).[75] Ihab Hassan depicts the vision of *Naked Lunch* as "infernal, a glimpse of the abyss which Dante defined in his time by another theology" ("Subtracting" 11). Pérez Minik includes "luciferina" among the "ristra de adjetivos [que] es buena para valorar su literatura" (6), and Colonje calls *El almuerzo desnudo* an "infierno antropológico y alucinante" (95). In the trial of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts v. *Naked Lunch*, where Burroughs' underground classic was cleared of obscenity charges, Norman Mailer testified as to the infernal nature of the book: "To me this is a simple portrayal of Hell. It is Hell precisely" ("*Naked Lunch* On Trial" xvii). Mailer expounded further as the court

allowed him to read some notes he had written for the occasion, and his testimony is instructive:

> Just as Hieronymus Bosch set down the most diabolical and blood-curdling details [...] of the mansions of horror attendant upon Hell, so, too, does Burroughs leave you with an intimate, detailed vision of what Hell might be like, a Hell which may be waiting us at the culmination, the final product, of the scientific revolution. At the end of medicine is dope; at the end of life is death; at the end of man may be the Hell which arrives from the vanities of the mind. Nowhere, as in Naked Lunch's collection of monsters, half-mad geniuses, cripples, mountebanks, criminals, perverts, and putrefying beasts is there such a modern panoply of the vanities of the human will, of the excesses of evil which occur when the idea of personal or intellectual power reigns superior to the compassions of the flesh. ("*Naked Lunch* On Trial" xviii)

Mailer goes on to argue for the necessity of artistic freedom by stating that only "a Great Society can look into the chasm of its own potential Hell and recognize that it is stronger as a nation for possessing an artist who can come back from Hell with a portrait of its dimensions" (xix). While Falcón's *Es largo* is not possessed of the intense vision or experimental literary technique manifest in Burroughs, Elisenda's wanderings certainly take on Dantesque dimensions. Indeed, the intertextuality between *Naked Lunch*, Dante's *Inferno*, and *El juego* point to the multi-layered, multifaceted critique developed by Falcón in her feminist version of travels in hell.

DANTESQUE DIMENSIONS IN *EL JUEGO DE LA PIEL*

There is a well known basic structure to the *Inferno*[76] which Falcón's novel mimics ironically. At the beginning of his tale Dante finds himself in a dark wood in a valley, having left the path of truth. His attempt to escape the dismal darkness by climbing a hill showered in sunlight is blocked by three fearsome beasts. These are a leopard, a lion, and finally a she-wolf. Driven back into the

dark wood, Dante encounters the shade of Virgil, who responds to the pilgrim's plea for help by telling him there is another way to reach the light. By traveling through Hell and Purgatory Dante may then meet another spirit who will guide him to Paradise. Begging Virgil to lead him on, Dante embarks on his trip through Hell.

The basic division of Hell is binary, with upper Hell and lower Hell separated by the walls which encircle the City of Dis (lower Hell), the home of Lucifer himself. After descending through the five rings of upper Hell, Dante and Virgil are transported across the river Styx and allowed to pass through the gates of the City of Dis, whereupon they continue their decline through the remaining four rings until they reach the very bottom. There, in the pit of Hell, the ninth circle of the *Inferno*, is the lake of ice known as Cocytus. At its far end, in the very center of the earth stands Lucifer, frozen in the ice from the chest downward. Climbing down his hairy body, the pilgrims reach a point beyond the center of the earth, where they turn around in order to follow a winding upward path which leads them eventually to the surface, whereupon Dante states: "I saw the lovely things the heavens hold / and we came out to see once more the stars" (Musa 191).

Structural correlations between Dante's rendering of Hell and Falcón's begin with the opening scene of the dark wood. Having strayed from the path of truth, Dante was lost in the darkness, three beasts preventing him from moving into the light. His journey through Hell is thus necessitated for it is the only other way to reach salvation. The darkness in which Elisenda is lost at the beginning of her story is that of conventional bourgeois Catalan family life during the era of Francoist national-Catholicism. Elisenda was born in 1950, the

youngest of five children, her older siblings all male. She was never afforded the love she needed from her formal bourgeois mother, and was provided instead with a series of nannies in spite of indications to the contrary: "Ya decía su abuela que era muy malo para los niños cambiar de niñeras, pero mamá no le hacía mucho caso, como tampoco hacía caso en realidad de su niñita" (13). Rather than being embraced by maternal love, Elisenda found herself

> siempre zarandeada por sus hermanos, los últimos tres, que el mayor con sus dieciocho años ya no hacía caso de aquella mocosa. Aunque los otros tampoco, porque Pedro, Agustín y Vicente se cansaban pronto de jugar con ella, a la que trataban como muñeca o mascota durante un rato y después la olvidaban y la rechazaban cuando ella pretendía que la aceptasen en sus juegos de machotes [...]. (13)

The love and acceptance Elisenda most wanted as a child was not afforded her except perhaps by Paquita, the one nanny who lovingly cared for the child but whose presence in her life was intermittent. Thus began Elisenda's journey of self rejection, modeled on the behavior of those around her within the confines of her own home. So she must find a way to satisfy her needs, and get the love and caring required by all humans for self actualization/self subjectification/self creation, the new guise that salvation takes in the modern era. This is Elisenda's truth.

Dante sought to escape the dismal darkness by climbing a hill bathed in sunlight, but the way is blocked by a leopard, a lion, and a she-wolf. As Elisenda struggles along the path to self-actualization she meets three beasts, each associated with her younger years. The first is Madre Legouvé, whom Elisenda encounters at the age of three years when she is sent to the Belén school, ostensibly to be educated in the ways of proper Catalan society and the Catholic Church. Her attempts to be herself, to express her will, are met with severe

discipline and humiliation. The second beast is encountered at the Sagrado Corazón boarding school where the intention was to "formarla como toda una señorita, de la misma forma que se habían educado todas las mujeres de su familia, su madre, su abuela, sus tías, sus primas, y separarla irremisiblemente durante tres eternos meses de Paquita [y] de mamá [...] (14). There she meets her nemesis the Madre General, whose cruelty lingers in her memory. The third beast is the boarding school Jesús y María, a "residencia de señoritas" where she is sent in a final attempt to properly socialize her after she is expelled from Sagrado Corazón.[7] There she is seduced by the teacher Jaime Bonavía, who affords her her first experience of exploitative, alienated love; she is diverted from her path. Whereas Dante meets two male and one female beast, Elisenda meets two females and one male beast prior to the entry into the pit of Hell.

While there is no single figure for Elisenda who serves as a guide to the underworld, as does Virgil for Dante, arguably the ideology of the love generation is what guides Elisenda in her travels through the hell she experiences. Whereas Dante visits upper Hell and lower Hell, passing through the walls of the city between the two and then crossing the river Styx, Elisenda crosses over from soft drugs and occasional tastes of heroin, with the more or less consensual sexual exploitation as part of the lifestyle she chooses, to hard core junk addiction, rape, and prostitution. The physical counterpart of the upper hell of Elisenda's *Inferno* is London and Paris, and lower Hell, the City of Dis, is Barcelona. Her crossing over takes place on the train between France and Spain.

The nadir of Dante's descent is Cocytus, where Lucifer is moored in ice; Elisenda hits bottom when the junk supply is cut off. Upon her arrival to

Barcelona she goes from a two or three times a week habit to daily doses, several a day. She is living by means of dealing on the junkie circuit and is confident of the business. Because supply and demand are up, she is able to avoid prostitution. This option is always looming on the horizon as an omnipresent opportunity, but "a Elisenda le parecían muy tontas [las prostitutas], porque siempre acababan dándole el dinero a algún hombre" (166). But when French police infiltrate the scene José Luis disappears, the supply dries up, and Elisenda hits bottom. She finds herself whoring on *las Ramblas* :

> [L]levaba casi dos meses suministrándose la "mandanga", y viviendo, si a eso que hacía se le podía llamar vivir, de arrastrarse por varias camas que ya le eran conocidas, soportando los manoseos y la jodienda de toda clase de tipos borrachos, maleducados y malolientes. (166-67)

As more time passes with no supply of heroin, she enters into a state of mind where she seems to absent herself from her body: "Todo su cuerpo era únicamente un colgajo de pieles. Tenía los huesos blandos y no la sostenían" (167). She is empty inside, as if there were too little of her to fill out her skin, her self being engulfed by the need to survive, the need for more junk. In this "skin game" she has truly entered into demon territory, where absolute need rules. Burroughs' term for this level of depravity is "The Algebra of Need":

> Junk yields a basic formula of "evil" virus: The Algebra of Need. The face of "evil" is always the face of total need. A dope fiend is a man [sic] in total need of dope. Beyond a certain frequency need knows absolutely no limit or control. In the words of total need: "Wouldn't you?" Yes you would. You would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do anything to satisfy total need. (Burroughs, "Introduction" xxxvii)

Indeed, at this point Elisenda would do anything to satisfy her need. But there is no heroin to be had. She is absolutely dependent on someone other than herself, who is dependent on someone else, and up and up the pyramid, to the top,

where the Algebra of Need serves to fatten pocketbooks without the least minimal concern for the junkies on the street who die daily for lack of a fix.

But this is not Elisenda's fate. Falcón has greater things in store for her protagonist than useless death. At the bottom of the pit, as Dante first casts his eyes on Lucifer he becomes conscious of sensing his own body differently; he does not suffer death, nor does he feel himself to be completely alive:

> Com' io devenni allor gelato e fioco,
> nol dimandar, lettor, ch'i' non lo scrivo,
> però ch'ogne parlar sarebbe poco.
> Io non mori' e non rimasi vivo;
> pensa oggimai per te, s'hai fior d'ingegno,
> qual io divenni, d'uno e d'altro privo. (34.22-27)[78]
>
> How chilled and nerveless, Reader, I felt then;
> do not ask me—I cannot write about it—
> there are no words to tell you how I felt.
>
> I did not die—I was not living either!
> Try to imagine, if you can imagine,
> me there, deprived of life and death at once.
> (Musa 187)

The chapter wherein Elisenda comes face to face with Evil is entitled "DEMON EST DEUS INVERSUS." Her withdrawl provokes a sort of delirium in which images and thoughts are juxtaposed in such a way so as to reveal the interrelatedness and correspondence between all her various quasi-mystical leanings: rock idols strung out on junk, "El Gran Mandala," death, Paris in '68, "el brahmano," the family, even Santa Teresa de Jesús: "Muerte, muerte, muerte, bam, bam, bam, bumbumbum, bam, bam. Muerte que las monjas decían esperar ilusionadas, 'vivo sin vivir en mí y muero porque no muero'" (176). At this crucial point, Katy and José Luis hear her utter these words:

> Señor mío Jesucristo, Dios y Hombre verdadero, Creador Padre, Redentor mío, porque os amo sobre todas las cosas, me pesa de todo corazón haberos ofendido y también porque podéis

> castigarme con las penas del Infierno, porque "Evil" el mal se lee al revés, "live", la vida, y empezar es empezar a preparar cuidadosamente el curso de la acción y dar, sorprendentemente, un paso al frente, da un paso al frente y sostente firme que ha empezado la vida y allí está el Infierno. "Demon est deus inversus..." (177)

José Luis arrives with a fix. Elisenda's need is satisfied, but he injects too much into her vein. Her lips turn purple and her cheeks pale. At Katy's desperate insistence, she and José Luis send her off to the hospital in a cab. Thus ends the torturous period of addiction and slavery to José Luis, both pimp and pusher. Thus ends the downward spiral Elisenda has followed, and thus ends her trip through hell.

The passage through which Virgil leads Dante follows along the "shaggy sides" of Lucifer, between the devil and the frozen ice. Upon passing the center point of the earth, Virgil leads Dante up stairs through a jagged crevice. They enter a rocky dungeon-like place, and as Dante has seen Lucifer's legs positioned feet upward, he is confused. Virgil explains that Dante and he have passed over to the other hemisphere, having moved away from "the hairy worm of rottenness that pierces the earth's core." This other hemisphere is ruled by "the Man whose birth and life were free of sin" (Musa 190). The two pilgrims then follow a little stream "through the hollow of a rock that it has worn" (Musa 191) and come through a hole to once again see the stars. Since they have passed the center of the earth and are now in the southern hemisphere, what was the dawning of a new day, the much awaited light toward which Dante travels, is now a starlit night. The imagery of this lightened darkness is most appropriate, for Dante's pilgrimage now leads him not directly to salvation but through Purgatory.

For Elisenda the taxi ride is her passage out of hell. As to her imminent "salvation," which would be first her cure and then her taking up a life which enables self actualization as self creation, (self-subjectification, in Foucault's terminology) there remains some doubt. Isabel, her loyal friend who has been with her every day in the hospital, asks her what she plans to do next. Elisenda thinks about going back on the road and becoming more profoundly hooked on heroin "o quizá el opio que es más exótico" (185); but then Isabel informs her that Elisa Vilaró, Elisenda's friend from *Sagrado Corazón*, has been released from prison. The news leads her to ponder "la inutilidad de su vida, transcurrida entre seres amargos y piojosos, mientras Elisa luchaba por un mundo mejor, y soportaba torturas y cárceles por alcanzarlo" (187). The respect she feels for Elisa coupled with the admiration she now senses for the independent, "liberated" Isabel inspire her to transformation.

However, Elisenda's hope for changing her life is attenuated by that which all Elisa's caregivers recognize and all the junkies know: "Todos vuelven, todos vuelven [...] todos, tú también, tú también volverás, volverás," the refrain repeats. "En teoría el drogadicto puede curarse," affirms the specialist, "con tener la suficiente fuerza de voluntad para no volver a inyectarse ni a 'snifar'" (191). So in spite of her decision to travel with Gina to Brussels for the Tribunal on Crimes Against Women,[79] any optimism based her possibilities for a new life are shaded by the reality of her junk habit. Elisenda will have to pass through a period of purification before she can be completely free to develop herself outside the confines of the dictates of addiction.

Sheer will to overcome is the only power that can really save her, and for Elisenda this is intimately connected with the availability of alternatives.

Heretofore she has felt herself to be trapped between living on the road and returning to the life her family and Francoist norms of female behavior expect of her. Some alternative to these two options is imperative in order that Elisenda muster the will to avoid them, in order to be a survivor. Elvira Siurana argues that this is precisely what Falcón creates in this novel:

> En la historia de Elisenda hay muerte y locura, también creación y deseo. Tras los 60 ya nada volvería a ser igual. Se habían abierto 'las puertas de la percepción'. Los movimientos feminista, pacifista, ecologista . . . que crecieron en los 70 y que cerrarán el siglo, comieron muchas papillas en la olla del hippismo. Los supervivientes, y los hubo, tuvieron que encontrar nuevas alternativas.
>
> Y Lidia, afortunadamente tiene alternativa para Elisenda que al final de su "trip" reencuentra a Elisa Vilaró, a Gina, a la inefable Isabel y con ellas emprende, ahora sí, su nuevo viaje. (51)

Thus the promise of liberation is hers, for the feminist movement will guide her to salvation.

SALVATION, HEAVEN, AND HELL

In the Dantesqe universe, salvation is gained by movement from dark to light, as the pilgrim moves from being lost in the dark wood, through the rings of Hell, and out into the open sky once again (albeit into a starry night, as he has not yet reached the full glory of God's light), and ultimately to Heaven. In *El juego* the movement from dark to light is that of going from bourgeois Christian upbringing through a life of aimless wandering always at the disposal of men, to the light of the feminist movement and the aid of a sisterhood. Feminism plays the role of a new religion, just as Elisenda had thought the love generation would. This equating of feminism with salvation is one of the more naive elements of this novel (and perhaps of 1970s feminism) which Falcón will

downplay though never quite relinquish in later works. The treatment of the salvation motif in this work is ironic, since Elisenda is running away from Christian ideals institutionalized in the form of convent schools and national-Catholicism in order to achieve her salvation.

Regarding hell in Burroughs and hell in Falcón the most obvious correlation is that addiction is hell. John Ciardi described Burroughs' early work as a "monumentally moral descent into the hell of narcotics addiction" (30). But as Burroughs' biographer Ted Morgan observes:

> Burroughs sees addiction as a general condition not limited to drugs. Politics, religion, the family, love, are all forms of addiction. In the post-Bomb society, all the mainstays of the social order have lost their meaning, and bankrupt nation-states are run by "control addicts." (Charters 104)[80]

In this interpretation of Burroughs' hell, culture based on the market economy of capitalism breeds addictions of all sorts. Heroin addiction functions metaphorically to point to behaviors bred by capitalism, like consumerism and other compulsive behaviors necessitated upon it. John Ciardi also points to particular behavior which may be included under the rubric of "addiction":

> [W]hat Burroughs is writing about is not only the destruction of depraved men by their drug lust, but the destruction of all men [sic] by their consuming addictions, whether the addiction by drugs or over-righteous propriety, lasciviousness or sixteen-year-old girls. (30)

Ten years after Burroughs' works were first translated and made available to Spanish readers a special edition of *Quimera* dedicated to the author was released: "Dossier Burroughs."[81] Among its articles is "El sistema del infierno según W. S. Burroughs" by Miguel Morey, which takes into account not only *Naked Lunch* but also many of the later works.[82] Morey's understanding of

Burroughs' hell is even more inclusive than the earlier versions, and turns on the idea of the virus:

> [S]u characterización de nuestro ahora: es el infierno. Un universo de adictos: a las palabras, a las imágenes, a las representaciones-objeto, a nuestras propias necesidades... Encontramos frecuentemente el mismo fantasma en las obras de Burroughs: un personaje trata de apoderarse de la vida de otro; los procedimientos son múltiples, también las situaciones, pero la relación se mantiene constante. Es la metáfora del virus. Y este modelo, en sus mil versiones posibles, es los que hay que abandonar: sea por mutación biológica, por conversión psicológica, apoyándose en la revolución electrónica o mediante el 'fije definitivo'. Cualquier estrategia es válida si nos sirve para abandonar este infierno que es el mundo de las addiciones. [...] Se trata de salir de aquí. (Morey 46)

At this point the question is: What human activity is not infected by the virus? There is a kind of nihilism operant here that only death itself can heal, since we shall never escape our own needs. Burroughs' project is, ultimately, iconoclastic. He poses no solution, and there is no salvation:

> His work [...] portrays a total assault on the human form and a response equally total. Action and reaction merge in that apocalyptic destruction of creation that is the complete metaphor of outrage. (Hassan, "Novel" 252)

Given the thoroughgoing nihilism of Burroughs, it can be argued that Falcón is more akin to Dante. She poses a solution, offers salvation. For Dante the light is attainable and heaven is within the realm of possibilities, ahead on the path. In *El juego* the option exists, even though it is is not fully described but rather only hinted at. The feminist movement promises to provide for Elisenda a real alternative to what appears to be her only options: the culture in which she was raised, or the counterculture. Feminism is described very little; the movement is not mentioned per se. In the construction of characters and in the development of a feminist ethics, Falcón traces the profile of this "mode of salvation" and holds it out for Elisenda and the reader to observe and ponder.

Her filling out of the profile, i.e., detailing of the movement, its activities, and opportunities it opens up for women, is documented in her next novels *Rupturas* and *Camino sin retorno.*

TOWARDS A FEMINIST ETHICS

Among the female characters who construe the feminist ethics in *El juego de la piel* it is Isabel who embodies the ideal of the feminist heroine. She is a role model for Falcón's protagonist and for her readers. Isabel is independent: she lives off her salary without help from outside sources. Elisenda admires her well groomed friend, who wears an attractive suit and has every hair in place, and who "había hecho en la vida exactamente aquello que deseaba" (187):

> [N]o había cumplido, al terminar el período escolar, con sus expectativas de señorita bien de provincias. Había despreciado varios pretendientes de la mejor sociedad natal, se trasladó a Barcelona, donde decidió vivir sola, y se mantenía con su trabajo sin requerir la ayuda de sus familiares. Y, lo más sorprendente, tampoco se le conocían amores ni relaciones íntimas, cuya existencia justifiacara su vida independiente. (187)

It is noteworthy that Isabel is uninvolved in sexual relationships; in the evolution of her fiction Falcón has not as of yet posited relationships between the sexes which are equitable. Indeed, the course of her novels seems to be in part a search for this very possibility.

Nevertheless Isabel voices some elements constitutive of this prospect. When Elisenda attends the *Jesús y María* school in Barcelona she is seduced by the teacher Jaime Bonavía, who gives the near-starving student nothing more that a bouquet of carnations for the night of love she shared with him. Upon hearing of this escapade, Isabel is enraged:

> –Una docena de claveles blancos a una muchacha que está muerta de hambre. Muy práctico y sobre todo muy alimenticio. Tres frases bonitas sobre tu virginidad y una sonrisa comprensiva, más allá del bien y el mal, de un hombre de cincuenta. ¡Qué guayabo, carumba! ¡Y qué barato!...
> –No, Isabel, por favor, no... No lo juzgues así. Bonavía es un hombre sensible, bueno, tierno. Tiene unas manos muy bonitas, grandes y carnosas, y una piel suave...
> –¡Y ni siquiera fue capaz de proporcionarte un orgasmo! (49)

Isabel's discourse, and particularly her concern with female orgasm and with Elisenda's prerogative for an equal share in sexual satisfaction, stands in stark contrast to the concrete reality of Elisenda's experiences.

If there is any figure in this work who approximates the role of guide (like Virgil, who had already been there and could lead the way to salvation) it is Isabel. She is the one who takes Elisenda to Paris for an abortion when as a teenager she became pregnant while vagabonding on the island of Ibiza, "una de las mecas de la ruta beat" (Siurana 50). She is the one who visits Elisenda in London and in Paris, feeding and clothing her, trying to convince her to go back home. Isabel is the one who transports Elisenda back to Barcelona to remove her from the nefarious clutches of José Luis. And it is Isabel who is with her in the hospital daily as Elisenda clings to life, in the hopes that her friend will find a better way.

Through the voice of Isabel, Falcón makes direct reference to the *Primeras Jornadas Nacionales por la Liberación de la Mujer* which she attended and of which she apprises Elisenda:

> Parece que las cosas empiezan a cambiar en España. Con esto del año Internacional de la Mujer se ha celebrado muchas reuniones en Barcelona y en Madrid. Ahora mismo vengo de asistir a unas Jornadas de Liberación en Madrid, pseudo-clandestinas todavía, porque nadie sabe qué va a pasar ahora después de la muerte de Franco. No han estado mal... Muy manipuladas por el PCE, como

> siempre, pero se atisban ya la formación de grupos feministas... (148)

Through Isabel Elisenda is reunited with Gina, who provides an alternative to returning to either her family or the tired-death-junk-trap-needles-cash-whoring route of life on the road. It is she who invites Elisenda to travel to Belgium for the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women.

Perhaps most importantly, in the end it is Isabel who enables Elisenda (and Gina) to see through the mirage of the ideology of the love generation:

> En fin, que ese bonito mundo en el que os metistéis para vivir sólo de amor y de hermandad, está hecho de prostitución, miseria y drogas. Pues vaya negocio, amigas. [...] La verdad es que yo había creído que se trataba únicamente de acostarse con los mozos que le gustaran a una por aquello de la hermandad universal y de dejarse de prejuicios morales [...]. (195)

The contrast between "aquello de la hermandad universal" and "el negocio" brings into relief the apparatus of sexuality which the ideology of the love generation in part constituted. The feminist ethic embodied by Isabel is the counter-current to the apparatus. Feminism poses a discourse counter to the exploitation of women, and Elisenda is now able to begin to perceive the dimensions of the machinery of the apparatus. Thus Isabel is the agent of that most central of feminist activities: consciousness raising.

Apart from and in addition to the positive model embodied in Isabel, Falcón also constructs a feminist ethics through the creation of negative role models, that is, she shows a variety of options which for women are destructive. Elisenda meets women who constitute a counter-discourse to a feminist ethic. A prime example of such negative coding is the character Agnés. Falcón's description of Agnés shows that, like Elisenda, she has fallen prey to the ideology of the "love generation":

> Se había escapado de la casa de su marido abandonando dos niños pequeños, para acogerse a los brazos de Louis que le prometió una vida de inquietudes y angustias espirituales, de mucha más calidad que la de baja estofa que soportaba al lado de su marido y de su suegra, lavando niños, guisando comidas y haciendo punto. (39)

Louis and Agnés live in the "guru" commune, where they practice transcendental meditation, contemplate karma, and engage in levitation. But underneath the alternative lifestyle is the sinister reality of Agnés' exploitation: she has resorted to turning tricks in the park with tourists in order to bring in some money, so they can eat. This means of earning money was Louis' idea; when Agnés refused at first, he beat her until she was unconscious. She finally acquiesced.

As Elisenda takes note of her bruises, Agnés relates her story, with Louis sitting nearby (supposedly) in deep meditation; the sinister and morbid atmosphere strike fear into the heart of Elisenda as she listens to Agnés vent her anger. Her fit intensifies and as Loius comes out of his meditation to attend to Agnés Elisenda, fearing a violent episode, escapes. She is awakened hours later by the news that Agnés has hanged herself from a tree. While the image of her companion's hopeless end will repeatedly haunt her, at that moment "Elisenda no se emocionó porque ya hacía mucho tiempo que sabía que Dios no existía" (44).

Another element of the counter-ethic posited by Falcón is the character María, described in the chapter "YO QUIERO DARLO TODO." This Yugoslavian beauty, with her "largos cabellos negros y vestiduras indias, que cantaba unas melódicas canciones con dulce voz" (129) spends her time singing in the metro, accepting coins from the passers-by. She goes from station to station joining groups of friends, male musicians who would not otherwise collect so much money. They divide the take equally and María runs to the next spot with her

meager share, ready to help other starving artists earn some much needed cash. And then she goes to the next, and the next, and the next, up to twelve hours a day.

> Pero soy feliz, ¿sabes? porque yo deseo darlo todo, todo, a mis amigos. El dinero no tiene más importancia que porporcionarte una buena "pirada" y un plato de espaguetis. En cambio la amistad y el amor son lo más importante de la vida, ¿verdad? (129)

One of Maria's idols is Patti Smith.[83] She tells Elisenda about an occasion when she was able to see Smith perform. Without money at the time, and hoping to get into the concert somehow, María meets an American at the door: "me pagó la entrada y hasta luego me convidó a una salchicha antes de irnos a la cama... El amor y la fraternidad universal cambiará el mundo, ¿verdad Elisée?" (130). Perhaps it is the blatancy of María's exploitation, or the way she embraces it wholeheartedly, reinforced by the same ideological principles by which Elisenda operates, that turn Elisenda away from her. As Elisenda leaves María behind, she is glad for the encounter, since she now understands about herself that "corrían por el mundo muchachas más simples que ella" (130).

Another secondary female character constitutive of the feminist counter-ethic is Jacqueline. She is the daughter of a bourgeois who provides her with a monthly pension, enabling her to pay for an apartment where Parisian beatniks and hippies are welcome to eat, sleep, bathe, and make love. Jacqueline lives there with her husband and baby, finding in the company of her visitors reprieve from her housewifely boredom. While Elisenda recurs to Jacqueline for food, "pensó que aquello de casarse y de tener niños, mientras los padres seguían manteniendo a la joven pareja y a sus retoños, era un mal rollo" (134). While Jacqueline believes that in her generosity to the countercultural vagabonds she is

constructing a new world, she eventually comes to see through the illusion of her ideals.

One day Elisenda shows up to gorge herself on breakfast and then spends an inordinate amount of time bathing with expensive products provided by her generous host, without taking any interest in Jacqueline. This precipitates a change in Jacqueline; something snaps:

> ¡Estoy harta, entendéis! ¡Colección de gorrones, vagos, sinvergüenzas! ¡Coméis, ensuciáis, folláis, os aprovecháis de mi casa¡ y ¿qué dais a cambio? ¡Bonita solidaridad! El niño está siempre pringado, lleno de mierda, de orines, y nadie es capaz de atenderlo... El niño debía ser hijo de todos, aprender a vivir en comunidad, y ¿para qué si la única que me preocupo por él soy yo? (142)

In addition to condemning the hypocrisy of the communal ideal, Jacqueline laments her lack of compensation, particularly from her husband who has bought-in to the collective sex ethic, availing himself to free and easy sex and ceasing to make love to his wife. Elisenda abandons the apartment and again finds herself on the street.

SEXUAL RELATIONS AND THE APPARATUS OF SEXUALITY IN *EL JUEGO DE LA PIEL*

After the scene at Jacqueline's apartment, Elisenda has nowhere to go. Half asleep in a doorway, she is picked up by Michael, a complete stranger, who takes her home. She is raped in his apartment, and during the ordeal songs of Janis Joplin fill the air. The juxtaposition of the songs' lyrics, which form part of the discourse of sexuality constitutive of the ideology of the love generation,[84] and the violence of sex Elisenda experiences, points to the disparity between the

ideal of love touted by this spokesperson of the counterculture and the reality of the sexual exploitation of women which was rampant within the movement.

Elisenda believes that her training in the convent school conditioned her for the acceptance of ideas such as "regalando el mundo" and "quiero darlo todo," adopted by Jacqueline and María. The standard of self abnegation had been taught to her by Madre Cervelló who first put into her hands the "Diario de Ana María." Among its precepts were:

> Para mí me basta una sola cosa: darme a fondo a los demás, ante todo porque los hombres y el mundo entero tienen necesidad de amor. En segundo lugar, porque el Señor no tiene morada más que donde hay amor auténtico. Por último, porque para mí es el único medio de aprender a amar... Seré pura cuando me habré dado toda, olvidándome totalmente [...] (146)

Elisenda's analysis of this aspect of her own history is simple: "Lo que pasa es que siempre nos están metiendo rollos en la cabeza, pero como piensan que somos tontas no se preocupan" (147). Intelectually she rejects the Catholic morality, but she continues to be conditioned by it.

Father Bosch had also predicated lessons which moved Elisenda toward her free attitude about sex. In his effort to steer the girls away from their own sexed natures, he preached the giving of oneself, the conferring upon others the love which comes from God by means of acts of charity, obedience to one's parents, and chaste kindliness toward brothers and friends. These teachings incited an opposite response in Elisenda: "Ella siempre pensó que aquellos rollos estaban bien para las pacatas e ignorantes de sus compañeras, por eso se precipitó a acostarse con Enrique" (147). In her rebellion against religion only an abortion could save her.

Alienation from herself, the estrangement or emotional distancing from her own body which is so evident in her behavior, also derives from her religious upbringing. Elisenda distinctly recalls one episode indicative of this conditioning. During a night of insomnia when she was eleven years old she takes to reading under her bedcovers with a lantern. She is discovered by Madre Font, who violently removes the blankets to find the girl absorbed in her book. To her great surprise, she is subjected to the gravest reproach on account of her "pecado contra la modestia y la pureza" (54). To alleviate the heat, she had removed her pajama top while hiding under covers to hide the light. She did not relate her half nudity to any lack of purity, even though since she had first attended school she was told that to look at certain parts of her body was a sin:

> Pero hasta aquel momento de sus recién estrenados once años, la parte de su anatomía que desarrollaba de la cintura para arriba no había sido todavía censurada en las instrucciones de sus maestras, cuyas prohibiciones de tocar y de mirar sólo corresponían hasta entonces al trozo de su persona que se extendía de la cintura para abajo. (55)

The ability of Elisenda to allow men to fondle her, to penetrate her, to use her for their own satisfaction without the least minimal concern for her own satisfaction or even for her well being, can be traced back to this kind of treatment, which conditioned her to deny her own self knowledge and self satisfaction in favor of obedience to the ideological dictates of the Catholic Church.

The sexual escapades in which Elisenda finds herself involved are nearly all examples of alienated love. In the opening scene of the novel she is unable to extricate herself from under the heavy legs of Ramón, and when she finally manages to get comfortable, his elbows dig into her ribs, his hands find her breasts and then he is on top of her, inside her, "resoplando y echando espumilla

por la boca" (9). She is too stoned to know how she became undressed, or to protest the overwhelmingly repugnant advances of Ramón. She met Jaime selling tambourines on the street and went home with him. She recurs to Oscar when she has nowhere else to eat or sleep and noting his eyes on her thighs, she "sintió un tirón en el estomago, simultáneo al recuerdo [...] de aquellas noches pasadas en la cama del gigante" (86). It is not much different with Gabriel, whom she believes herself to love in a special way: "Ella sintió sobre sí misma el peso, el sudor, el olor de un hombre que casi la parecía desconocido, repugnante [...] (28-29).

One night in the crowded commune she feels a hand on her leg as she tries to doze off in her sleeping bag laid out on the floor. From among the sleeping mass of bodies she cannot determine whose hand is trying to ease her into another session of "jodienda diaria" (68). That night she has an anguished dream:

> Los tenía a todos encima. Ramón, Asun, Gabriel, Helmut, Louis, incluso muchos más [...]. Y todos le exigían hacer el amor a la vez. Todos por igual. [...] La masa de personas se removía y se agitaba encima de ella y sabía que iba a morir aplastada por aquel peso, pero no podía decir que no, no podía preferir a uno en rechazo de los otros. Tenía que aceptarlos todos a la vez, y a cada minuto se ahogaba más. (68)

She awakens with a keen sense that "así no podía seguir" (68) yet she is unable to find another path, another way to live. Her explanation of this behavior rings like a refrain of trite truisms:

> Tenemos que querernos todos. No hay que hacer distinciones. Eso es cosas de burguesas. Lo del matrimonio monógamo y la pareja y todas esas 'mandangas'. [...] Sólo así se cambiará el mundo. El amor fraternal y universal cambiará el mundo. Hemos de amarnos y de ser amados recíprocamente, ¿no comprende? Si no todo seguirá seindo guerras y torturas y todo eso. Si no cambiamos por dentro, y nos hacemos más amables y más cariñosas, tampoco

> cambiará nada en la sociedad. Yo tengo que quererlos a todos igual. (67)

Such is the ideology of the love generation. This kind of thinking, coupled with the alienation from her own body learned in the tenets of Catholicism, keep Elisenda locked into sustaining continuously repeating patterns of exploitative behavior. Time and again she comes to see clearly what she is doing to herself, the mechanism by which her subjugation operates, and the nihilism of her self destructive behavior. In a moment of lucidity she confronts the truth, recognizing

> aquella parodia de hermandad que representaba la comuna, de la que sobre todo salían beneficiados los macarras de los compañeros. Se sobresaltó de reconocerse capaz de pensar tal cosa. Pero así era, se repetió. Todas perniabiertas ante Gabriel y Ramón y Louis, y cualquiera que quisiera llegar a follarlas, y sin comer y sin abrigo. [...] Aquel amor en el que siempre había creído se convertía, finalmente, en veinte jadeos y empujones y una humedad viscosa entre las piernas. (147)

She comes to understand the words of her mother: "para ser puta y no ganar nada, más vale ser mujer honrada" (148). She sees that all the "counterculture" women she knows, including herself, "ya no eran más que un sexo abierto a los impacientes penes de los tíos" (148).

This consciousness might have been enough to liberate Elisenda from her addiction to the ideology of the love generation, but at this point the heroin takes over and she goes even deeper into the hell of sexual exploitation. Sex stops when she is using junk, except for prostitution. José Luis is uninterested in sex, but when the junk dries up so does Elisenda's income. When withdrawal makes her ill, and José Luis has her in his absolute control (since only he can supply her) he takes the money she has earned, serving seemingly as her pimp.[85] The portrayal of the interrelatedness of drug addiction and prostitution has didactic

ends in this work. Women's sexuality is used to keep the machine of the heroin market alive. Whereas Falcón shows the microsystem of women's exploitation, Burroughs outlines the macro-view:

> The pyramid of junk, one level eating the level below (it is no accident that junk higher-ups are always fat and the addict in the street is always thin) right up to the top or tops since there are many junk pyramids feeding on peoples of the world and all built on basic principles of monopoly [...]. The Pusher always gets it all back. The addict needs more and more junk to maintain a human form [...]. Junk is the mold of monopoly and possession. [...] Junk is the ideal product... the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy... The junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. [...] and junk is big industry. (Intro xxxvi-xxxvii)

If the junkie is the paradigmatic exploited consumer, doubly so is the female junkie who prostitutes herself. Falcón in another context calls prostitution "la máxima explotación sexual" and characterizes the practice as "[e]l más próspero negocio de todos los tiempos para los hombres" (*Razón* 85).

But sexuality in *El juego* is much more than prostitution, for there are many shades of sexual exploitation. For Elisenda sex has exchange value, it is a means of survival, fulfilling her basic needs of food and shelter, and at times for heroin. Sex either works as currency or it gets her currency. It is bolstered by the ideology of the love generation, or by absolute need.

There are a few exceptions to this pattern. While at *José y María* she falls in love with Rosaura, and they carry on a fairly inconsequential lesbian love affair until Rosaura leaves and marries the boy from her home town. Tradition brings an end to that real love that Elisenda felt. She later develops a special love for Gabriel, but the conventions of the commune prevent them from forming the bond their love might otherwise engender. He later commits suicide, and it is

reported that Elisenda is the reason. Juan, the man who pays her for sex, seems to really care for Elisenda, and probably would have taken care of her had José Luis not returned. Isabel and Gina love Elisenda, but these relationships do not entail sex. While love is a rare commodity for Elisenda, sex is not. And her mistaking sex for love is central to the apparatus of sexuality.

It will be recalled that in Foucault's conception of the "apparatus of sexuality" discourses, laws, institutions, administrative measures, social practices, and philosophical and moral propositions are elements (there are others) which make up "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble." The ensemble is constituted by a "system of relations" which jointly constitute "a sort of formation" which "has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need." In fulfilling this urgent need the apparatus "has a dominant strategic function" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 194-95).

In *El juego de la piel* women are exploited as a class. The male hippies of the love generation are sustained economically by the women; the women work to support the men. Agnés is sent out to whore by Louis, so he can continue his meditation unhampered by mundane responsibilities. Jacqueline's pension supports her husband and all the others who frequent their place. María spends her days singing in the metro, taking only a small portion of the money paid by passersby attracted to her melodious voice. José Luis has Katy and Elisenda dealing for him, and they are consumers as well. He profits doubly from them. Oscar uses Elisenda as a mule to carry hash to France for him. Gabriel smokes marijuana all day and dreams while Elisenda works at their market stall selling tambourines. The only one outside this circle of exploitation is Isabel.

What discourses, laws, institutions, administrative measures, social practices, and philosophical and moral propositions make up the ensemble which keeps this class exploitation in place? By what system of relations does this formation operate? What is the strategic function of the apparatus? What urgent need is fulfilled in this functioning? Such are the questions which arise when applying Foucault's methodological analysis to Falcón's novel.

The practices which constitute the apparatus are those moments of alienated love in which the women find themselves engaged: sex is currency used to procure money, food, shelter, and drugs. For the men sex serves the function of providing physical satisfaction. This imbalance points to the fact that for each of the sexes, sexual activity serves separate interests. In the cases where the men are in possession of housing and money, the women gain access to these by engaging with the men, and this engagement nearly always includes sex. When the men are bereft of basic necessities, the women are expected to provide, in some cases they are coerced into prostitution to do so.

The basic reason that this interdependency exists is that the characters in *El juego de la piel* exist within the larger cultural framework of the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. A prevalent ideological construct of the movement was the idea of dropping out of the system, "tune-in, turn-on, drop-out" in the famous words of Timothy Leary. Elisenda's language for this sentiment includes terms such as "ese rollo," "cosas de burgueses," "el refugio de la familia." While she recites the canonical maxims of the hippie movement, Elisenda lacks a well developed philosophy which might give meaning to her current existence; she has taken on this life more out of rejection of and reaction to her own past than out of any proactive position. Throughout the novel she

recognizes the vacuousness of her lifestyle. The tension that arises between her inner awareness of the truth of her own discomfort and the outward show of solidarity with the ideological constructs of the love generation evinces an almost universal phenomenon among women of her generation.

Laws, institutions, administrative measures, and philosophical and moral propositions all play a role in forming the relations of the apparatus of sexuality in *El juego*. The elemental motivation for Elisenda's behavior is alienation from herself and lack of alternatives, both predicated on Francoist national-Catholicism as manifest in the Verdiell family, the schools she attended, and Spanish society at large. The illegality of both prostitution and the drug trade keep Elisenda subject to those with the power to control the relations of production and consumption within each. In *El juego* those in control are men, until the closing scene that is, which holds the promise of a whole new range of possibilities for women.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS - *El juego de la piel*

This chapter has examined Lidia Falcón's *El juego de la piel* in light of William S. Burroughs and *Naked Lunch*, the *Inferno*, feminist ethics, sexual relations, and the apparatus of sexuality. A key concept that includes and unites each of these themes is that of the "skin game." This metaphor for the transformation of identity is the intersection of Falcón's and Burroughs' literary projects. It appears in the text below:

> Only excuse for this tired death route is THE KICK when the junk circuit is cut off for the non-payment and overdose of time and the Old Skin has forgotten the skin game simplifying a way under the junk cover the way skins will. . . . A condition of total exposure is precipitated when the Kicking Addict cannot choose but see smell and listen. . . . (Burroughs, Introduction xlii)
>
> La única excusa para esta agotada ruta de muerte es la sensación cuando el circuito de la droga se cierra por falta de pago y la piel drogada se muere por falta de droga y sobredosis de tiempo y la Piel Vieja ha olvidado el juego de la piel acortando el camino cubierto por la droga como hacen las pieles... Se precipita un estado de exposición total cuando el Adicto Golpeante no puede sino ver, oler y oír... (Falcón, *El juego de la piel* 161)

Close examination suggests that this translation falls short on accuracy. In either language, because of the drug, one self goes below while another surfaces. Thus the skin game is a play of identities, as identity is tied inexorably to the body. This doubly enfolded corporeal metaphor is an apt one for Elisenda, for the layers of self she exhibits/manifests/ becomes are multiple and as she becomes more accustomed to the drug she changes and becomes more and more the slave to male desire.

In so doing Elisenda thinks she is escaping the life conditions that have made her miserable. She tries to actualize the mind-body split, to achieve a separation between her concrete reality and her emotional/psychological experience: she tries to live strictly as new skin. The attempt to achieve this dualism is unsuccessful, for the reality of the body will not allow the mind to forget its existence. The skin game is absolute. The only way she can survive is to kick the habit, and so her story becomes one of the challenge of exercising will power over herself. The Old Skin must remember the skin game in order to come out from under the cover, gain a new (clean) skin, form a healthy identity and build a satisfying life. To get out of Hell, and then Purgatory, to not shoot

up any more or seek escape in dead-end outlets, to stay clean, all this requires tremendous strength of will.

Thematically, this ultimate exercise of will is Burroughs' principal focus in *Naked Lunch*. For him the ultimate evil is "the collapse of individual will and identity rather than the possibly illegal or immoral acts the addict-in-need might perpetuate" (Lyndenberg 76). The system that encourages and patronizes "absolute need" can only be overcome by the exercise of will. But once that will is harnessed, the energy of the individual must have direction for creative and meaningful outlet. Whereas for Falcón setting a course for future action is of primary importance, for Burroughs it is not the principal issue:

> Burroughs is not just concerned with objectifying the possible directions of the moral will. He is doing instead something that could not possibly have been done without the precondition of a full-flowered drug traffic: writing a book in which the only alternatives are absolute [...] will or its absolute lack. (Mc Connel 669)

Objectifying directions for the moral will is equivalent to outlining possible paths of action, possible ways of comporting oneself, of making choices. This Falcón does by opening up the possibility of feminist action to Elisenda. In *El juego de la piel* the iconoclastic Burroughs meets the feminist Falcón. Elisenda is challenged to muster the will to survive, and she is afforded directions for the exercise of this will.

In the end her healing and transformation come about by way of a dream. Confronting her own need to change her lifestyle, to construct for herself a life full of meaning and devoid of the emotional scarring which has heretofore strapped her, Elisenda blames those outside herself for her plight. She thinks that the life she has adopted will change the world, even though it has destroyed

countless young people and nearly destroyed her. She dreams of her friend Elisa Vilaró, the recently released political prisoner. She argues with Elisa in her dream:

> ¿Y tú? ¿acaso no has soñado con un mundo mejor en el que participar, y por eso te has metido en todo ese rollo de la política? Pues yo no te digo nada, y tú ya estás reprochándome, como todo el mundo, como mamá y Enrique y Vicente, y hasta el pelma de Pedro, que antes parecía progre y fíjate lo carroza que está; Isabel y tú, y todos. ¡Todos persiguiéndome, todos fastidiándome con consejos, recomendaciones, reproches! ¡Ya estoy harta, entiendes! (189)

In the dream Elisa responds: "Los reproches te los haces tú, nadie te ha dicho nada. Eres tú la que estás descontenta contigo misma, bien lo sabes" (189). This insight allows her to realize that "el alcohol, los porros, el ácido y las picadas, sustituyeron los consuelos pueriles, en forma de chuparse los dedos, morderse las uñas, o comer caramelos y chocolates (190). She confronts the monsters of her past. Her self destructive fixation is at an end. The promise of freedom and engagement in meaningful activity is on the horizon.

Thus Elisenda's story ends with the subtheme of political action, just as it began on September 22, 1975, the day after the FRAP and ETA executions which caused worldwide scandal at the atrocities of the Franco regime. Elisa, without ever actually appearing in this novel, turns out to be a key figure in Elisenda's final transformation, thus setting the stage for Falcón's strongly political *Camino sin retorno*, in which Elisa is the principal female protagonist and her tales of political activism and life in prison take center stage. Thus Lidia Falcón constructs a political response to the apolitical escapist ethic posited by Burroughs and the "tune-in, turn-on, drop-out" culture of the 1970s.

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CHAPTER 5

RUPTURAS

Lidia Falcón's third published novel, *Rupturas*, can be considered Falcón's best example of what Rita Felski considers "the genre which is most clearly identified with contemporary feminist writing . . . the narrative of female self-discovery, in which access to self-knowledge is seen to require an explicit refusal of the heterosexual romance plot" (122). *Rupturas* is the story of one year in the life of Elena, a forty-five year old woman living in Barcelona in 1979. Elena works as a history professor at the university where she is completing her doctoral thesis. Her daughter and son are adults -- Alejandrito lives with his insipid wife Mercedes, and Carlota is in the process of leaving home to take up residence with her fiancé Juan. Elena's husband Alejandro is an unsuccessful businessman whose continual failures are a source of frustration; they leave him dependent economically on Elena and foster a crisis in his sense of male identity. This lack of satisfactory ego-identification leads Alejandro to lash out at the outside world, and in particular against Elena and "her" children, as he refers to them.

Apart from family entanglements, Elena is involved in a love affair with Miguel, a colleague from the history department. The relationship is unsatisfying to her however, for Miguel's family life ostensibly prevents him from being as fully engaged with Elena as he would like. Other secondary characters of importance are María Luisa, a long time friend and confidante, and María José, the history department's secretary, who initiates Elena into activities of the feminist movement.

Rupturas is divided into two parts of equal length. Part I constitutes an iconoclastic attack on women's state through the prism of Elena's consciousness. The details of Elena's frustrations and miseries are depicted in a way that enables the reader to sympathize with her plight and with her need to make radical changes in her life if she is to garner a modicum of satisfaction for her travails. Part II is reconstructive, in the sense that Elena takes steps to make changes in her life. These steps are related directly to her involvement with feminism. The burgeoning sense of self respect and dignity gleaned through participation with women's consciousness raising groups and political action allow Elena to break with relationships, attitudes, and behaviors that have heretofore prevented her from developing fully into the person she wishes to be. Elena's quest is emblematic of that of the millions of women for whom the women's liberation movement "[a]t its core," as Mary Daly states, "means the self-actualization of creative human potential in the struggle against oppression" (264).

Falcón's title *Rupturas* brings into relief the necessity and centrality of the breaks Elena makes in order to move into new territory in her life's terrain. She represents an entire generation of women coming into full maturity as the second wave feminist movement came into being in post-Franco Spain. Regarding the "nuevas formas de feminismo" in the period 1982-1988 in Spain Pilar Folguera writes:

> El fenómeno más importante que se ha producido [...] durante estos años es la existencia de una corriente de opinión entre las mujeres que se orienta hacia la ruptura de viejas pautas de comportamiento, y rechaza las actitudes patriarcales de los sistemas de poder y de los hombres. Esta actitud de ruptura se refleja en las mujeres de diferentes edades, clases sociales y profesiones, y se plasma en un creciente deseo de alcanzar una independencia en lo económico y en lo afectivo, en lo personal y en lo profesional. ("Transición" 130)

Arguably Falcón's novel, published in 1985, relates one particular woman's experience of this reality, which came to be widespread among women of post-transition Spain. Again, as in her previous works, Falcón's fiction serves to chronicle a now commonly recognized set of historical phenomena.

Two themes which recur and give structure to this narrative are that of generations and that of becoming. With respect to the question of generations, at the outset of the story Elena and María Luisa commiserate over their shared state:

> Hay generaciones que llevan sobre sí el peso de las otras dos. La que la precede y la que la sigue. La nuestra por ejemplo. Mi madre siempre repetía que ella había tenido que cuidar a sus padres ancianos primero y a nosotros, los hijos, después. [...] [C]uando estuvo enferma me esclavizó en justa retribución, como pensaba ella, a los servicios que me había prestado antes. Hoy sería absolutamente imposible exigirles a nuestros hijos que nos cuiden cuando seamos viejas. [...] Sí, Elena, somos las madres de la generación "bocadillo"... (7)

Elena's mother is now dead. Her children are alive, but they do not render her the honor she feels that she deserves after so many years of devotion to their well being. Their visits are sporadic, motivated principally by their own needs. Alejandrito even expresses outright that he wanted to marry early so as to escape the trouble at home due to Elena's bad marriage. So she finds herself in a catch-22 position: she has stayed with Alejandro all these years for the benefit of the children, and now they despise her for it. As Starcevic says, "She feels betrayed and insists that her love and sacrifice for her children have to be met with some kind of caring response" (181).

The theme of generations recurs in the second part of the novel as Elena becomes involved in the women's movement. Most of the women she meets are in their twenties. Their behavior, attitudes, and lifestyle are foreign to her: their

ubiquitous use of marijuana and hashish is vexing, their comportment is as ineffecutal as it is monotonous, and their display of lesbian practices is alienating and greatly distanced from what Elena considers to be the plight of the great majority of women whom feminism addresses and for whose benefit the movement exists.

This "generation gap" becomes more than just an annoyance: attempts to move forward with a political agenda are thwarted by the younger members. Not having experienced the difficulties facing women of Elena's generation, the younger feminists have other concerns (principally issues of power, and of female-identified sexuality and lifestyle). Their insistence on the primacy of their issues prevents any arrival at a collective consensus which is indispensable to a united front. Hence the same generational split which to some extent determines Elena's family relations has profound effects on the movement and everyone's role within it.

The second leitmotif in this work is that of becoming. The term here refers to the transitional spaces Elena leaps through in passing from being an unhappy, unhealthy, sexually dissatisfied, and at times battered and unproductive woman to becoming an optimistic, whole, assertive, productive and sexually savvy feminist. She reorients her sense of identity from motherhood to personhood, cutting the ties of emotional dependency on her children. She breaks off the affair with Miguel and decides to divorce Alejandro, ordering him to move out. She dismisses the psychiatrist Antonio Ferrer and seeks knowledge of self and of sexual politics within feminist circles. Once initiated into the movement, she breaks off from María José and those who embrace *feminismo de la diferencia* and from those associated with party politics. In the end she concretizes plans for a

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trip to Egypt so as to consult the museums and thus be able to complete her thesis and move forward professionally. This process of breaking with the past, the leaping itself, the transitioning, is the becoming. The becoming is a tearing away from old ways and a leaping into new ways. Each rupture opens out into a new horizon of becoming.

PART I OF *RUPTURAS:* WOMAN'S PLACE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The first part of Elena's story consists of a litany of problems, frustrations, and dissatisfactions encountered in the unfolding of her "vulgar destino femenino" (*Rupturas* 74). A principal source of these is her marriage. She undertook the marriage partly in reaction to the extreme rigidity and puritanism of her parents, determined largely by their religious convictions. A very sensitive and romantic girl, Elena had abandoned the study of mathematics, physics, and chemistry in favor of the arts, particularly drawing and piano, and the pursuit of sewing, embroidery, and cooking. This education was combined with her avid reading of nineteenth-century romantic love novels and the overwhelming presence of heterosexual cultural mythology disseminated in American movies and radiophonic and newspaper serials. "Y sin embargo," Elena notes ironically of her parents, "se asombraron y se indignaron cuando la niña, con sus dieciséis años, mostró aquel encandilamiento por el mozo más guapo, más amable, de manos más suaves y que recitaba mejor que ninguno los versos de Bécquer" (73).

Parental attempts to dissuade Elena from her course, including a bribe to finally send her off to Italy to study art, are fruitless. Marriage to Alejandro transforms Elena's life from one replete with comfortable bourgeois

accomodations to the misery of poverty, which she endures "escatimando las monedas de sus más elementales necesidades para sobrevivir con el miserable sueldo que las empresas de los años cincuenta ofrecían a sus empleados" (52). The couple's passionate love lasts barely ten months, Alejandro losing interest prior to the first baby's birth. Elena has come to embody the perfect portrait of a woman absolutely bored, having outgrown the man who feels so closely tied to her in his affective and economic dependency. She is distracted, has heard it all before, and finds him not in the least bit attractive. She suffers "la amargura de constatar la hostilidad que presidía hoy su convivencia con él [...]. Se sentía demasiado harta. No le quedaba ni un resto de ilusión por entenderse con su marido" (92).

Elena's experience of motherhood has been equally disillusioning. If her pregnancy with Alejandrito was normal, the birth was not. Both labor and delivery were dehumanizing, the nightmarish result of mismanaged perinatal care and the incompetence of an overworked, understaffed public clinic. While pregnant with Carlota Elena was confined to bed for "cinco meses de vida miserable [...] atendida con mal humor por su madre y por su suegra, que ambas se repartieron tan sagrada tarea, [...] para ejercer el derecho que se ganaban de protestar y de quejarse por todo " (241). When she hemorrhaged in the eighth month and was rushed to the hospital for an emergency caesarian section, she survived with ambivalence, "porque constatar con alegría que todavía estaba viva no resultaba demasiado consuelo para ella, que al fin y al cabo antes de comenzar semejante aventura se encontraba perfectamente bien" (243). Carlota turned out to be a sick baby, and on top of the responsibilites of caring for her

special needs Elena had to manage a jealous, short-tempered husband and an unruly three year old.

Reading like excerpts from *Diary of a Mad Housewife*,[86] Falcón's account of Elena's mothering tasks constitutes a litany of rage, pointed not at any one in particular, but rather at a system which isolates, oppresses, and exploits women. Falcón's feminist-Marxist position on motherhood, stated simply if not oversimplified, is that "all women suffer exploitation by men in the areas of sex, reproduction, and house work through the mode of domestic production. In this mode of production the products are children and housework" (Rague-Arias 475). In *Rupturas* Falcón's discourse on motherhood serves to undermine the official ideology by which women are supposed to be pleased to accept the travails of motherhood. In *La razón feminista* Falcón points to the functioning of such mythicizing ideology:

> [E]n los países industrializados, hasta en los sectores realmente pobres de las clases desfavorecidas, ha calado la ideología oficial, y sus mujeres, a pesar de sus partos incesantes, de sus hijos sin escuela, de sus varices, de sus ovarios inflamados, de su matriz destrozada, de sus pechos flácidos y colgantes, de sentir como una maldición la fertilidad de su vientre, siguen aceptando la idea de que fabricar un hijo es "un destino divino o natural", que nada tiene que ver con la reproducción de ovejas o la fabricación de coches. Y se escandalizarían si oyesen lo contrario. (*Razón* 179-80)

While a terrible tone of rage and an explicit rejection of the status quo inflame Falcón's feminist rhetoric, sensitivity to the plight of women is often the cornerstone to her poignant prose, as in this description of a loving mother at the beach:

> Pobre mujer [...] de las manos inertemente cerradas sobre el barquito de plástico, con los hombros hundidos en la resignación del destino inevitable, el que la había llevado a pasar las tardes sentada en el malecón con el barquito entre las manos aprendiendo

> a convertirse en animal, en planta, en mineral, mientras su hijo iba haciéndose hombre (*Rupturas* 208).

It is notable that in spite of the radical rejection of the conditions of motherhood foisted upon Elena, Falcón's protagonist does not hate her children. One the contrary, her love survives the most dire conditions, for example after the birth: "Pero para compensarla allí estaba Carlota, con la que tropezó al abrir los ojos. [...] Elena la quiso inmediatamente, perdonándole todas sus tropelías, cuando le miró la carita [...]" (243). Elena's growing hatred for her situation is never turned against her children (in contrast to Alejandro, who readily blames her and the children for his condition).

In the present time Elena suffers from ill health; her "condition" remains undefined yet she continually endures malaise. A stomach disorder, an ulcer or "nervous stomach," presents itself under stress, and often keeps her from eating properly. She takes sleeping pills, which sometimes impede her work. The tension she suffers results in part from her relationsip with her colleague Miguel, for their love affair is clandestine:

> Elena sentía todo el cuerpo dolorido por la tensión que debían mantener sus músculos cuando estaba con Miguel [...] obligados a permanecer en la postura que se suponía digna de una señora que se halla acompañada en público por un amigo, y aquella sensación como de agujetas, le cansaba también el cerebro, sujeto demasiado tiempo a dominar sus reacciones afectivas, a pensar respuestas educadas a cuestiones que no le interesaban, a interesarse y a emocionarse siempre por los problemas de Miguel, y a relegar para otra ocasión el relato de sus angustias. Por ello acabó en el quirófano. (66)

When her daughter suggests that she has brought the illness upon herself in order to castigate the family and win some attention, Elena thinks she may be right. In her view things would be different if those around her only knew how alone and abandoned she feels, at the point of committing serious agression

against herself. But she checks her own dour sentimentalism, and resolves to live more independently of those around whom she has constructed her life. When Elena comes to realize that she makes the same decision about once a month, the reader understands that while Elena has both the desire and the will to change, she does not know how.

PART II OF *RUPTURAS:* ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Throughout the course of the second part of *Rupturas* Elena is involved in different forms of feminist activity. In the first of the seven chapters which narrate this involvement Elena, in spite of her awareness that "resultaba un poco tarde para empezar la militancia feminista," finally accedes to her co-worker María José's insistence and agrees to attend a meeting of "un grupo de feministas radicales" (155). Elena's doubts as to whether "aquel reunión fuese la adecuada para ser la primera de una mujer como ella" (155) are conditioned by what she has previously seen and heard at the university:

> Las Jornadas pasaron como un vendaval sobre la Universidad, dejando una estela confusa de reivindicaciones recién entendidas, de feministas surgidas de células de partidos políticos que siempre habían rechazado el término feminismo, de jovencitas que se creían liberadas porque fumaban ansiosamente los porros de su afirmación y que demostraban con sus modales, con sus gestos, con sus atuendos, que su libertad sexual ahora pasaba, después de tantos años de entenderla como la descarada relación con hombres, por el lesbianismo. A Elena no le gustaron ni las nuevas feministas ni las viejas militantes. A todas, a unas y a otras, las encontraba algo de artificioso, de papel mal aprendido en una comedia que no les pertenecía, para cuya interpretación no tenían preparación ni vocación. (156)

The typology of feminisms which Falcón introduces at this point, at the very beginning of Elena's feminist activity, is indicative of divisions within the movement which have preoccupied feminist organizers from the late 1970s

onward. These divisions have run along the lines of class and age distinctions. On the one hand many of Elena's criticisms against veteran militants "resultaban argumentos muy pobres de aquellos que antes exponían los burgueses bien pensantes contra los comunistas," while on the other with respect to the younger generation of feminists she feels herself to be "completamente ajena a aquellas mujeres, tan jóvenes, de costumbres, lenguaje y vestido tan distintos de ella" (156).

Elena recalls an episode which ocurred two years previously, when she attended a women-only gathering of her neighborhood association, her first incursion into feminism. The attendees, between twenty and twenty-five years old, carried on with a cliquish air of familiarity, not only neglecting to speak to Elena, but going so far as to ridicule her new high heels and fresh beauty parlor coiffure. After waiting an hour for the opportunity to converse with someone, anyone, Elena observes:

> [C]inco o seis de las asistentes fumaban porros sentadas en el suelo en un corro cerrado de complicidades muy conocidas para ellas y empezaban a perder el sentido de la realidad que las rodeaba, hasta que dos se tendieron en el suelo y comenzaron a desnudarse, y cuando Elena intentó desviar la mirada para disimular su sonroja y vio cómo se besaban en la boca varias parejas de las que bailaban, comprendió que la oportunidad no se le presentaría porque niguna pensaba propiciarla. (157)

As if to contrast the behavior of these "feministas radicales" with other elements of the feminist movement, another woman enters the scene, also in high heels and with a beauty-parlor hairdo. She is Carmen, the neighborhood butcher, whom Elena observes as being in "un estado anormal, que no podía identificar con claridad, pero que podía casi sentir en su respiración, en su olor. Era un olor de animal herido o perseguido. Un olor a transpiración limpia pero que

rezumaba angustia" (158). Carmen reveals that her husband, who owns the butcher shop, beats her, fiercely, but where the bruises cannot be seen. Since she has four children and the shop is in his name, there is little Carmen can do to ameliorate her situation. Her attorney has told her that since they are Catalans, "lo que es de cada uno es sólo de él" (159) and that in return for the many years she has worked she owns none of their property and has no rights to any of it. In spite of the fact that he works only at bringing in the meat and doing the books at night, and that she labors daily "como una burra," she can claim no rights to his chalet, his boat, or any of his other possessions, and if she leaves him she will be left with nothing. When a couple of blithe dykes approach them and listen to Carmen's tale of woe, their reply is "Vaya mujer, esto te pasa por ir con hombres" and they depart, "mirándose las dos con esa comprensión de quienes están iniciados en los secretos que permanecen ignorados para el resto de los mortales" (161).

This experience of two years ago transpired right after the *Jornadas*, the "hito del feminismo catalán de la posdictadura" (161). Today Elena's experience is not dissimilar: at the meeting she attends with María José she witnesses young women "tan despeinadas, tan sucias, tan ingenuas," seated on the floor, chain smoking alternately cigarettes, marijuana, and hashish in a state of semi-consciousness. Elena, alert to learn the latest of feminist issues, is hard pressed to understand their discourse. She attempts to summarize what she has grasped:

> No he entendido muy bien lo que han querido decir aquellas muchachas [...]. Bueno, aquello de la identidad de sí mismas y de la diferencia. Lo de que tenemos que afirmar nuestra identidad, defendiendo las diferencias que nos separan de los hombres, porque poseemos cualidades distintas a las de ellos pero mejores... (162)

Once María José affirms that Elena has grasped adequately the affirmations of these feminists, Elena expresses her rejection of this philosophical approach:

> [A] mí me suena exactamente a lo mismo que nos contaba el cura de mi colegio y lo que decía mi madre. Quiero decir que exaltar los valores femeninos de la dulzura, la bondad, la amabilidad, es lo que han estado haciendo siempre los educadores y los filósofos, y por ello nos han convertido en sumisas y obedientes al poder de los hombres... [...] yo quisiera ahora hacer y oír algo diferente. Creo que es hora de que vayamos pensando en rebelarnos por la vía de alguna violencia, de quizás una agresividad potenciada y dirigida para defender nuestros derechos, y no para amar a los hombres o para huir de ellos. (162)

The key word here is "derechos," the struggle for which constitutes for Elena as well as for Falcón herself the fundamental battle that feminists must undertake.

Apart from this statement of tactical positioning, an explanation is proffered as to why the practitioners of *feminismo de la diferencia* avoid confrontation with men:

> [E]stas muchachas se encierran en sí mismas y entre ellas para huir de los hombres, no para enfrentar la batalla contra ellos... [...] huían de su entorno, de los enemigos que las rodeaban y de los peligros que las esperaban en la batalla diaria por sobrevivir, y, atemorizadas por la agresividad, se abandonaban a su propia pasividad y amabilidad. (162-63)

The seeming clarity with which Elena expresses herself belies her own inability to carry out such daily struggle. When she finds herself proclaiming that "hay que salir a luchar al espacio exterior, no dejarse vencer por ellos," it is with "súbito rubor" that she does it. This is because she sees the image of Alejandro rising before her, accusing her of inertia and submission; it changes her expression to one of shame on account of her own sense of hypocrisy at reproaching others for what she herself is incapable of doing. In this way Elena takes one more step up and out of her predicament, toward that "self-actualiztion

of creative human potential in the struggle against oppression" which is the goal of feminist consciousness (Daly 264). She is beginning to see that the personal is political.

The next moment of feminist activity for Elena revolves around the case of Amparo López, a mother whose fight to retain custody of her ten year old daughter, in spite of an ecclesiastic order demanding that she return the child to her homosexual alcoholic father who abandoned them several years ago, has become a major feminist issue. Activists plan to enclose themselves in a church for two days to protest the order. Elena decides to take part in this political action despite her ambivalence toward the movement as a whole. Her sense of solidarity with the others is growing and she realizes that as she supports other women she grows stronger. For her the joining in solidarity with fifty women in the church of San Nicolás yields a form of contentment never before experienced: "más que los hechos o las palabras en sí, la desconcertaba y la atraía aquel ambiente que no sabía cómo calificar, si de libertad, de compañerismo, o de unión, porque ninguno de aquellos conceptos resultaba exacto (195).

Yet Elena's euphoria is tenuous, for the meeting is replete with tensions, fears, and violent discussions, with antagonistic splinter groups forming in corners and niches, manifesting conflicts that Elena fails to grasp. Arguing over whether it is acceptable to hang a poster inscribed with "Abajo el machismo" on the crucifix, or debating the propriety of filling the sacred air with marijuana and hash smoke is one thing; ordering those responsible for such activity to stop turns out to be entirely another: no one wants to exert control for fear that "Me contestarán que me meta la lengua en el culo, que qué me he creído dando órdenes y que si soy una estúpida reaccionaria" (196).

Power struggles within the assembled group come to a head. Having agreed on a set of tasks and who should carry them out, the voice of dissidence arises:

> No sé cómo estamos aceptando estas propuestas que parten de las mismas mujeres que están manipulando esta asamblea y que han mandado durante varias semanas, con gestos autoritarios y machistas, con el pretexto de que eran de la comisión organizadora. Yo propongo que se vote una moción contra ellas y que no se escojan comisiones. Todas las decisions deben tomarse en asamblea [...]. (197-98)

To Elena it appears that there are two distinct camps: the *políticas* or organized group who want to make progress on specific political action, and the *independientes* or dissidents who want to criticize as *machista* the behavior of those who are organizing and directing the effort. Eulalia is the principal representative of the *políticas:* she has been involved in party politics for many years and her approach is one of organized, direct action, much like what the political practices of the Left had been before second-wave feminism developed. But the dissidents reject what they consider Eulalia's love of authority for authority's sake, considering her "de las que quieren tomar el poder y mandar a todas las demás (201). Typical of the criticism aimed at Eulalia is the comment, "Ha sido de un partido político durante muchos años, por eso conserva esos modos autoritarios" (201). While it appears to Elena that this schism divides the movement in two, it is explained to her that "La verdad es que el movimiento feminista está dividido en diez capillitas, que algunas son claramente antagónicas entre sí [...] existe un temor, un reverencioso temor a ser denunciadas como dirigentes y manipuladoras por las otras [...]. Total que todas están en guerra contra todas (205).

As Elena seeks to sort through these experiences, María José explains:

> Bueno, Eulalia es de un grupo feminista que lleva bastante tiempo trabajando, se puede decir que es el más antiguo. Antes militaba en un partido comunista, como muchas otras de su grupo, por eso son las más disciplinadas..., pero las demás las acusan de ser autoritarias y hasta machistas..., aunque se utiliza muy frívolamente el calificativo de machista entre las independientes... Pero, como no son de ningún partido, a ellas no pueden acusarlas de obedecer consignas masculinas. Eso se lo sueltan todos los días a las de los partidos. (202)

At the same time, Elena's view of the independents is far from sympathetic. She finds their efforts to take the lead as ineffectual as they are arduous:

> [A]llí en un simposio totalmente femenino, las intervenciones las protagonizaban casi siempre las mujeres que utilizaban los términos psicoanalíticos de uso común, personitas que todavía no habían abandonado la adolescencia, que repetían estúpidas preguntas sobre temas ya debatidos para hacer interminables las discusiones, o que ni siquera tenían nada que ver con el motivo de la asamblea. (203)

She rejects their speech and their determination to rehash the same issues time and again:

> [M]uchas de ellas llevan bastantes años pisando estas piedras, y sin embargo, siguen diciendo las mismas tonterías, que yo las he oído ya en varias ocasiones. Y en cambio siempre se burlan, con ese tono de superioridad [...] de cualquier propuesta sensata..., sobre todo si parte de las militantes de algún partido. (203)

Elena has no difficulty in determining which of the groups vying for leadership earns her loyalty. She agrees with another woman who breaks through the chaotic discussion by proclaiming:

> Me parece increíble que perdamos el tiempo en discutir si debemos censurar la gestión de la comisión o no, cuando resulta que durante más de un mes esas mujeres han sido las que han trabajado como burras para conseguir que este encierro se realizase, y la mayoría de las que ahora estáis criticándolas no habéis dado golpe. En todo caso nos tenemos que censurar las que no hemos trabajado suficientemente... (198)

Elena is not convinced by the philosophical rejection of leadership and authority displayed by the independents. She dismisses the veneer of their quasi-

philosophical positioning and lays bare what to her are their real motivations: "Es mucho más cómodo discutir cuatro horas, fumando porros, sobre si el poder o no, y si es o no machista una comisión, que trabajar en serio dándole a la máquina escribiendo sobres o repartiendo propaganda" (199). Old style political action is being replaced by the practice of *feminismo de la diferencia*, and Elena, as Falcón's alter-ego, rejects it wholeheartedly.

In another episode of Elena's peregrinations through the feminist movement, she attends an encounter group, a sort of consciousness raising session *qua* therapy group where certain individuals present personal problems for analysis by the group. In the character Otilia Falcón creates a version of woman-centered or lesbian love which offers little that is "different" from the common defects of male-female relationships. Bored of the stable married life she led with her husband and fearful that she might harm her three children out of hatred for their having stolen her life from her ("No comprendo cómo no se cometen más infanticidios..." she says [217]), Otilia finds respite in the arms of Lola. Never having been so deeply in love ("Estaba loca por ella..."), Otilia learned to transcend her own heterosexual conditioning and found a route to the core of woman-loving feminism: "¿Y cómo podrían las mujeres reclamar algún día el respeto de su propia dignidad si no se amaban a sí mismas, si las habían enseñado a detestarse?" (218).

Otilia and Lola have to hide their love from Marisa, the latter's live-in lover of ten years (of Lola and Marisa's liason Otilia explains "Lo comprendí tardíamente" [218]) so that Otilia finds herself having to keep their lesbian affair clandestine from Marisa but not from her own husband. Having abandoned her husband and children to live in a studio where she waited for Lola to toss

morsels of love her way whenever she could escape from Marisa's jealousy, Otilia hit bottom:

> Supo entonces lo que era odiar a un adulto, comprendió las agresiones que por celos llegaban al asesinato y comenzó la etapa de reproches, de discusiones, de tormentosas noches de amor concluidas en lágrimas, en gritos, en desapariciones de Lola [...] que prolongaban varios días hasta que la suplicante llamada de Otilia la hacía regresar a sus brazos por el corto espacio de las horas que el engaño a su compañera la permitía. (219)

Otilia returned to her husband and children, and recovered from the emotional disaster which the affair with Lola had caused. But Lola continued pursuing her, and was overcome with jealousy over Otilia's living again with her husband. Otilia's melodrama presents a case of the double standard in reverse for, as she explains, Lola began to "hacerme reproches de mi convivencia con Joaquín..., ella que me había impedido averiguar con certeza la naturaleza de sus relaciones con Marisa, ahora se creía con derecho a exigirme cuentas de las que yo sostenía con mi marido... " (220).

To break the spell which Lola held on her, and partly out of spite, Otilia has resumed amorous relations with her husband, but finds in him only negative qualities in comparison with Lola:

> [L]a repulsión que le ocasionó aquel rudo contacto que casi había olvidado, el peso excesivo de un cuerpo que no era parejo al suyo sino dominador, el tacto velloso, la ausencia de aquellos blancos y hermosos senos que tanto las hacían gozar a las dos, las voz ronca, la boca gruesa, la barbilla rasposa y aquel jadear y resoplar exagerado, zafio, y aquella nauseabunda humedad con que premió se entrega. (221)

In spite of her repulsion, Otilia finds herself trapped within the "tela de araña" so astutely woven by her husband. After an attempt at suicide, she lands in the hospital where she falls in love with her roommate Estrella, who threatens suicide if she leaves her. So in order to please everyone, Otilia now has three

lovers, is satisfied by none, and continues to be abused by Lola, who "en realidad me trata como todos los hombres del mundo han tratado a sus amantes, reservando su tiempo y sus obligaciones hacia la mujer legítima" (224).

The details of these depraved affairs are enough to lead the reader (as she has been so astutely guided by Falcón to do) to conclude that female-centered bonds are not in themselves enough to solve the egotism, oppression, and exploitation inherent to heterosexual relationships. In Elena's discourse there are evident two lines of reasoning that elucidate Falcón position, giving voice to the further explication of her feminist ethic. The first line deals with her ethical position on interpersonal relationships, as for example when Elena explains her opinion of Otilia's story:

> [L]o que me ha desagrado profundamente [...] es ver cómo las mujeres imitan lo peor de la conducta de los hombres. Ese desprecio por la entrega de la otra, ese mezquino utilizar las vidas y los sentimientos de su amante de que hace gala Lola, ese separar una vida ordenada con Marisa de la pasión que la une a Otilia. [...] Yo no creo que el feminismo, ni el camino para la liberación de la mujer sea la imitación de los peores defectos de los hombres... (224)

The ethical standards posited here include having respect for what another person gives, and taking care not to use another for one's own ends. Clearly if people disregard these basic elements of interpersonal ethics, their sex/gender is irrelevant in the estimation of their behavior.

The second area of opinion arising from this situation relates to the issue of *feminismo de la diferencia*. Elena notes that many of the women she has met at feminist meetings habitually defend female virtues as different from male qualities, but Otilia's situation brings this differentiation into question:

> [C]uando las veo aparecer con esos pelos cortados como los nazis, esos pantalones horribles y hasta el mismo buche que echan los hombres a partir de los cuarenta anos, me pregunto si en realidad,

> [...] no se están portando como tales en las relaciones amorosas. De donde se infiere, quizá, que las mujeres no son tan diferentes de los hombres en el fondo, por más que quieran creérselo todos..., ellos y ellas... (224).

In this way Falcón turns the tables of the discourse on difference and makes an argument in favor of a *feminismo de la igualdad.*

A meeting of feminists in the home of Sylvia provides yet another forum for Falcón to represent feminist activity which she has in real life experienced, and Elena proves once again to be an ideal foil for the further development of her position vis-à-vis the *igualdad vs. diferencia* debate. On the wall of Sylvia's home is a crucifix whose Christ figure has been dressed in a pair of blue jeans. Sylvia explains to Elena that "Ese es el símbolo de cómo queremos ver a los hombres. No hemos de parar hasta conseguir crucificarlos a todos... Los colgaremos en los balcones, en las calles..., hasta acabar con todos... (259). While the more vociferous women (Julia, Mara, Espe, Rosa) join Sylvia in her hysterical enthusiam for male bashing, several others "sonreían beatíficamente, llevadas por el hachís a ese estado pacífico, hilarante y bobalicón que ocasiona la droga" (259). The regular association of absurd, "different" behavior[87] with the use of marijuana o hashish reinforces the generational identification of this sector of the movement, as do their physical descriptions, e.g., "los rostros adolescentes manchados todavía por las marcas del acné [...] aquellas personitas envueltas en flecos, en sedas, pataleando con sus tejanos, con los rizados cabellos al viento" (260). Their abuse of pot and hash inhibits any serious approach to the meeting which it is presumed the attendees might otherwise take.

Another characteristic closely associated with these women is their hatred for any form of authority. When María José attempts to bring order to the

meeting, she is met with Nuria's "¡Estás tú muy dictadora, eh! ¡A ver si te has creído que vas a mandar aquí!" upon which the others "soltaron sus trenos habituales contra las conductas machistas e impositivas y descalificaron completamente a María José" (261). With so much support Nuria gains control over the meeting and the discussion centers around their personal problems and those of their cats. This sort of "feminist" meeting enrages Elena, because the self-proclaimed practitioners of feminism of difference neglect to address what are to Elena real feminist issues:

> ¡Y qué van a hacer esas mujercitas en el curso de la lucha! ¡Si no saben nada de lo que les sucede a las mujeres de verdad...! [...] ¿Qué pueden resolver de los sufrimientos de las demás mujeres [...] de manos marcadas por los limpiadores abrasivos, de vientres siempre fértiles, de pechos que amamantan, con sus niños agarrados a sus faldas, vestidas torpemente con las ropas convencionales que han dicho siempre que eran femeninas [...] Constituyen un escupitajo en mitad del mar que ni tiene incidencia alguna en la lucha feminista [...]. (263)

The invective against these women is intense and lengthy, in *Rupturas* as well as in many of Falcón's other writings.[88]

The term used for this sector of feminists is *radicales*, which stands in sharp contrast to the historically previous denotation of this term, which differentiated feminists active in double militancy from those who espouse single militancy, the latter being *feministas radicales*. Whereas Falcón stands firmly in the camp of *feministas radicales* in its prior denotation, she is severely critical of the latter brand of "radical" feminist:

> Todas las que se llamaban a sí mismas radicales, porque afirmaban que para ellas el feminismo era un cambio radical, absoluto, y así buscaban nuevas formas de vida, de convivencia, de amor, de relaciones sexuales, que no tuviesen nada que ver con aquella tradición machista que las había oprimido siempre. Huyendo del macho violador y apaleador, de los esquemas de jerarquía

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> representados sobre todo por el padre, detestando la disciplina que suponía un trabajo asalariado... (264).

Clearly Elena feels repulsion at much of what constitutes these women's lives. She considers them incapable of study, learning, or understanding, because "es cansado" (264). It is far more fun to live without working, to spend one's days smoking hash and dreaming, traveling without paying one's own expenses, and partaking in other similar frivolity.

But there is much more at issue here than complaints about laziness or disgust at lack of hygiene. The efficacy of the feminist movement is at stake. All this comes to a head when Elena attends another meeting, "la más disparatada reunión que jamás había conocido" (268). Most of the women present are young, under thirty years old. Eulalia seeks to reach a concensus so that the movement can present a list of candidates for the upcoming Parliamentary elections in Catalunya. Merche raises an objection:

> Yo no comprendo cómo se pueden llamar feministas unas mujeres que pretenden participar en las elecciones del Parlamento, lugar eminentemente machista donde sólo se debaten las cuestiones que les interesan a los hombres y que se relacionan con el poder, cuando el poder no interesa a las mujeres. Nosotras estamos al otro lado, en otro lugar bien distinto... (268).

Another voice arises in a similar vein, stating that power and feminism are two different things, feminism consisting of "trabajar por la liberación de las mujeres, empezando por cada una de ellas, por sí mismas y luego en el trabajo, en la casa, en la calle, y no en el Parlamento" (269). Eulalia's response is that many of them have already carried out the struggle in the work place and in the streets, and that this does not impede working for Parliamentary representation.

Nuria, speaking for the independents, asks how gaining a seat in the Parliamentary elections would benefit the them. Eulalia responds acerbically:

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> Nunca se me hubiera ocurrido participar en unas elecciones para favorecer a las feministas. [...] A mí sólo me interesan las mujeres [...]. A los millones de mujeres que son amas de casa, madres, que trabajan en las fábricas, en el campo. Por ellas estoy luchando hace tantos años, y para ellas es por quienes deseo alcanzar algún escaño en el Parlamento. No sé si os habéis enterado que las trabajadoras no ganan el mismo salario que los hombres por el mismo trabajo, que no hay divorcio, que no se puede abortar, que los hijos se los queda el padre quitándoselos a la madre, que los maridos apalean a las mujeres, que cada día hay más mujeres violadas en las calles... (273)

Just when Eulalia believes they are going to progress, as this most sensible of statements creates common ground among all present, it is suggested that everyone be given the opportunity to comment, and another lengthy digression begins. As Eulalia marches out on the proceedings, Elena wishes to follow, but is held up by María José, whose interest in the interminable debates is patent. Elena, whose feminist positioning is as yet undetermined, praises Eulalia's effort, but María José is adamantly opposed:

> [Y]o soy de las que creen que el feminismo no puede ir por los caminos trillados por los hombres, ¿entiendes? Yo soy de las que estoy segura [sic] de que Eulalia y las suyas son sólo imitaciones de hombres, y no les doy el calificativo de feministas aunque a ti te gusten tanto. Yo deseo que el movimiento no siga el camino que ésas quieren imprimirle, porque para mí sería destrozarlo. (274)

With María José's stance clearly delineated, Elena decides that she must determine unequivocally her own position vis-à-vis the various options presented to her in the last several months.

It is not until the penultimate chapter of *Rupturas* that Elena comes to a clear sense of her own convictions. Falcón completely dichotomizes *feminismo de la igualdad* and *feminismo radical* in this chapter, and through the experience Elena comes to recognize where she stands. A feminist assembly is convened by many organizations to decide upon the possibility for and the opportunity of

presenting a united women's front for the next Catalonian Parliamentary elections. After two months of work to come to an agreement among the different factions, members of the authoring commission arrived at a consensus, having approved a program of demands to be presented at the elections. Then, as soon as the assembly begins, Brunilda along with Nuria, Merce, Lola and Pura (all of whom were present at each of the commission's meetings) demit from the commission, claiming that they are not in agreeement with the program. The untimeliness of their decision is underscored by Eulalia:

> [S]emejante decisión no la habían comunicado el día anterior, cuando las de la comisión se habían separado a las dos de la madrugada después de aceptar íntegramente el programa que llevaba así y enarbolaba unos papeles escritos a máquina que le había costado una noche de insomnio copiarlos según las últimas correcciones realizadas. (287)

It would seem that her work was for naught.

Brunilda is spokeswoman for herself and the other four, who collectively form "ningún grupo determinado puesto que como independientes no constituían ninguno y no podían, en consecuencia, representar a nadie" (287). Their rationale is that they cannot approve a plan for four years until they have listened to the opinions of other women, i.e., all the feminists not in attendance, those at home or in the street, simple women who ought to feel themselves reflected in the program but who have never been consulted. Brunilda and company will not adopt "una postrua ni redentora ni tiránica arrogándose una representación de todas las mujeres que no tenía en modo alguno" (288). When Brunilda suggests that instead they open up a dialogue among women, at weekly meetings, and collect reports which would then be synthesized into a platform for the elections four years from now, a large sector of the assembly

agrees vociferously, "mientras otro, un poco superior en número, silbaba y pateaba, y se entendían algunas frases como que se calle esa loca y ya es hora de que nos dejen trabajar" (288).

Eulalia, speaking on their behalf, hardly containing her ire, explains that they had worked intensively for two months, that everyone had made the commitment to see it through, that to change the platform continually is foolish, and that "resultaba absolutamente irresponsable e indigno de llamarse feministas, ni cosa parecida, que en aquel mismo momento se echaran atrás" (289). A supporter of the independents comments crudely that "Esas quieren masturbarse con los tíos por un escaño en el Parlamento" (289). Upon closer questioning by Eulalia as to why they changed their minds when just last night they had agreed, Brunilda and company try to skirt the issue by claiming that as independents they represent and are represented by no one. Eulalia points out that this was not their line last night, and Pura admits that "habían aceptado el compromiso, pero que [...] la noche anterior no se había tenido en cuenta su estado de ánimo" (290). Eulalia's response, typical of Falconian derision, is to wonder "qué se creían que estaban haciendo, feminismo o psicoterapia de grupo" (290). In the end, Eulalia takes stock of the divided assembly and steps down, marking an end to the proceedings, the platform defeated and the work of several months wasted.

This episode points to what Falcón considers to be one of the principal reasons for the breakdown of the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s. In *Mujer y poder político* she delineates three classifications of causes of the destruction of the feminist movement: "A) La ofensiva de los enemigos. B) La influencia de la ideología de la clase dominante. C) El antagonismo furioso que

se desató entre las componentes del Movimiento" (429). The third set of phenomena which she cites is much broader than the atagonisms portrayed in *Rupturas*:

> Todas las condiciones fueron favorables para hacer florecer el antagonismo entre las participantes del Movimiento. Enfrentadas las de los partidos políticos con las independientes, las partidarias de la doble militancia con las de la única, las marxistas con las de la "diferencia", las heterosexuales con las lesbianas, las jóvenes con las mayores, las universitarias con las que no tenían instrucción, las que disponían de trabajo y de dinero con las amas de casa y las hijas dependientes del marido y del padre, las liberales con las socialistas, las creyentes con las ateas, el laberinto en que se convirtió el Movimiento llevó inexorablemente a las mujeres a su suicidio político. (Falcón, *Mujer y poder* 432)

In the 1990 issue of *Poder y libertad* celebrating "15 años de feminismo" Falcón recognizes the many hundreds of groups of women existing in Spain and refers to this factionalism of the movement as "el final," noting that "todavía se mantienen entre ellos los antiguos rencores y divisiones que llevan a algunos a no convocar a otros cuando organizan acciones de agitación social en temas tan fundamentales como la ley de aborto o la violencia contra la mujer" ("Auge y caída" 40).

While the impact of the lack of solidarity among women with respect to political goals is fairly obvious, the means by which the patriarchy effectuates divide-and-conquer techniques are not so apparent. Falcón states unequivocally that "La división entre mujeres está organizada, dirigida y provocada cuidadosamente por los hombres. 'La politica del macho' es la 'política del matricidio', en donde se halla el origen de la rivalidad entre las mujeres" (*Mujer y poder* 434). The philosophy behind this claim is expounded in Susan Blaise's *Le Rapt des Origines (ou Le Meurtre de la Mère)*, (Paris: Blaise, 1986).[89] While it is beyond the limits of the present study to examine this question is detail, it is

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worthwhile to point out that for Blaise the origin of rivalries and betrayals which have torn asunder the feminist movement is to be found in the ideology of gynocide and its incumbent models and stereotypes of female relationships fostered by men throughout history[90] (*Mujer y poder* 434-35). Women interiorize these models which are not their own:

> Nuestra rivaldad, nuestras luchas internas, no son –en la mayoría de los casos– sino pura mímica o máscara. Esta es la estrategia fundamental del poder patriarcal, la más arcaica, compleja y perversa. Esto es un hecho: las mujeres no se aman entre sí. (Blaise 11).

For Falcón this is a case of "los esclavos [siendo] incitados por el amo a odiarse" (*Mujer y poder* 435). In Falcón's view the only remedy for this internecine rivalry is for women to develop a consciousness of group solidarity, to go beyond differences toward a sense of identity based on the fact "que sufren las mismas explotaciones, que viven dependientes de las servidumbres de su fisiología, obligadas a reproducirse, a cuidar hijos, a sufrir las agresiones masculinas" (*Mujer y poder* 436). Only through such collective consciousness can mass political movement be efficacious. *El feminismo de la diferencia* works directly against such efforts.

MAJOR THEMES

EL FEMINISMO DE LA IGUALDAD Y EL FEMINISMO DE LA DIFERENCIA

Rupturas reads like a handbook of women's liberation. There is an almost inexhaustible treasure of feminist issues, "a mine of possibilities" as Starcevic qualifies it (178), far more than what can adequately be treated here. Principal among these issues is the multifaceted nature of the feminist movement, and

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especially the debates over "igualdad vs. diferencia" which Elena observes each time she participates in collective feminist action.

One of Spain's principal proponents of *el feminismo de la diferencia* is Victoria Sendón de León. In her 1988 exposition "El feminismo visto por sus protagonistas" Sendón strives to explain the term *diferencia* as it applies to the practice of feminism (an exercise futile in itself given the parameters of the discussion[91]). For Sendón the terms "independiente, utópico, radical o de la diferencia" all serve to designate the positioning of the feminist practice of difference (141). She explains that feminism of difference is *independent* because it does not fit into any political agenda associated with specific parties, consisting rather of a world view, a particular mode of being political, a social alternative; it is *utopian* since its goal is to create a society which does not as yet exist, and so the "mere" attainment of reformist vindications is unsatisfactory; it is *radical* because its analysis transcends the symptoms of social inequality between the sexes and seeks to combat the most profound cause of woman's state: patriarchy. This form of feminism is *the practice of difference* inasmuch as its adherents view equality between the sexes and the abolition of class divisions not as goals but as points of departure, and since identities and essentialisms are denied, vindicating feminine identity on the basis of difference would be a contradiction (141).

According to Sendón this approach to feminist practice is associated with postmodern thought, with its incumbent rejection of "grandes leyes históricas" and scientific paradigms, like Marxism and Newtonian physics:

> Los grandes sistemas de pensamiento, así como las creencias, los mitos y los dogmas están cayendo vertiginosamente, porque la realidad es mucho más compleja e inexplicable de lo que se

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With the paradigm of postmodernism the method of analysis has changed: paradox, entropy, and the mutability of matter relative to time lead to an understading of the internal instability of all structures. When applied to the historical, sociological or political spheres:

> Esa inestabilidad interna constituye la clave de la transformación, y la transformación sucede siempre a partir de la conducta de un pequeño grupo de partículas, de células o de individuos que actúan en la dirección privilegiada del cambio, del salto cualitativo, del progreso. (143).

According to this philosophy the future can be invented and utopias become possible because open systems in evolution present great fluctuations: "La flecha del tiempo los atraviesa y los hace imprevisibles" (143). Closed, global analyses (those adhering to rational principles and presumably dealing with existing structures of power which are also predicated on ideas rooted in Enlightenment vision) can only be applied to systems in equilibrium, which are static. Feminism of difference acts instead within "los sistemas abiertos y evolutivos [que] presentan grandes fluctuaciones y más cuando se presenta una encrucijada" (143). What is not clear in Sendón's exposition is precisely *where* feminist action may have its effect.

Nevertheless Sendón addresses questions of actual practice relative to "la gran transformación," which some women could bring about in the folowing ways: 1) political action predicated on sudden, abrupt leaps, aimed at gaining parcels of power, not in the sense of replacing or reinforcing existing structures but rather that of "forzar las situaciones en la dirección de un cambio real"; 2) theoretical reflection oriented toward action by small groups, since mass

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movements are always blind and tend toward conservatism; 3) tactics which allow for the individual to "relacionarse más que vincularse" based on the model of a web, of interests and relationships of support and self-help, wherein each person is the center of a web (rather than fitting into some pyramidal structure) such that "no es la persona la que ha de adecuarse a las decisiones y formas políticas, sino que son éstas las que se conforman de acuerdo a lo personal" (144). Specifically she calls for the formation of new affective structures to replace the family, "el más imporante bastión del orden patriarcal"; a reordering of health care with a concomitant restructing of priorities; and the reorganization of urban life, since "la estructura del hábitat es demencial" (145). Based on Sendón's explication of difference politics, these reorderings will take place starting from the individual's needs and desires, ("a partir de sí") entailing a bottom-up restructuring rather than a top-down approach to social change.

El feminismo de la diferencia is often contrasted with feminism rooted in Enlightenment principles. In "Memoria de una Ilustración olvidada" Alicia H. Puleo traces the origins of equality politics to Enlightenment thought. She notes that the Enlightenment has two sides, one emancipatory and the other positivist: "A la primera debemos la articulación de un feminismo que llega hasta nuestros días: el feminismo de la igualdad" (29). Tracing this historical development Puleo writes, "Como mostrara Cèlia Amorós, el feminismo 'como cuerpo coherente de vindicaciones sólo pudo articularse teóricamente ... a partir de las premisas ilustradas' procediendo a una radicaliazión del paradigma ilustrado de igualdad y autonomía"[92] (28). One Poulain de la Barre, a Cartesian of the seventeenth century, radicalized and universalized the Cartesian epistemological challenge to prejudice by applying it to the social sphere:

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> [S]obre la base de la común posesión de la facultad de razonar, se pide la igualdad de derechos y se denuncia la injusticia de un sistema que excluye a las mujeres de la educación, el gobierno, las profesiones y otras actividades prestigiosas [...]. La razón se atreve ahora a juzgar las costumbres y a subrayar la ilegitimidad del orden sexual existente. (29)

Following de la Barre, feminists of the eighteenth century denounced male supremacy as against natural right,[93] but this aspect of the Enlightenment would be painstakingly concealed and forgotten, "ya que el modelo político que se impondrá [...] exigirá una mujer doméstica que libere al ciudadano de las preocupaciones y tareas del ámbito privado para que éste pueda dedicarse al ámbito de lo público" (Puleo 29).

According to Alicia Puleo's analysis, feminism of equality today seeks the same ends as those espoused by the principles of the Enlightenment: the full development and expression of individual freedom. This feminism seeks full equality of opportunities concretely manifest in reality through multiple series of positive political actions. Specifically with respect to establishing equality:

> [E]l feminismo de la igualdad propone profundizar en la crítica a los estereotipos de género que hasta ahora han configurado nuestra historia. Esto implica continuar el trabajo de análisis en el plano teórico, promover nuevas actitudes en la educación, asumir la defensa del Estado de Bienestar y marchar hacia una democracia partidaria que radicalice el sistema de cuotas hasta alcanzar un 50 por ciento de representación política. (Puleo 30)

Of course this activity brings women into contact with men, struggling with them to establish laws and create social structures. This is precisely Falcón's arena: the courts.

Indicative of Falcón's political convictions in this arena is a 1996 article in which she defends affirmative action against the European Union High Court's decision striking down the protection of a woman's job position on account of

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affirmative action "por considerar que discrimina a los hombres" (Falcón, "Principios" 35). Falcón with indignation points to the 1979 United Nations dictate that "la adopción de medidas especiales de carácter temporal, encaminadas a acelerar la igualdad de hecho entre hombre y mujer, nunca puede considerarse como un acto discriminatorio respecto al hombre" (Falcón, "Principios" 42). She states the necessity of being conscious of these events, "porque es muy fácil retroceder en el camino de nuestras conquistas y muy lento y muy difícil avanzar en él (43). In this particular practice of equality politics the issue at hand is one of common concern for *all* women and a question of labor law: the availability of earning a livelihood, rudimentary to the practice of freedom. From Falcón's vigilant viewpoint, no case of "backlash" should be tolerated:

> La ofensiva de los poderes, del capital y de los hombres se une contra los intereses de todas las mujeres, y si el feminismo no sabe unirse contra ella, perderá una nueva batalla y puede tardar en recuperar el espacio perdido. Ante este nuevo desafío el Movimiento Feminista tiene que tomar rápidamente la iniciativa. En este punto crucial en que nos encontramos espero que ésta sea inmediata, eficaz y unitaria. (43)

In life as in fiction, Falcón's rejection of *el feminismo de la diferencia* is profound.

Offering another historical view of the controversy is Cèlia Amorós's "Algunos aspectos de la evolución ideológica del feminismo en España," an overview of the feminist movement up to 1980. Amorós traces the roots of the movement to the Enlightment, stating that the feminist polemic which began with Feijóo's *Teatro Crítico y Universal* was not so much a vindication of political rights as a justification of certain virtues, "una prolongación de las polémicas medievales acerca de los vicios y virtudes de las mujeres" (41). Sustaining the thesis of Geraldine Scanlon that "la sociedad tuvo interés en conceder un grado

relativo de emancipación a la mujer [sólo] cuando se hizo necesario integrarla en la actividad laboral" (Scanlon 5), Amorós argues that "El feminismo es ... en España, cosa de las trabajadoras; de la clase media y de la clase obrera" (42). The lack of an enlightened bourgeois tradition in Spain relegated the movement to a state of incipience until the 1963 Plan de Desarrollo promoted debate on the role of women. Soon feminist works in translation were becoming available in Spain, like Friedan's *La mística de la feminidad* (trans. 1965) and Simone de Beauvoir's *El segundo sexo* (trans. 1962).[94] Starting in the late 1960s autochthonous works were authored and became available to a wider reading public.[95]

With respect to the onset of second wave feminist agitation, Amorós asserts that "la autoconciencia feminista pasa, como toda autoconciencia no ilusoria, por la praxis" (45). Only through engagement with political movements were women able to develop a radical feminist politics:

> El feminismo ha crecido históricamente *-et pour cause-* como proceso de radicalización de otros movimientos emancipatorios, como crítica radical de unas *insuficiencias* que no podrían ser sino inconsecuencias y, en esa misma medida, ha tenido que *redefinirlos* en el mismo movimiento por el que *autodefinía*. [...] Ciertamente, el feminismo históricamente no surge [...] en un medio en el que nada se pone en cuestión. [...] [E]l despertar del feminismo en España no se [produjo] sino de forma balbuciente y tímida en el seno del movimiento de lucha democrática antifascista y en los partidos clandestinos de oposición. (45-46)

Amorós suggests that in 1975 two movements arose in the public sphere: "uno se definía 'de mujeres' y el otro feminista," the *Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres* and the *Colectivo Feminista* respectively.[96]

In order to map out ideological classifications of feminists of the 1970s Amorós delineates "algunas coordenadas fundamentales" which serve as axes for the discussion; among them is the distinction between "el feminismo radical" and

"el feminismo no radical." Whereas radical feminists see the class antagonism between men and women (distinct classes in the Marxian sense) as the force driving society and history, non-radical feminism ("que puede ser a su vez socialista o burgués") recognizes the ancient opposition between men and women but does not credit this opposition with the "función de motor de la sociedad" (48). Amorós' use of the term *diferencia* in clarifying this distinction is important:

> El primero de estos planteamientos pone el énfasis en la *diferencia* en las funciones sexuales y reproductoras que sustituiría a los hombres y a las mujeres como dos clases sexuales, mientras que el segundo se refiere fundamentalmente a las funciones que ambos sexos desempeñan, respectivamente, en la producción de la vida material. (48 emphasis added)

In this sense Falcón's brand of feminism is associated with difference, specifically with the different roles men and women play within the social organism.

There is another sense in which Falcón's brand of feminism is associated with the concept of difference. As Amorós points out, within radical feminism there exists a biologistic mode of analysis, in the line of Shulamith Firestone or Falcón herself, which maintains the position that for woman within patriarchy the principal means of production is her body and the children she bears are the product. Amorós notes that "este sesgo biologista que aparece en ciertos puntos del feminismo radical lo aproxima al feminismo de la diferencia" (50). In this sense the fundamental biological difference between the sexes forms the basis for an entire analysis of the mode of production, which is the foundation of the patriarchal order.

Yet clearly Falcón does not ally herself with *el feminismo de la diferencia*. Falcón's feminism relies on the concept of difference between the sexes for its theoretical elaborations; but with respect to *el feminismo de la diferencia* Falcón's

brand of radical feminism "se separa profundamente en cuanto a estrategia política y en otros planteamientos ideológicos fundamentales" (Amorós 50). Whereas the Partido Feminista is profoundly committed to female protagonization of activity in the public, political sphere, *el feminismo de la diferencia* operates on another level:

> [S]e propone algo así como nuevas formas "específicamente femeninas" de discutir y de comunicarse, así como la conversión de los encuentros feministas en "una fiesta" que haga quebrar los rígidos esquemas de unas programaciones y unos contenidos que llevan la impronta de "lo patriarcal." (52)

The representative text Amorós uses to elucidate ideological aspects of *el feminismo de la diferencia* is Victoria Sendón's *Sobre diosas, amazonas y vestales.*

Central to the philosophical positioning of feminism of difference is the space of the symbolic wherein difference is said to exist or be practiced. As Sendón explains it:

> He transgredido el objeto de la mujer como "problema" para situarme en la óptica de la mujer como "misterio", es decir, devolviéndola al plano de lo simbólico que, queramos o no, nos preexiste. Por una especial deformación racionalista y materialista de cuño "made in Patriarcado" nos aferramos a un concepto de lo real, que no es más que la abstracción cifrada de un mundo mucho más rico e inquietante que ignoramos o nos empeñamos en negar. (Sendón de León, *Diosas* 14)

The conception of woman in this "versión soteriológica del feminismo de remotos antecedentes," as Amorós qualifies it, takes its inspiration from mythology[97]; its mythical discourse stands in countrast to the patriarchal logos. Rejecting all forms of patriarchal discourse as useless to personal emancipation, *el feminismo de la diferencia* embraces "los placeres del cuerpo y del conocimiento" and insists that every woman operate "a partir de sí misma" since "lo apasionadamente subjetivo constituye su mejor potencial" (Amorós 53).

Amorós finds that the most significant aspect in terms of impact on the movement is this manifesto's position vis-à-vis *la igualdad:*

> ¿A qué igualdad aspiramos? ¿Qué semejanzas defendemos? Los dogmas de la época impiden, bajo amenaza de excomunión, que cualquier ciudadano honesto, "comprometido", mediamente racional, clame en contra de la igualdad. Acepto mi "propia excomunión" y me desmarco de cualquier referente que tenga que ver con la honestidad, el compromiso o la racionalidad en clave de consenso. Quiero la diferencia. Me repugna profundamente la igualdad. Mi pensamiento no puede ni pensarla y no quiero consentir, una vez más, en cometer errores arropada en el buen sentido, esa concepción estúpida de los fracasados por vocación [...]. (Sendón de León, *Diosas* 54)

In terms of what *el feminismo de la diferencia* means for the political efficacy of the movement, Amorós concludes: "[E]n el balance del "feminismo de la diferencia", en nuestra opinión, priman los elementos paralizantes para el movimiento de emancipación de la mujer sobre los estimulantes" (54). Intense reaction of *el feminismo de la diferencia* has arisen from the strongly enlightenment-inspired feminists,[98] to whose principles Falcón is a most vehemently resolute adherent. The clearest and most well developed expression of Falcón's position with respect to *el feminismo de la diferencia*, apart from *Rupturas*, appears in *Mujer y poder político.*

FEMINIST SEXUALITY

Another major theme developed in *Rupturas* is that of feminist sexuality. Falcón imparts a vindication of women's fundamental right to a full fledged satisfying sexuality, and she emphasizes the woeful lack of availability of adequate anatomical/physiological information in the immediate post-dictatorship period. Such information would, in part, enable full sexuality to develop. For Elena, the feminist movement plays a central role in the mitigation

of the situation: the lack of knowledge is alleviated by insight gained through consciousness raising sessions in which information and experience is shared. Prior to her involvement in the movement Elena had reached the point of feeling "asco por el miembro viril y sus funciones fisiológicas" (174), due not to lesbian leanings but rather out of ennui at male self interest.

At one of the "reuniones de encuentro" Elena meets María Angeles who, after twenty years of marriage, asks "¿puedes decirme, que no lo sé, qué es el clítoris y dónde lo tengo?" (182). After María José explains masturbatory technique for achieving orgasm, including the location and function of the clitoris, Elena is able for the first time in her life to experience orgasm, after only seven minutes of effort. Elena recognizes that she previously had been kept in the dark and suggests that her psychiatrist Antonio Ferrater is culpable:

> Si Elena se hubiese atrevido hubiera gritado allí mismo [...] "sí, tenéis razón, tenéis toda la razón, yo misma he sido la primera víctima de la ignorancia, de la estafa de todos, desde mi padre hasta el último psiquiatra", el bueno de Antonio, que fue incapaz de explicarle lo que debía hacer para alcanzar su ración de placer, la suya, la indiscutible, la que le pertenecía desde siempre, desde que poseía aquel órgano, diminuto pero muy eficaz, que estaba dispuesto, de ser bien tratado, a compensarla de tantos dolores como le depararía la vida, y cuya utilización, cuyo derecho a su disfrute la había sido sustraído dolorosamente. (183)

Pinpointing the psychiatrist as the one who ought to have been able to help her but who was incapable of doing so constitutes one of the basic premises upon which the edifice of second wave feminism was built, not only in Spain but internationally: the repudiation of Freudian doctrine relative to female sexual development.[99]

As early as 1970, in the wake of Kinsey's and Masters & Johnson's research, articles began to appear on the international scene fleshing out issues

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related to the particularity of female sexual pleasure and its political dimensions. Two of the most influential of these are Susan Lydon's 1970 "The Politics of Orgasm" and Anne Koedt's 1973 "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm." Lydon states that in the post-Freudian milieu,[100] "The clitoral vs. vaginal debate raged hot and heavy among the sexologists," with Kinsey in 1953 emphasizing the centrality of the clitoris to female orgasm; Lydon reasons that "there was something indispensable to the society [sic] in the Freudian view which allowed it to remain unchallenged in the public consciousness" (199). Definitive evidence was gathered by Masters and Johnson, whose 1966 *Human Sexual Response* concluded that "Anatomically, all orgasms are centered in the clitoris, whether they result from direct manual pressure applied to the clitoris, indirect pressure resulting from the thrusting of the penis during intercourse, or generalized sexual stimulation of other erogenous zones like the breasts" (Lydon 199-200).

The lack of generalized acceptance of these findings, despite the solidity of Masters & Johnson's scientific approach, their book's instant best-seller status, and the plethora of popular paperbacks making the information readily available to the general public, suggests to Lydon that the "mythology [of vaginal orgasm] remains intact because a male-dominated culture has a vested interest in its continuance" (200). Female pleasure being centered in the vagina makes women dependent on males seeking pleasure; however if female pleasure is clitoral, "woman's sexual pleasure was independent on the male's, and she could seek her satisfaction as aggressively as the man sought his, a prospect which didn't appeal to too many men" (201). Thus the myth of the vaginal orgasm "was part of keeping women down, of making them sexually, as well as economically, socially, and politically subservient" (201). Conversely, "to define and enjoy the

forms of her own sexuality" constitutes for a woman "the first step toward her emancipation" (205).

In "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" Anne Koedt questions the premises underlying the notion of female frigidity, which is defined as the incapacity of women to have vaginal orgasms. The "experts" proclaim it a psychological problem, and "Those women who complained about it were recommended psychiatrists, so that they might discover their "problem" -- diagnosed generally as a failure to adjust to their role as women" (326). While women were "defined sexually in terms of what pleases men," the reality of female anatomy and sexual response refutes the myth (326). Facts such as "women need no anaesthesia inside the vagina during surgery," and "The head of the clitoris is [...] composed of erectile tissue [...] supplied with special nerve endings called genital corpuscles" which no "other part of the female generative tract has" are convincing enough (329). On top of being sexually deprived, the nonorgasmic woman was blamed for her own "frigidity" and for having a "psychological problem."

This is precisely what happens to Elena at the hands of the psychiatrist Antonio Ferrater. Her initial approach is one of innocent confidence, as she believes Ferrater to be the authority who will enable her to resolve her dilemma and find a way to a more satisfying life. But she soon realizes that he encourages her to simply accomodate herself to the limiting parameters of her situation, to which she responds critically:

> Ya sé, ya sé. La solución es exigir menos y contentarme con poco, ¿verdad? Es un buen consejo, no cabe duda, pero no demasiado original, ¿sabes? Porque el cura del colegio ya nos lo daba en los felices años cuarenta, cuando el temor de Dios y del infierno nos torturaba a todas horas, y la máxima para obtener la gracia y

> alcanzar la salvación del alma era no pedir, no desear, no esperar. Resignación y humildad... [...] No comprendo como [sic] la ciencia psiquiátrica no ha podido en cien años encontrar soluciones nuevas. Estás cumpliendo el mismo papel que el director espiritual de las señoras de la buena sociedad decimonónica. (70)

Elena's awareness that "la psiquiatra trataba hoy de consolar y de acomodar a su papel tradicional a las amas de casa del siglo XX, de la misma manera que los directores espitiuales decimonónicos" (78) is, as Starcevic notes, demonstrative of Michel Foucault's assertion that "we are not talking here about the repression of certain topics, i.e., sexuality, but rather, the transference of the locus of control of these topics from the church to the medical profession"[101] (Starcevic 180). Ferrater's interest in Elena's accomodation really serves Alejandro's interests more than Elena's. However Elena is not prone to reconciliation with her husband. In fact her life has changed so much that "[s]e sentía tan radicalmente alejada de aquel hombre con el que había compartido veinticinco años de vida, como si nunca lo hubiera conocido" (78).

Elena's principal interest at this point is her lover Miguel, who affords her at least some level of communication and affection. In another consultation with Ferrater the subject of "aquel problema obsesivo de luchar por alcanzar el orgasmo" (93) comes up. Years earlier she had consulted her gynecologist, to whom she admitted that "sí, me excito mucho y luego... pues no consigo nada... (94). He also kept her in the dark (if he even knew about the function of the human clitoris), as is evident in his reply:

> —Oh, pero eso es placer también. Hay muchas maneras de obtener placer y no únicamente alcanzando el clímax. Le aseguro que usted es afortunada de obtener sensaciones placenteras haciendo amor con su marido, no hay muchas señoras que puedan decir lo mismo. Se lo aseguro yo que llevo trienta años visitando mujeres. (94)

His response does little more than satisfy her curiousity as to whether other women experience orgasm. The question in Elena's mind in later years is why she sometimes has orgasms and why sometimes not. The manuals of sexology clarify nothing. The psychiatrist's opinion is that "su posibilidad de alcanzar el orgasmo dependía exclusivamente de su relajación psíquica" (93).

Clearly Ferrater's allegiance is more to Alejandro than to Elena. He suggests that Elena ought to make love with Alejandro to paliate her husband's anxiety, to make everything easier (168). She rejects this outright:

> Deberías conocerme mejor. [...] Y no me digas que acostarme con mi marido no es despreciable puesto que firmamos un acta de matrimonio, porque para mí ese documento legal no absuelve de todas las miserias, y hay tantas prostituciones en el lecho conyugal como en los burdeles. Yo he dejado de amar a Alejandro hace ya mucho tiempo, y a costa de gran sufrimiento, porque lo quería apasionadamente cuando me casé con él, y me ha costado quince años desilusionarme difinitivamente, y, acabado el amor, no encuentro honesto mantener relaciones sexuales con él porque ahora me dé pena, o peor aún, porque así me quite un problema, otro más de encima [...]. (168)

To alleviate his embarrassment and in a blind attempt to help Elena discover what he himself appears not to know (i.e., the functioning of clitoral orgasm), Ferrater asks her about her initial discovery of sex and whether she masturbated in her youth. It never ocurred to her to do so; or rather, she says, she really did not know how, nor did any of her friends. Embarrassed over the fact that "seguía sin saber exactamente cuál era la verdadera técnica para conseguir el placer autónomo," she hopes not to have to admit that as an adult she has not masturbated either (170).

In Ferrater's opinion Elena's experience of "asco por el miembro viril y sus funciones fisiológicas" and her lack of orgasm are explained by the fact that "el rechazo a cualquier conducta sexual sólo podía estar motivado por los prejuicios

religiosos que nuestra sociedad católica había hecho interiorizar a sus individuos. Sobre todo a las mujeres" (173). Elena asks herself if this means that sex is supposed to be always pleasurable and desirable, and knowing that male pleasure far exceeds female pleasure she wonders: "Pero, ¿a qué sexo se refería... o, mejor dicho, a cuál de los dos sexos... es decir, no, a cuál de las conductas sexuales y a según quién de los dos...?" (173). Elena comes to the realization that Ferrater has nothing more of interest to offer her because she sees that "[p]ara los dos profesionales Elena formaba parte de aquella clase de mujeres que nunca habían sabido gozar del sexo por una incapacidad psicológica que ellos debían descubrir" (174). He has proved himself incapable of discovering the root of the problem and from there its remedy. All the wiser, she breaks off relations with the psiquiatrist entirely, thus establishing another *ruptura* in an ever-growing chain of breaks.

Relative to psychology's incapacity to deal adequately with women's issues, in 1978 Naomi Weisstein's groundbreaking 1968 essay "Kinder, küche, kirche: Psychology constructs the Female" was published in translation in Spain.[102] Weisstein makes it clear that: "La psicología no tiene nada que decir sobre lo que son verdaderamente las mujeres, ni sobre lo que necesitan ni sobre lo que quieren, porque la psicología no sabe nada de eso" (105). In the character of Antonio Ferrater Falcón exemplifies this notion. He really cannot help Elena. It is only through feminist circles that she is able to access information about female anatomy, physiology, and sexuality. Not only does the informative session on female orgasm which she attends in the company of other women unshroud mysteries long held secret, but it bonds her with her sisters with whom

she knows she shares this common ground; it cements her affinity to them. She feels that "su orgasmo recién conseguido [...] les pertenecía a todas" (184).

After Elena's discovery of her own potential for orgasm she reencounters Miguel after a seven-month hiatus. The reader is perhaps disappointed -- Elena has already outgrown this. Yet soon the purpose for the rendezvous becomes clear: this is the vindication of her right to pleasure. Once in bed, she proclaims to Miguel, who is following his same routine (severely lacking in foreplay), that he must caress her more if she is to obtain pleasure. For the first time in four years she demands her own pleasure. Huffily he asks for an explanation, and she informs him that she has never reached orgasm with him, that she was faking it. She thinks that perhaps "esta torpeza [de Miguel] [...] se debe a la ignorancia" but then realizes that he lacks the will to apportion her the pleasure she seeks:

> Y la idea de que la mala fe hubiese llevado a su amante a no utilizar los medios, que indudablemente debía conocer, para compartir con ella aquel placer del que él se procuraba su buena dosis, hizo enrojecer de ira a Elena. (191)

She realizes that his lack of considering her equal to himself in deserving pleasure is reason enough to break ties with him, and to her own satisfaction she finds that "no sólo no le importaba su frustrada relación sexual sino que tampoco parecía emocionarla la situación, que se anunciaba irremediablemente más como una ruptura que como una reconciliación" (191).

Miguel's response is to blame Elena's feminist associations: "Ahora entiendo lo que te ha pasado. No podía imaginármelo, porque nunca hubiera supuesto que fueses capaz de meterte entre esas desgraciadas, frustradas y pervertidas" (192). As he feigns relief that she is not carrying scissors along to

castrate him, he asks sardonically whether she has become lesbian, like María José. She vents her anger in one sharp blow and leaves, slamming the door behind her. In the taxi she tries to relax, expecting an ulcerative assault on her system, or tears, or an attack of depression. To her surprise and pleasure she finds that none of these physical ailments assail her. She observes herself not only maintaining the indignation which triggered her dispute with Miguel, but also seeks to continue the polemic with him, "[d]e explicarle prolijamente todas las razones, que eran sus razones, de todas las mujeres que habían sido estafadas por amantes como aquél, y de explicarles también a todas aquellas mujeres las verdades que siempre les habían ocultado" (193). She has become a warrior.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS - *Rupturas*

Substantiating what critics have observed about Falcón's fiction (that its greatest value lie in its testimonial nature [Davies, *Spanish* 251], that it is directed to the Spanish woman and offers "many points of reference against which to measure her own situation" [Starcevic, *ALEC* 179], that her fiction works to "subvert the dominant political apparatus" [Vosburg, "Prisons" 132], that in her work "the individual and the social converge, ultimately converting woman into the subject of a feminist discourse that is both personal and political in scope and universal in objective" (Gabriele, "Towards" 102), and that Falcón's testimonial literature replaces the universal "I" of Western humanist discourse with a collective "I", which speaks metonymically in name of a community of the oppressed [Cavallo 88]) *Rupturas* narrates specific aspects of the feminist movement in Spain and the awakening of one woman to her condition within social, political, and interpersonal paradigms which formed the bulwark of the

patriarchal model of human relationships during the period of second wave expansion of the feminist movement in Spain.

This chapter has focused on two particular aspects of this historical confluence of factors: one, the political/social structures in place which induce women to form part of the very system which circumscribes their possibilities and delimits their sense of self, and two, the creation of new structures of behavior and understanding generated in feminist activity and thought. The story of Elena narrates that historical process, characterized by Pilar Folguera as the most important historical phenomenon of the late 1970s: "la ruptura de viejas pautas de comportamiento" and the rejection of "las actitudes patriarcales" which she calls an "actitud de ruptura" are the hallmarks of the change; changes in attitude and breaks with old modes of behavior go hand in hand with the "deseo de alcanzar una independencia en lo económico y en lo afectivo, en lo personal y en lo profesional" (Folguera, "Transición" 130). This is Elena's saga.

At one point in the story Elena finds herself criticizing adherents to *el feminismo de la diferencia* for what is in her view their flight from men, their fear of confronting the battle against men, and their passivity vis-à-vis the daily struggle to survive in the midst of men (162-63). As she encourages her sisters to "salir a luchar al espacio exterior, no dejarse vencer por ellos" (163) she realizes that she herself lacks the courage to do this in her own life. The strength she garners which enables her to fight against the limitations in which she operates and which steal her potential for happiness and satisfaction (marriage, mother-identity, professional status, sexual relations) come from the encounters she has with other women in feminist gatherings. Whether she embraces what they teach her (e.g., knowledge of female sexuality) or discards their comportment

(e.g., programmatic espousal of lesbian relationships as inherently superior to heterosexual ones) what remains is that Elena's life has been radically transformed. She has discarded that which no longer served her interests and has embraced that which promises to make her life more fulfilling; she has engaged in the process of "self-actualization of creative human potential in the struggle against oppression" (Daly 264).

Of equal importance in the elaboration of *Rupturas* is the narration of divisive elements within the feminist movement. In her 1981 overview of the movement, "Spain: Feminism In Our Time," María José Rague-Arias states:

> At present four tendencies can be said to exist within feminism in Spain [...] a feminism working for immediate goals within established society [...] women's sections of proletarian political parties or feminist orgaizations linked to parties [...] another is the feminism which considering women are a class, fights for women's takeover of power and whose chief proponent is the Partido Feminista. There is also the so-called 'radical' wing of feminism which fights for the identity of women, attempts to contribute to the formation of a feminist culture proper to women, and rejects any structure comparable to that of the organizations of men -with whom they want no alliance of any type- functioning solely through assemblies. It is dificult to name exponents of this last tendency given that as well as 'radicals' they call themselves 'independents'. Although this tendency includes many women it manifests itself in short-lived groups which participate in feminist campaigns and are present at meetings and coordinating assemblies at local and state levels but are not classified either by names of groups or individuals and lack any kind of strategy for fighting or orgnization. (475-76)

Each of these tendencies is represented in Falcón's depiction of the various feminist activities in which Elena takes part. Elena's experience of this divisiveness in the movement points to what for Falcón is the principal cause of the breakdown of the feminist movement in Spain, and a testament to its ineffectiveness as a political movement.

The movement's potency as a catalyst for personal change remains, however. There Elena finds the strength to oust Alejandro from their home (which she has paid for with her years of hard work); she finds the knowledge she sought from Antonio Ferrer but which he proved unable to furnish, which provides not only the key to her life-long search for sexual satisfaction but also the means by which she is able to dismiss the dishonest and self-serving "lover" Miguel; she also gains a new sense of self relative to the other women she meets as she compares and contrasts their values and experiences with her own. Thus while the efficacy of the movement as a political tool in the public forum is ambiguously represented, its power to produce meaningful change in individual consciousness and thus in human lives is unequivocal.

With respect to a feminist ethic, the novel offers some inisght into what for Falcón is an ethics of interpersonal relationships. Elena recognizes her own hypocrisy in reproaching others for what she herself is incapable of doing, as when she charges practitioners of *diferencia* with seeking escape from the world around them, from the enemies who engage women in a daily battle for survival, adopting postures of passivity and amiability rather than aggressivity and fearlessness (162-63). Thus Falcón points to the need for integrity between expectations of others and of oneself. The telling of Otilia's attempt to ameliorate her boring marriage by engaging in lesbian affairs shows that women-centered relationships are not necessarily superior to heterosexual ones, and that women are capable of imitating the worst of male conduct: "ese desprecio por la entrega de la otra, ese mezquino utilizar las vidas y los sentimientos de su amante [...], ese separar una vida ordenada [...] de la pasión" (224). Clearly women's liberation ought not consist of imitating (the worst in) men. To Ferrater's

suggestion that she make love to Alejandro just to make things easier Elena responds, "no encuentro honesto mantener relaciones con él porque ahora me dé pena, o peor aún, porque así me quite un problema" (168). Lovemaking must be based on honest intentions.

The personal liberation Elena feels as a result of confronting squarely that which has made her so unhappy and of taking steps to correct her situation gives her an uncommon sense of personal power. Achieving clitoral orgasm, the fulfillment of her physioloogical destiny, is the common ground whe shares with other women, and affords her a sense of affinity with them never before known. When she demands of Miguel that he provide her with this kind of satisfaction, recognizing her equal right to orgasmic pleasure, and he refuses, she leaves him. In the cab she expects another ulcer attack, but it never comes. In fact, she apears to be healed of her malady. Thus through learning of her own potential for an equal share in the sexual balance of power, and demanding it, Elena tears away from old ways and leaps into new ways of being, healing herself in the process. As she prepares for her trip to Cairo, the reader feels assured that Elena, for one, will never return to her old ways; there are too many definitive *ruptura.* By making a feminist political issue a most personal one, Elena is empowered, and Falcón offers a new subject position to her readers, urging them to self-actualization in their own struggles.

CHAPTER 6

FALCON'S NOVELS OF THE 1990s:

CAMINO SIN RETORNO AND *POSTMODERNOS*

PART I:

POWER, SEX, AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN *CAMINO SIN RETORNO*

> [T]he analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations and the 'agonism' between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence.
>
> --Michel Foucault[103]

Generally speaking, when the question of power arises within the framework of 20th century Peninsular studies, the specter of Francoist fascism surfaces on the horizon. As an institutionalized form of power, the *guardia civil* was central to the regime's hegemony, while prisons like Carabanchel and Yeserías were accessory elements of this "pathological form" or "disease of power," as Foucault has termed fascism (Subject 209). The Catholic Church, Franco's co-partner in the authority complex, through its various "technologies of the self"[104] propagated psychological domination which its subjects internalized from the tenderest of ages, forming an ethos of self-monitorization and self-limitation which spread throughout the population. Communism is another structured form of power, which became a formidable ideological antagonist to the forces of right and order even while the PCE dictated its own mandates for action, exercising both psychological and material control over its adherents.

Lidia Falcón's novel *Camino sin retorno* treats these foci of power, as it relates the history of the final days of Franco and the first years of the Transition. *Camino sin retorno* is the fourth novel published by Falcón. The book dates from

1992 and typifies Falcón's acerbic critique of the left from within its own ranks. Constructed as a series of retrospective episodes encapsulated within the frame of a five-hour conversation between Elisa and her estranged husband Arnau, *Camino sin retorno* narrates the lives of the militant women of FRAP and the PCE who were enclosed in the walls of Madrid's women's prison Yeserías during the final years of the dictatorship; it also a examines the relationship between Elisa and Arnau as they recall their shared history and she attempts to ascertain the reason for her husband's abandonment. The character Octubre, a third central figure, "una de las heroínas de la novela, singularmente luchadora, experimentada y lúcida," (París, "Puñado" 66) is unmistakably the alter ego of Falcón herself. Octubre knew Elena and Arnau before the two women were imprisoned, and their relationship continued for a time after their release.

One observer has characterized Falcón's technique for constructing the action in *Camino sin retorno* as "profoundly original" in the way it weaves Elisa's and Arnau's memories into a seamless whole:

> La técnica con que la acción de *Camino sin retorno* está construida se muestra profundamente original. Todo el relato se centra [...] en el encuentro final entre los dos grandes protagonistas, Elisa y Arnau. Y a partir de esta situación central, la confrontación de dos personalidades, de dos perspectivas en que una historia común se manifiesta, asistimos a un doble juego en el desarrollo de la acción. (París, "Puñado" 65)

The problem of reconciling the fascist past with the "democratic" present is resolved in the novel perhaps more easily than it has been for anyone in real life. Falcón's method of shifting from Elisa's present to her past allows the reader to see how each period of her life (her childhood experiences, her years of Communist militancy, her stint in prison) gives meaning to each successive period and to the present:

> Por una parte se va saltando hacia el pasado, con técnica de "Flashbach" [sic]. Un pasado que aparece en su entidad propia y en su sedimento sobre el presente. Por otra parte el encuentro, la conversación va avanzando lentamente. Este peculiar enfoque de la acción hace que las personalidades de ambos protagonistas se vayan revelando, resplandeciendo su ser en este escenario de "jucio final" al modo hegeliano de su historia común y sus historias propias. [...] Pero, a la par, se nos manifiesta un singular sentido del tiempo, atravesado por ciertas constantes que lo cruzan por extrañas y sorprendentes reiteraciones. Y que en este sentido podría sugerir el "eterno retorno", pero más adecuadamente se identificaría con la imagen dialéctica del discurrir de la historia en espiral. (París, "Puñado" 65)

The "constantes" to which París refers are Elisa's Catholic education and the profound marks it leaves on her consciousness; the radical discourse of Octubre, the voice of feminist conscience; and Elisa's experience in the Party and the concomitant secondary position accorded her as woman. Falcón's treatment of this final theme may be considered a continuation of its exploration, as has been seen, in *Es largo esperar callado* with Athenea's period of Party militancy. As succinctly elucidated by Jorge Sampedro:

> [L]a condición subalterna y sometida de la mujer no es impuesta sólo por los poderes tradicionalmente patriarcales [...] sino incluso en ambientes minoritarios que, como el FRAP, se proponían nada menos que cambiar el mundo mientras, paradójicamente, mantenían sojuzgada a la mujer por anacrónicas relaciones entre los sexos. (Sampedro 45).

Thus *Camino sin retorno* is qualified fairly by Levine as "un testimonio fascinante visto desde una perspectiva nueva" (*Camino* 41) because it offers its readers a history of the last days of Franco from the perspective of women inside Yeserías and inside the Party, and of earlier days, inside convent school.

The dynamics between politics and *intrahistoria*, ubiquitous in Falcón's work, bring sharply into focus what is for her the only remaining viable path of revolution: the feminist struggle. It will be recalled that *intrahistoria* is the term

whereby Miguel de Unamuno vindicated "[l]a historia callada y profunda de las multitudes y de la cotidianidad [...] frente a la historia convencional" (París, "Puñado" 64). It is the retelling of events covered over by "official history" which Falcón offers in this tale, demonstrating her desire to "enfrentar al público español con una problemática que tiene que entender para ser consecuente consigo mismo y para tener conciencia de la historia que ha vivido" (Levine, "Camino" 41).

Yet Falcón does not stop there: the question of a feminist ethics arises. Elisa's life does not magically take on meaning because she engages in the feminist struggle; her identity does not gel in the new cause. Instead, her quest for fulfillment leads her up to the threshold of what Foucault calls the modern ethics of the self, that is, "the formulation of an ethics around a non-essentialist conception of identity" (Mc Nay 84) wherein each person bears the responsibility to create him/herself as a work of art (Foucault, "Genealogy" 350). As Lois Mc Nay points out in *Foucault and Feminism*, "It is important to note that Foucault sees this exploration of the self not as a liberation of a true or essential inner nature, but rather as an obligation, on the part of the individual, to face the endless task of reinventing him or herself" (89). This task is posited as a feminist ethic in Falcón's novel.

The unfolding of Elisa's life toward confrontation with the challenge of self creation is a record of resistance to power. Through her protagonist Falcón reveals her analysis of power as one which transcends the notion that power is held in isolated centers which form a unified block against which forms of resistance, if they are to have significant impact, must take on monumental dimensions. What she presents instead is analogous to Foucault's conception of

power. For Foucault, a relationship of power is "a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action." (Foucault, "Subject" 220). Susan Bordo has written a good brief overview of Foucault's postulation:

> For Foucault, modern (as opposed to sovereign) power is non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial, and indeed non-orchestrated; yet it nonetheless produces and normalizes bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination. Understanding this new sort of power requires, according to Foucault, several conceptual changes. First, we must cease to imagine "power" as the *possession* of individuals or groups -- as something people "have" -- and instead as a dynamic or network of non-centralized forces. Second, we must recognize that these forces, although non-centralized, are *not* random or haphazard, but configure to assume particular historical forms, within which certain groups and ideologies *do* have dominance. The fact that power is held by any *one* does not entail that it is equally held by *all*. It is "held" by no one; but people and groups *are* positioned differently within it. No one may control the rules of the game. But not all players on the field are equal. (Bordo 232)

Elisa discovers this last point as she moves from a position of relative powerlessness to the threshold of conscious self creation. Her empowerment comprises the decentralization of power and her repositioning with respect to it.

The technologies of the self utilized by the Catholic Church in the development of Elisa's consciousness are evident in flashbacks to her childhood education in the convent school, and in the recurrence in her adult life of mental and behavioral habits instilled there. At seven years of age she began her training in suffering in silence for the love of God. Striving to be holy entailed total serenity, control of one's feelings, impassability in the face of provocations, the absence of anger, rage, and sadness. Disgrace and suffering were to be met with passivity (22). The influence this early training exercises over her as an adult is questioned and resisted by her companions. They query her about the

mental lapses, absences, and inhibitions which she has always suffered in the face of reality, and show her their roots in spiritual exercises, long prayers, meditations, and silences. "No te has fijado en que todas parecemos alejadas, idas de este mundo, entontecidas con tanto rezo y tanto silencio? Fíjate en las otras compañeras. Todas tenemos un tornillo torcido" (92). Thus like Elena in *Rupturas*, although without the structural apparatus of the feminist movement, Elisa draws the strength and understanding, from her "sisters" in prison, which she needs in order to leap beyond her self-limiting conditioning.

The faith ingrained in her early years was transferred, and the practices in which she took part were transformed as Elisa became a servant of the Communist Party. Octubre, who left the Party in 1966, charges Elisa with believing in the Party line like she believes in the Bible, and sees this tendency as generalized among leftist insurgents. She hurls her assault at the policy of the PCE-ml which advocated terrorist activity in response to the horrendous repression of 1973. She sees the provocations of FRAP, like the assassinations of individual *guardia civiles* and attacks on relatively insignificant military installations as totally counterrevolutionary, as incitement of the forces of the right to flex their repressive muscle through their mechanisms of domination: incarceration, torture, and murder of leftist activists. How could so many be led to self destruction by the Central Committee of the PCE-ml? For Octubre, "Los chalados esos están dispuestos a la inmolación en el altar de los mártires, y yo insisto en que eso ha de tener que ver con la educación religiosa que han recibido de niños esos radicalísimos dirigentes marxistas-leninistas. Lo peor que puede haber es un converso" (40). She condemns those who embrace violence as a form of revolution:

> Son un caso patológico de masoquismo. Como ahora esos chalados del GRAPO, que lo único que desean es el martirio. Seguro que todos fueron educados en la admiración de los primeros cristianos comidos por los leones. Te digo que tienen un gran placer en vivir marginados, clandestinos, huyendo de la policía, sintiéndose héroes . . . (133)[105]

Gradually, through the intervention of Octubre, Elisa begins to understand where her blind loyalty to the Party is grounded. It is certainly not based in what the Party has to offer her or any of the other women. The best she can expect from comrade Ramiro, a member of the Central Committee, is indifference; her upset tears provoke in him the reaffirmation of his criterion that women do not serve the interests of the Party (19). Women were called to the centers of communist agitation only to cook and keep house for the men, the "real" protagonists of the struggle. In the prison of Granada, the women prisoners prepared meals for their incarcerated comrades, and dirty clothes passed to them were returned laundered and ironed (54). Octubre relates her former husband's habit of throwing himself on her every night only to roll over afterwards and fall asleep before she even knew what happened:

> ¡Y era militante del PCE! ¡Fígurate! Mucho hablar de la liberación del proletariado, pero para él las mujeres estaban en el mundo únicamente para follarlas. . . Excepto los anarquistas, y poco, los hombres revolucionarios no se han preocupado nunca de la opresión sexual. (156)

When Marisa, sent with her husband to Madrid to study revolutionary ideology, enters Yeserías pregnant and devastated, Octubre immediately gauges her level of ignorance in sexual matters, and again vents her anger at Party politics: "¡Uf, mucho cursillo de cuadros y libros de Lenin y de Mao, y no saber cómo meterla sin hacer daño! ¡Qué ignorancia, señor! Ya se podía haber preocupado tu partido de enseñarte las cosas necesarias de la vida" (79). Party

dictates nevertheless command Marisa's thinking; she responds that her Party "tenía asuntos más importantes de los que ocuparse, y que dar cursillos sobre píldoras y otras tonterías semejantes estaba bien para las organizaciones femeninas pequeñoburguesas, pero que ellos estaban llamados a hacer la revolución, en la que todo cabría" (79).

Decisive steps are taken to deal with Marisa's unwanted pregnancy. Octubre performs the clandestine abortion in her cell by using probes, forcing an expulsive reaction in Marisa's uterus (84). Still Marisa remains adamant in her loyalty to the Party line: for fear of compromise to the Party, she would not have allowed her prison mates to call a doctor if complications would have arisen, nor would she have permitted Octubre to attempt to contact her man because, as she says, "Esto que me pasa es una tontería, y él se está jugando la vida" (84). The obviousness of the sexual politics at play in this episode impels Elisa to question her own loyalties. She realizes that she entered the PCE out of love for Arnau instead of on account of any revolutionary impetus of her own. Thus she takes a step out of her identity which has been formed by technologies of the self perpetrated on her by others, and she begins the journey toward self-subjectification, that is, she moves from being "subject to someone else by control and dependence," and moves toward being "tied to [her] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, "Subject" 212).[106]

Further events within the walls of Yeserías move Elisa toward breaking free of long held limitations on her own subjectivity, her autonomy, particularly with respect to her own sexuality. Within one week of Elisa's encarceration, Mercedes González, disinclined to obey the prohibitions of her political superiors, asks Elisa, "¿Quieres hacer el amor conmigo?" (149). Elisa later learns

of the many regular lesbian relationships going on behind bars, but is unable to consider the option as viable for herself. Intent on helping Elisa find a way out of her feverish, restless solitude Mercedes asks, "¿No te masturbas?" (150). When Mercedes offers a mini-course on masturbation to her fellow inmates, Elisa cannot bear it. She hides in the bathroom, crouched up, ear to the wall, listening to Mercedes demonstrate techniques of female auto-satisfaction (150). When Elisa later criticizes her fellow inmates for having attended the spectacle, Octubre defends what she considers one of the truly great heroic acts undertaken in Yeserías:

> Olvida tus prejuicios burgueses. Todas necesitamos realizar nuestra sexualidad. También somos seres humanos, ¿comprendes? No solamente los hombres se masturban y se dan por el culo cuando no encuentran una mujer a mano. En las cárceles, en los conventos de monjas, las mujeres se aparean, se aman, se hacen compañía y se masturban conjuntamente. ¿No lo sabías, santita? (151)

Thus Yeserías becomes central to the dissociation of some of fascism's techniques of individuation. The resistance proffered by Octubre, Mercedes and others already radicalized by the feminist movement allows for this. A few years after her release Elisa finds heself enmeshed in a lesbian affair with Octubre.

After her release from Yeserías Elisa becomes involved in the feminist movement, during the intensification of its activity following the United Nations' declaration of 1975 as the International Year of Women and after Franco's death. Having seen through the illusion of her own involvement in communist insurgency, Elisa had left Yeserías determined to avoid political activism. But the force of Octubre's argument draws her in: "Sólo el feminismo puede dar el salto cualitativo que hace falta para transformar el mundo. [Es] el paradigma de nuestros tiempos, caducos ya todos los socialismos y todos los comunismos . . ."

(132). But when Elisa's growing feminist activism alienates her husband, she decides to give it up. Octubre analyzes the double standard inherent to Elisa's situation: "Te sentías culpable de ejercer una actividad política en la que él no participaba, mientras que al revés, cuando era él el dirigente político que apenas tenía tiempo para cenar en casa el fin de semana, te parecía bien" (176).

At this time, unknown to Elisa, Arnau embarks on an affair with Roser, a companion from work. It goes on secretly for six months. When Elisa realizes what is happening, Octubre points to Elisa's feminist activism as the motive: "Por eso te ha dejado Arnau. Él te quería en casa, como una buena y hacendosa esposa" (173). Elisa finds it difficult to contradict the analysis, and asks herself, "¿Era posible que en realidad sólo deseara una mujer fiel y dedicada a su cuidado, después de haber[me] arrastrado a aquel partido de guerrilleros durante diez años?" (173). Elisa's roommate Isabel offers a related but distinct explanation for Arnau's estrangement: the lesbian affair which arose between Elisa and Octubre. Elisa had been seduced by the force of Octubre's logic: "Se cumplen los pronósticos del feminismo, ¿comprendes? Liberadas de la explotación y de la brutalidad masculinas, las mujeres sólo encontrarán el equilibrio perfecto cuando mantengan únicamente relaciones sexuales entre sí" (263). Arnau's real motivation for abandoning Elisa is never known; he is unable to articulate an explanation when pressed to do so.

Up to this point in her *camino sin retorno* Elisa has resisted power exercised over her by the Church, the Party, and to some extent her husband. Recall that the working definition of power here is Foucauldian: "What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an

action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future" (Foucault, "Subject" 220). The one remaining influence delimiting Elisa's sphere of action is Octubre, the great antagonistic force of the novel. Elisa's personal quest for autonomy determines that she resist and break free from the limits Octubre puts on her, that she open up her field of action. Once Elisa realizes the root of Arnau's estrangement and tries in vain to rebuild their relationship, rejecting her ties to the feminist movement, Octubre responds caustically:

> Te sientes profundamente disgustada contigo misma, sobre todo ahora en que, por causa de Arnau, has abandonado tu trabajo feminista. Pero no creo que tengas derecho a negar el mérito de tus antiguas camaradas porque ahora te seintas [sic] a disgusto con el papel de obediente esposa que has adoptado. (166)

When Elisa becomes pregnant immediately after Arnau's lover gives birth, Octubre challenges the motives of her act, charging her with seeking to call attention to herself in her abandonment: "¡Estás loca! ¡Si no te das cuenta de la dependencia afectiva que tienes por Arnau y de la cantidad de tonterías que estás haciendo por su amor, es que estás loca, simplemente" (247). Finally Elisa reaches the limit of her psychic resistance, and says she wishes to live a peaceful life, by the side of a husband and children. "¿Al lado de qué marido?, ¿el tuyo o el de otra?" replies Octubre sarcastically, making reference to Elisa's current affair with a married man. This pushes Elena beyond the limit: this is the last time she ever sees Octubre. The gadfly has been dismissed.

Elisa's affair leads Octubre to scorn her lack of personal ethics. And even though Elisa rejects further association with Octubre, her conscience has been pricked by Octubre's probing challenges. Elisa knows that "Todo movimiento revolucionario precisa una ética" (201) and ponders the problem. As the book-

length conversation which has taken place between Elisa and Arnau draws to a close, Elisa realizes that her heart's desire, that she and Arnau be lovers once again, is possible in only one way: by deceiving Roser, the mother of Arnau's child. When Arnau suggests it, Elisa is enraged: "¿Eso te parece progresista? [. . .] ¿Es muy revolucionario tener dos mujeres a la vez?" (313). His Marxist-Leninist consciousness does not reproach him for extramarital relations, and when he responds that she need not mix one thing with the other she replies: "¡Vamos, Arnau, por favor! Menos panfleto entre nosotros, ¿eh? Siempre dispuesto a dar la vida por la revolución y ni un minuto por tu ética personal" (313). When Arnau puts forth the question, "Entonces, para ti, ¿cuál es la alternativa feminista?" she has no answer:

> Debe de existir una síntesis, pero yo no la conozco. Tiene que descubrirse la verdadera ética feminista. Sólo cuando la sepamos podremos avanzar... Quizá sea ésta la clave de las transformaciones revolucionarias... Eso es lo que tengo que hacer. Es el único objetivo que me impulsa a cambiar de vida... ahora lo veo. (313)

This singular purpose comes into clearer focus in the novel's final lines: "Necesito saber cómo se cambia, de dónde se saca fuerza para vomitar la educación recibida... Para aprender a ser otra..." (314). Arnau asks her what it is that she must learn, and her reply is "Tengo que encontrar un nuevo objetivo para mi vida. Pero antes, debo aprender a dejar de amarte" (314).

Thus the novel closes with Elisa on the threshold of self creation. The iconoclasm is nearly complete: she is beyond the mechanisms of the Church, the Communist Party, her marriage, the feminist movement, and Octubre. There remains only one limiting factor: the emotional tie to Arnau. Seeing clearly what it will take to carve out the future of her own choosing, she sets her sights. On

the surface it appears that the question of a feminist ethic remains unanswered. None of Falcón's characters acknowledge that a feminist ethic has been found. Yet in the text there are numerous instances of resisting the power which seeks to produce and normalize people in order to "serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination" (Bordo 232). The resistance, along with Elisa's overt intention to seek modes of self-subjectification in the Foucauldian sense of being "tied to [one's] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" constitute an ethic which responds to the "permanent political task inherent in all [modern] social existence."[107]

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS - *Camino Sin Retorno*

It is certainly true that Falcón leaves Elisa's future open, subject to her own intentions and choices, to be formed by the determinations she must make in the face of her own consciousness, much as Mc Nay points out regarding Foucault's "exploration of the self not as a liberation of a true or essential inner nature, but rather as an obligation, on the part of the individual, to face the endless task of reinventing him or herself" (Mc Nay 89). In this sense the author creates no program, defines no ethical lines which must be followed. Yet Elisa's consciousness has been indelibly marked by Octubre's reasoning and challenges. Hence it is also true that some parameters of a feminist ethic have been laid out clearly in *Camino sin retorno*, since Octubre is so vociferous and her line of reasoning clear. She is the voice of right action in this novel.

For example when Octubre scorns Elisa's lack of personal ethics and Elisa disassociates with the flaming redhead, it is obvious that her conscience has been

pricked by Octubre's questioning, for she castigates her companion Carles saying:

> Todo movimiento revolucionario precisa una ética. Quien no sienta su necesidad, quien haga del oportunismo, de la comodidad y de la corrupción el ideario de su vida, no tiene nada que hacer por el futuro, no tiene sitio entre nosotros ¿comprendes? (201)

Octube also rejects the double standard between the sexes, even if it is disguised to look like something which might advance the revolution; she chastizes Elisa for feeling guilty for participating in Leftist activities without Arnau's consent, even though "cuando era él el dirigente político que apenas tenía tiempo para cenar en casa el fin de semana, te parecía bien" (176). Elisa's choice to drop out of feminist activity on account of Arnau's dismissal of its validity is accepted by Octubre, but Elisa's subsequent condemnation of other women's continued involvement in the movement is vehemently rebuffed: "[N]o creo que tengas derecho a negar el mérito de tus antiguas camaradas porque ahora te seintas [sic] a disgusto con el papel de obediente esposa que has adoptado" (166). Making choices for oneself based on one's own circumstances is acceptable; legislating for others based on one's own personal criteria is not.

The second area where Falcón's delineation of personal ethics is made explicit is in the arena of monogomous relationships. Elisa can be seen to be on both sides of the fence. On the one hand, when she realizes that the only way to have Arnau is to deceive Roser she is incensed, responding with sarcasm: "¿Eso te parece progresista? [. . .] ¿Es muy revolucionario tener dos mujeres a la vez?" (313). But when Elisa decides after all that settling down to marriage and family is what she "really wants" in life, Octubre retorts, "¿qué marido?, ¿el tuyo o el de

otra?," making clear her rejection of the "husband snatching" which Elisa engages in to ease her own pain.

Thus it must be concluded that in *Camino sin retorno* Falcón establishes a feminist counter-ethics, that is, an ethics based on what ought not be done, rather than prescribing behavior that should be adopted. She renounces opportunism, comfort, and corruption in favor of revolutionary struggle; she rejects the double standard whereby the same behavior displayed by two people is accepted or rejected according to the person's sex; she repudiates the legislation of others' activity based on one's own personal criteria; she dismisses out of hand interpersonal betrayal; and she condemns the hypocrisy of acting out of concert with one's own professed beliefs. Most importantly perhaps, Falcón refuses again and again to design the future of her protagonist: Elisa must confront the challenge of reinventing herself after the final break with Arnau with no help from her creator; so too must each woman decide for herself what action to take and what will be the determinants of her own life path. When asked by Arnau what is the feminist alternative, Elisa's reply is, "Debe de existir una síntesis, pero yo no la conozco. Tiene que descubrirse la verdadera ética feminista. Sólo cuando la sepamos podremos avanzar. . . " (313). It appears that *Camino sin retorno* constitutes an exploration of this theme, with no definitive programmation laid out, but with plenty of iconoclasm spread throughout.

PART II:

POSTMODERNOS

LINDA GOULD LEVINE'S "LOS POSTMODERNOS DE LIDIA FALCON"

It will be recalled that Linda Gould Levine, along with Gloria Waldman, was one of the first American researchers to bring news of 1970s Spanish feminism to the American academy (particularly with their first collaboration *Feminismo ante el franquismo: entrevistas con feministas de España*). Over the years Levine has offered highly valuable estimations of Falcón's literary and political work; her analysis of Falcón's last novel is one of only two articles published on the book that could be found by the present researcher. An overview of Levine's insights shall serve here as introduction to Falcón's *Postmodernos*.

In "Los postmodernos de Lidia Falcón" Levine states that one of postmodern writing's principal initiatives is "la subversión de los modos aceptados del pensamiento y experiencia humanos para revelar la falta de significado de la existencia y el abismo sobre el cual precariamente se suspende nuestra supuesta seguridad" (42). For Levine, it is within this context that Falcón entitled her last novel *Postmodernos,* appropriate for a novel which employs a "visión esperpéntica"[108] to reveal her biting critique of Felipe Gonzalez's Spain. Focusing on familial and political structures in an urban setting and confronting the Left with its own contradictions, Falcón "desconstruye minusciosamente muchas de las dicotomías que se han erigido en torno a la derecha y la izquierda y sugiere que en medio del naufragio español de la última década nadie se merece un chaleco salvavidas" (42). Levine draws parallels between *Postmodernos* and such literary antecedents as Cela (*La colmena*), Valle Inclán,

Cernuda, and Delibes (*Parábola del náufrago*), affirming that the compendium of discordant elements which together form Falcón's vision of Madrid in the 1980s constitutes "un ejemplo magistral del realismo crítico" (43).

With respect to *La colmena* the parallels which Levine cites include both similarities and differences. On the one hand certain structural elements correspond between the two novels: "Tanto la estructura de la novela compuesta de varios fragmentos cortos donde se van perfilando los personajes principales como la ruptura de la cronología tradicional y la presentación en muchos casos del efecto antes de la causa evocan el texto que Cela lanza al mundo en 1951" (42). These analogous structural aspects belie, however, a fundamental distinction between Cela's depiction of mid-century Madrilenian life and Falcón's portrait of the 1980s. Whereas *La colmena* "funciona para satirizar el concepto de una España unificada," the function of *Postmodernos* is to "destacar la desintegración de la izquierda y la imposibilidad de una alianza entre los diferentes partidos que la constituyen y que tratan de acceder al poder en las campañas electorales de los ochenta" (42). While the café of Doña Rosita serves as metaphor for Francoist Spain, where differences between "los vencidos y los vencedores" are clearly delimited, in *Postmodernos* the bar *"No valemos nada"* is the site of interaction between characters who share a common destiny, i.e., their lives are bereft of value in the Socialist Spain of Felipe González. The interactions between people already familiar to each other underscore their shared frustration and the paucity of realistic alternatives to their seeming uselessness, and new acquaintances lack common ground for unity: "El hecho de que se vayan conociendo e incluso formando amistades [...] manifiesta la forma

en que las nuevas alianzas se basan más en el alcohol y el consuelo momentáneo que en una ideología unificadora" (43).

Levine goes on to observe that this absence of unifying political ideology is counterbalanced by the presence of another more pervasive and fundamental principle:

> Aunque una ideología unificadora no existe respecto a los partidos políticos, si [sic] existe a nivel del machismo dominante que penetra todas las esferas de la vida madrileña, y que se revela en los dictámenes más estereotipados de los obreros en paro que no reconocen el derecho de la mujer a trabajar, de los comunistas que acusan a sus miembros feministas de histeria biológica y de los burgueses que repiten el lema de "mujer en casa, pierna quebrada." (43)

The unifying principle of *machismo*, expressed in attitude as well as behavior, has tragic results: three women, Aránzazu, Conchita, and Belén, "víctimas del cansancio, explotación y sacrificio" (43), meet their demise at the hands of men who are indirectly responsible for their deaths. It is true, as Levine states, that Falcón avoids establishing an absolute dichotomy between "víctimas y verdugos, entre hombres y mujeres": "se borran los contornos que separan estas categorías" (43). Power is not exercised solely by men against women or by men against each other, for there are women who behave as if bent on the destruction of each other. Any would-be collective ethic is superseded by an individualist project, as "[l]as relaciones políticas y personales se definen precisamente por las matamorfosis constantes que [los personajes] sufren a medida que cada uno busca su parcela de gloria, amor, poderío y amistad" (43). While in some cases the men share an ethic of *machismo*, there is no parallel unifier for women, and in general between the sexes it is each man/woman for him/herself.

It would appear that Falcón's old dream of a unifying ideology for women, which would serve as a foundation for feminist action, has been abandoned. Whereas she waxes bitter at the breakdown of just such a principle in *Rupturas*, in *Postmodernos* one notes rather an acceptance of a generalized divisiveness. Is there a lingering nostalgic yearning for unity, or has Falcón given up? This is question to which the present analysis shall return.

Levine's characterization of Falcón's vision in *Postmodernos* as *valle-inclanesca* wherein "le huele España" is substantiated not only by the frequently alluded-to stench of areas inhabited by the characters, but also by the fact that "su retrato de Madrid se convierte en nuevo esperpento, en nueva definición de España como 'deformación de la civilización española'" (43). The multiple examples of a supposedly modernized Madrid (the electric escalators which disallow people to enter the Metro, the police station where citizens' needs cannot be met, the offices equipped with new computers which employees do not know how to use, the electric lamp which Nieves takes in for repair and which is converted by the shopkeeper into a lance he hangs on his wall) are seen by Levine as "recuerdos de la España inverosímil por donde vagaba don Estrafalario hace años [...] un eco de la dicotomía entre progreso y encerramiento, Europa y España, que reverberaba por la península durante siglos" (43).

Closely associated with Valle-Inclán is the discourse of the Generation of 98, which Levine affirms tended to privilege one or the other of the dichotomous terms of its social critique (progreso y encerramiento, Europa y España). In contrast, Falcón satirizes dual tendencies equally: "Si bien revela despiadosamente que los únicos que han triunfado en esta España socialista y democrática son los que pertenecen a la empresa privada, también satiriza el

discurso fosilizado del comunista" (43), for example in the character Enrique, who rejects "modern" Socialism in favor of the Old Spain of *burros, tortillas* and *boinas*. Falcón's iconoclastic attack on all that comes before the eye invites comparison with Luis Cernuda's caustic "Mejor la destrucción, el fuego" which Levine equates with comrade Mario's statement (in reference to all who have acceded to power by virtue of manipulations and personal connections) that "para renovar de verdad el comunismo haría falta que os fueráis todos los que estáis y que se empezara de nuevo con gente nueva" (*Postmodernos* 230).

For Levine the characters of *Postmodernos* exist within a political-economic system which is presumed to be structured in order to serve their interests but which leaves them in much the same position as during Francoism: "Desposeídos de nuevo en la España socialista como lo habían sido en la España franquista, los personajes de Falcón se hunden en el alcohol, el sexo, la amistad y en ciertos casos en la solidaridad y colectividad como modo de romper la impotencia que los consume" (43). If it is true that human beings seek to exercise power, the frustration and unhappiness which mark those who inhabit *Postmodernos* result from the incapacity of all who lack sufficient *enchufe* to be able to do so. Yet for all the valuable insight Levine offers with respect to this text, one is left wondering why there is so little focus on the feminist aspects of the work. Is it really the case that men and women are equally frustrated and dispossessed? Has Falcón dispensed with her analysis along sex lines of the corruption and depravity of Spanish society? Falcón is, if anything, a feminist writer--where is the feminism in this text? Have the lines dividing the categories man/woman been so erased that analysis of sexual politics is nonexistent in this work? This

question shall constitute the backdrop for the study of *Postmodernos* in this chapter.

PRINCIPAL FEMALE CHARACTERS

The deaths of three female characters and the conditions under which they die form part of Falcón's denunciation of sexual politics in this novel. Conchita, Aránzazu, and Belén are all introduced in the first chapter, as are all other principal female characters. Conchita is a single mother whose two young children are invariably ill-kept and hungry. She is overwhelmed by the responsibility of feeding and caring for them. Trips to the neighbor's house to acquire food or to palliate her lonely misery often lead her to drink cognac or gin, and by the time she returns to feed or entertain the children they are asleep on the floor. Cognizant of the discrepancy between what is expected of her and what she is actually capable of, Conchita cries out in frustration, "¡yo no soy una madre previsora! ¡ni siquiera sé por qué soy una madre!" (35).

Conchita's father, "podrido de dinero," provides financial support but at too high a cost: "no entendía nada y lo que le diera le serviría únicamente para reporcharle toda la vida el fracaso de su matrimonio, y para vigilarla y obligarla a vivir como él quisiera" (61). Her estranged husband Alvaro makes a minimal contribution to the welfare of the children, in spite of his being a successful banker who manages to have servants at home and, as she complains to her friend, "como él es el que tiene el dinero pretende controlarme, no dejarme vivir" (105). Instead of helping her and doing right by the children he has developed what she considers to be a series of tactics which leave the children disappointed and constantly in need while the lack of good care appears to be Conchita's fault.

When Alvaro complains to a friend that Conchita is "tan loca como siempre y los chicos abandonados [...], no le da la gana de fregar ni de guisar de modo que aquella casa es una mierda," and the friend suggests that he take charge of the children in his own home, Alvaro refuses, claiming that he is too busy, that Conchita has nothing else to do in life, and that above all to leave them with her "sale más barato" (137).

Seeking a way out of her misery by gaining economic independence Conchita decides to find a job, "¡como fuera!, trabajando en la vendimia o fregando suelos o picando piedra en la calle" (60). At one point she claims that "sólo puedo dedicarme a puta si quiero tener algún duro mío" (105). Her father tells her she is crazy for wanting to work and earn a living and sides with the husband in all matters. She appeals to an old family friend, Juan, a bank president. He agrees to meet her and discuss the possibility of her working for him, and appears to be disposed to offer her a job. But Alvaro intercedes, convincing Juan that it would not be in Juan's best interest: employing Conchita would bring on a series of difficulties and problems that he is sure Juan would rather avoid. Alvaro acts as if it were in his rights to control her, stating: "Tu [sic] puedes comprender Juan, que no puedo permitir que mi mujer, aunque estemos separados hace varios años, al fin y al cabo es también la mujer de mis hijos, se dedique a. . . bueno, a esta clase de tonterías" (187). Alvaro's attitude is that "la única manera de tenerla controlada, de verdad, es reducirla a la pobreza, te lo digo yo. Si ella se encuentra con dinero, aunque sea poco, se sentirá independiente y se mostrará arrogante conmigo. Hay que tenerla atada corto, de verdad, sólo así puedo controlarla a ella y a los niños" (188). His wish is not to "causarle ningún grave disgusto"; what he proposes is rather "una regañina, que

se la merece por conspirar de este modo sin que yo lo supiera" (188). He argues that he has the right to intercede since she is, after all, the mother of his children. Juan agrees to the scheme.

Thus when Conchita meets Juan in a restaurant to discuss her prospects for employment, Alvaro appears and the scene portends violence. As he grabs her by the wrist forcing her to stand she cries out for help from the restaurant staff. She curses Juan, "¡cochino traidor, viejo verde, abusa niñas, me has vendido a este torturador!" and screams for all to hear:

> ¡Porque ustedes no saben que estamos divorciados! ¿Entienden? ¡Divorciados! Entre este señor y yo ya no existen vínculos legales, ¿comprenden? No le debo nada, ¡nada! y en cambio él me debe, por lo menos, la pensión de este mes para que coman los niños. [...] [U]nos hijos que no tienen que comer porque este señor que es su padre y que es millonario no les da dinero!
> (205-6)

In an extreme state of agitation she marches out of the restaurant, crying and moaning, mumbling to herself. As she runs into and collides with moving traffic, Conchita meets her death.

While the men who minutes before had abandoned her to her fate of poverty or prostitution would certainly not be found guilty for the commission of murder, it can be said that they terminated a certain set of options for her, viable ones. Her physical death is symbolic of the death of an opportunity she may have had to attain some modicum of freedom, based principally on her ability to earn a living in a decent way. Alvaro's presumed right to dominate her actions, to determine her economic situation, to control her life really, is obviously the cause for the agitated state which led to her carelessness in the street. Blinded by rage she runs headlong into an accident which never would

have occurred without Alvaro's intervention in her life, which he had no right to undertake but which social standards sanctioned.

A second tragedy among Falcón's *postmodernos* is the death of Aránzazu. Similarly to Conchita's case, this fatality is related to the lack of ample care provided by absent fathers, and to the need for a mother to earn a living adequate to meet the needs of her children. There is a difference, however, in that Aránzazu holds a position which is both demanding and rewarding. She is artist, journalist, and now designer with ten years of experience, whose job is to organize and execute *haute couture* fashion shows. Hers is a high powered, high stress position which requires long nights, cross country travel, and strict attention to detail. A perfectionist by nature, Aránzazu excels at her position, and wonders at the public's appreciation for her productions, which in her view inevitably fall short of the standard she strives to meet. The reader first encounters her as she prepares for the next day's runway presentation at Madrid's Hotel Ritz. After only a few hours of restless sleep, she finds herself running late, her heart racing, a sense of anxiety impeding her respiration; she tries to gain control: "Con una profunda aspiración intentó dominar la taquicardia que la había acometido" (27).

Near the end of the very successful Ritz fashion show, and before her sister Begoña comes to help her prepare for the *Talgo* to Barcelona, Aránzazu goes up to her room. She prepares a warm bath, anticipating how relaxing it will be; this is the last the reader sees of the beautiful and talented Aránzazu. At the conclusion of the show, Begoña cannot find her sister, and begins to fret:

> Se sentía muy inquieta por la salud de su hermana que en los últimos meses presentaba un aspecto deplorable. Pensó que no podía adelgazar ni un gramo más sin volverse tuberculosa, y las

> veinte horas diarias que se empeñaba en trabajar para no tener que pedirle dinero a su marido, muy poco dispuesto por otro lado a darlo, amenazaban su integridad física. Quizá también psíquica [...] (42)

When Begoña gets no answer on the phone in her sister's room, she finally convinces hotel personnel to open the door. There she finds Aránzazu, with her "grandes ojos negros abiertos en el rostro cérulo de pómulos hundidos que tenía sorprendentemente una expresión relajada, y el cuerpo esquelético, blanco, hermoso a pesar de todo [...] flotando entre la espuma del baño" (47). Later investigation determines that no foul play entered into Aránzazu's death--her heart simply stopped.

Subsequent conversations carried out by Begoña and Santiago, Aránzazu's lover at the time of her death, reveal the forces at work in this dead woman's life. Looming large among these is Pedro, Aránzazu's husband and the father of her two children. Begoña's grief at the funeral is doubled on account of this man's insistence that he take the children, separating them from her, with whom they had lived and known as a second mother:

> [E]speraré una semana para que podáis hacer el equipaje pero el otro lunes quiero a los niños en mi casa, ¿lo has entendido? Siete años de separación, de pleitos interminables, de gastos judiciales y de minutas de abogado que dejaron exhausta a su hermana, exhausta hasta matarla, siempre luchando para evitar que sus hijos tuvieran que vivir con el señorito fascista que les había tocado de padre [...]. (62)

Santiago remains silent upon seeing Pedro at the funeral, although he feels like crying out, "¡tú la has matado, tú eres el único culpable de este asesinato, si le hubieras dado el dinero que necesitaba no se habría extenuado hasta la muerte!" (63). He later swears that he will kill Pedro for his crime of neglect, as he passionately explains to his sister:

> ¡Es que la han asesinado, comprendes, la ha asesinado el criminal de marido que tiene, que le negaba la comida de sus hijos y los zapatos y el colegio, si ella hubiera recibido de él una cantidad decente no se hubiera matado trabajando! ¡Y contra tipos como ese [sic] no hay ley ni castigo ni nada que hacer más que matarlos! ¡Eso es lo que haré! ¿Comprendes? ¡Lo mataré! (93)

Santiago's passion is, however, tainted with hypocrisy, for he himself refuses to provide his ex-wife with sufficient funds, and regularly engages in verbal battle with his mother over the issue.

A further irony to the story of Aránzazu is that Pedro manages not only to gain custody of the children but also denies visitation rights to Begoña and her mother. This is a terrible blow to Begoña, "que adora a los chiquillos y que prácticamente los había cuidado desde pequeños, porque Aránzazu trabajaba día y noche para mantenerlos" (149). But she and the members of the feminist collective which support her are informed by the attorney that there is little that can be done until summer's end. The likelihood of the judge's determining in their favor is slim anyway, so there are only tears left, and longing, for Begoña (and for the children).

The third death narrated by Falcón which, like the others, underscores the difficulties facing women in Spain of the post-Transition and post-second wave feminism is that of Belén. She is representative of the myriad of women who have participated in double militancy. In her role as wife and mother she is frustrated--for Belén these responsibilities are sources of misery. The reader first encounters Belén after a disagreement she has with Gregorio, the Party boss who exploits Belén; she has worked as a secretary for the Party for twenty-five years. Two things become clear about Belén at the outset: first, it seems to her friends that Belén is always preoccupied with her daughter Rosita, who runs wild in the

streets, ignores domestic duties, and is ill cared-for since the death of Belén's mother; and second, she is an activist and leader of feminist groups in Madrid.

In her role as secretary, immense burdens fall on Belén's shoulders. A typical day for her is not different from that of millions of other secretaries: "Contestaba el teléfono mecánicamente. Le dolía la espalda de escribir a máquina, de hablar por teléfono, de levantarse cada cinco minutos a atender una visita, a abrir la puerta, a entregar los carteles y los folletos" (24). Not insignificantly, the office photocopier has run out of toner, and none can be purchased until next week. This is particularly inconvenient for the Party since they need to distribute copies of the program for the upcoming elections, and each of the many Party groups has requested 100 copies which cannot be furnished. Belén fears the reaction of Gregorio, while young people crowd the office predicting the triumph of the Left.

Belén's frustration at doing the same repetitive labor for so many years for a cause which in her mind is at a dead end is expressed in typical Falconian fashion:

> Empujó con el voluminoso culo una silla que se interponía entre ella y la pared y se situó detrás del mostrador con la misma actitud reservada y paciente que empleaba cada día [...]. Pero en vez de ello los miró largamente sin decirles nada. Por fin, ante las preguntas ansiosas y las bromas impacientes, Belén comenzó a explicarles que estaba muy cansada de hacer lo mismo cada día, de ver siempre a los mismos personajes, de repartir carteles semejantes y de organizar campañas que a nada conducían porque nunca ganaban, porque todos estaban más viejos, muchos ya no volvían y los jóvenes sí, también había jóvenes que habían venido desde Vicálvaro y desde Mósteles y desde Navalcarnero para recoger unos carteles que nadie leería y unos folletos que ni siquiera tenía tinta para imprimir. (50)

Disillusionment has overcome Belén's daily life: she is tired, dispirited, indifferent, unable to see why anyone would bother with elections, and earning

so little that she can barely cover the expenses of her miserable flat on the outskirts of town and of the daughter which "el marido le había dejado de regalo" (50) and who "le estrangulaba la libertad" (71). Falcón's style of amassing evidence, piling detail upon detail, as if she were firing a machine gun or arguing a case before the magistrate in condemnation of forces conditioning Belén's life, is effective not only in transmitting a sense of the overwhelming number of different tasks demanding her attention in a day, but also in relating the impossibility of finding any note of optimism for Belén and the millions of other women like her. The disillusionment Belén experiences is much like that of Elena in *Rupturas*, except that in the end Elena's life opens out into a window of possibility, and Belén's never will. She is one of the *postmodernos* for whom the hopefulness of the 1970s or 1980s has died.

One day when a large Party meeting is planned, after being ordered to bring in the sandwiches, disallow interruptions, take phone messages, and "nada más," Belén shares her disconcertion with Fernanda (164). Both are bored, demoralized, and aware of their revolutionary bad faith; they nevertheless recognize that "estas interminables reuniones donde todos gritan y nadie escucha a nadie no [sirven] para nada," and that while the women consider them a waste of time the men seem to enjoy it, as Fernanda says:

> Para ellos sí; quiero decir que ellos disfrutan, no sé si porque creen que están haciendo algo o porque se desahogan de tanto callar como han tenido que hacerlo en toda su vida, o porque están todos locos y estas sesiones les sirven de catarsis, pero a ellos sí les sirve. A mí no, será porque no me dejan decir nada. (164)

Belén's observations run along similar lines. Again, Falcón's style of amassing evidence is convincing:

> A mí no, porque los veo tan obsesos, escucho unas discusiones interminables y surrealistas, a veces me parece imposible que ellos se crean los argumentos que repiten, no sé cómo no les da un ataque al corazón o al cerebro cuando gritan de esa manera, y no sé cómo no se dan cuenta de que después de ocho o diez horas de reunión no han resuelto nada, que todos siguen igual de convencidos de lo que pensaban al principio; que en fin, por este camino no seremos tres partidos sino cinco o diez cuando terminemos las reuniones de la coalición o de la unidad o de la locura. (164-65)

The reader wonders, as does Fernanda, why Belén continues in such a dissatisfying position, and why she remains a member of the Party at all. Her explanation is simple: "Porque no puedo prescindir del sueldo que cobro aquí" (165). Fernanda muses that "había más razones para seguir en el partido de las que ella había creído" (165). So much for revolutionary fervor.

But Belén's passionate feelings about the Party go further. This veteran militant who has worked the nuts and bolts of the revolution most of her life sees the need for a complete overhaul of the Party. At the local headquarters where she is employed Mario, a comrade who is infuriated at the scandal mounted by a female candidate to a high post, decides to demit from the Party; Belén says she would do the same. The impassioned Mario asks her to clarify why she remains then, and she explains:

> Porque no podría encontrar trabajo en ninguna parte a mi edad después de veinticinco años de ser funcionaria del partido. En mi misma situación hay muchos, no te lo imaginabas, ¿verdad? Creías que las eternas fidelidades no tenían más causa que la firmeza revolucionaria. Pues, ya ves, ahora nos hemos enterado de cómo eran los funcionarios del partido en los países socialistas. Basura. Había que barrerlos a todos porque son la peste del mundo. Pero para eso hay que hacer todavía otra revolución. Y no serán esos, señaló la habitación cerrada, precisamente los que pueden hacerla. (203-04)

This sentiment points to the calcification of Party members in their comfortable positions in spite of the inefficacy of their actions. Belén feels herself to be just another cog in the wheel.

This woman's difficulties at work pale in comparison with the problems facing her with respect to her daughter. Rosita stays out several nights a week; when Belen's friend asks alarmingly whether she has gone to the police station looking for her daughter, she responds in a bored tone:

> Oh no, Fernanda, si cada vez que Rosita no aparece por casa tuviera que ir a denunciarla a la comisaría estaría allí tres veces por semana, ya no quieren ni verme los guripas del barrio. Va a dormir a casa de una amiga, o se queda en los bares que no cierran en toda la noche, o yo qué sé, la verdad es que no puedo más. (181)

Belén unravels the reasons for her marriage to Eusebio and for Rosita's unusual behavior. She ascribes to her husband Rosita's lack of good sense: "Su padre está loco, por eso ella es así. [...] Ha estado internado varias veces" (183). Although she knew this prior to marrying him, "la verdad es que antes de casarme no sabía nada" (183). Typical of women her age, she came from a right-wing family and was educated in convent school; Eusebio's involvement in Christian groups attracted her.

But soon their passions turned toward clandestine militancy against the regime, and Eusebio began to show signs of mental breakdown, which she dismissed: "quién no iba a estar nervioso y colérico militando en la clandestinidad bajo el franquismo" (183). He lost his job, had to hide in others' homes, and was detained and incarcerated, like all serious anti-Franco militants, Belén adds. Then the true madness began to set in; he was taken to the hospital as a psychiatric emergency, diagnosed as schizophrenic, and admitted to the asylum. Eusebio is allowed out on occasion to live his more or less vegetative

life at this mother's house, but when they forget his medication or life becomes too much, he must be readmitted. It follows that Rostia behaves as she does, notes Belén: "Yo creo que está loca como su padre, pero le han hecho diversas pruebas y no le han encontrado nada anormal. Todos dicen que lo normal, ahora, es que los adolescentes funcionen como ella" (184). In silent response her interlocutor reasons that "todo el país debía estar loco cuando creía que las vidas de aquellas personas eran normales" (184).

The culminating point in the tale of Belén's life is the night she drives Rosita to camp. That night, the night of her death, Belén had called Gregorio to inform him that she was driving Rosita to camp and would return afterwards with the posters and programs, which so many Party members were clamoring to receive. Noting the tone of reproach in his voice, she insists that she simply has not been able to deliver them yet, and that she must now leave. At his persistent lack of undestanding, she gives voice to the anger and resentment which has been building for so long:

> No, no he podido llevarlos esta tarde al partido, ¡te enteras!, no he podido, no soy una máquina, soy un ser humano, aunque tú nunca me hayas visto como tal. ¿Que no me ponga histérica?, ¡cabrón de mierda, lo que tú eres es un explotador, sí, un explotador, muy comunista, muy comunista, pero a mí sacándome las tripas! ¡Sí, eso has hecho todo este tiempo, sacarme las tripas! ¡Durante veinte años en ese partido todos me han sacado las tripas, y estoy estrujada como un limón, desventrada, reventada! (227)

While driving back from the camp with no one to accompany her, and resolved to return to the Party office to deliver the printed matter, Belén is killed in an auto accident. According to Irma's report:

> Gregorio la presionó para que volviera enseguida [...]. Fernanda dice que entre todos la han matado, que estaba ya destrozada por lo de su marido y su hija, y que en el partido nadie la estimaba, que cuando ella quiso hace algunos día plantear en el comité la

> necesidad de que tuviese una excedencia y un tratamiento médico adecuado, no le hicieron caso. (231)

The Party has become no more than another business, like so many others, pressuring employees to perform beyond the limits of their abilities, to the point of total exhaustion. All idealism is gone, all humanity is gone, only infighting is left. Such is the portrait of the *postmoderno* Party that Falcón paints.[109]

Unlike other women militants portrayed by Falcón, Belén reached the limit of her possibilities. For Atenea in *Es largo esperar callado* the chance to create new opportunities for women, to create new spaces and new modes of living, opens up her horizons of possibility infinitely, and brings into the arena the younger generation; she is able to meaningfully critique the Left and Party bosses in ways which make them take notice and which alert the public to their unscrupulousness. There was still a place for critique and thus for optimism. Also for Elena in *Rupturas* the future opens out into a whole gamut of opportunity, both personally and politically because of the promise of the feminist movement. In *Camino sin retorno* Elena's radicalism is tempered by her conditioning, but Octubre continues to bring home the revolution and forge the way for feminists to agitate for social change and women's rights. For Belén there is no such hope; her road is a dead end: neither her militancy in the Party nor her work in the Colectivo Feminista lead anywhere.

A summary, then, of the forces at play in the deaths of these women, must include Conchita's, Aránzazu's, and Belén's children, their relationships to the children's fathers (whether divorced or separated), their livelihoods; in sum, their pressures. None of them received adequate support for the children (pointing to the need for legal protection of single mothers), none maintained any level of

positive working relationship with their estranged husbands; only Aránzazu did satisfying work, but it consumed her, while Belén was fed up and Conchita was highjacked in her attempt at decent employment; they were all subjected to demands that it would take several people to meet adequately.

WOMEN LOVING WOMEN? JOSEFINA, BEATRIZ, AND EUGENIA

Josefina is another tragic character, although her fate is not as terminal as the others. She is first encountered as she attempts to do exercises suggested by her physiotherapist, which cause her a great deal of pain, so much so that she finds herself preoccupied with thoughts of suicide. Annoying problems which confronted her before, particularly those posed by her daughter Katy, have all been supplanted by one colossal, eminently personal, and absolutely unignorable reality--she has undergone a mastectomy:

> Aquellos pechos plásticos que ya no le pertenecían pero con los que debía vivir o morir eran su problema. Las cicatrices, la herida todavía supurante, constituían su enfermedad que, como un pecado, debía expiar por el camino del sufrimiento y de la resignación. (20)

Josefina's naiveté regarding her condition is reflected in her inability to analyze critically what has happened to her:

> Volvió a pensar que le resultaba imposible entender a Rafael a pesar de las múltiples explicaciones que sobre su conducta le habían dado las amigas. Recordaba a Belén, a Nieves y a Irma describiéndole el sadismo y las obsesiones de los médicos y no podía casar las clásicas definiciones que el feminismo había formulado acerca de la misoginia de los ginecólogos con las manos suaves y los ojos dulces de Rafael. (20)

He had removed the interior portion of her breasts and replaced it with "goma moldeante," converting them to "prótesis de inválida, en muñeca de goma, en relleno de maniquí," and her nipples are inert, as "montículo de plástico inmóvil,

al que ninguna emoción, ninguna excitación, ningún movimiento podía hacer temblar" (20-21). Her torso criss-crossed with stitiches and scars forces her to carry her arms akimbo, "con el movimiento y la postura de una muñeca articulada deficientemente" (21). Katy's attitude of disgust compounds Josefina's suffering, which the latter feels would be justified "¡si por lo menos hubiera tenido cáncer en vez de una quistiomanía benigna!, ¡si hubiera tenido cáncer, cáncer, cáncer, cáncer!" (21). It would seem that Josefina's breasts have been removed without due cause, at the suggestion of Rafael, he with the "manos suaves y los ojos dulces" (20).

Naiveté toward the medical establishment is not the only ingenuousness plaguing Josefina. As a member of the Colectivo Feminista she often meets friends at the club for socializing.[110] One night as she is leaving she is invited out for a drink by Beatriz. But this is not an altogether forthright invitation: "Al sacar la mano del hueco del brazo doblado Beatriz rozó un pecho erguido, duro y sin movimiento y la repentina excitación que sintió la obligó a apretar los muslos" (113). Since the bar was overcrowded, the two decide, at Beatriz's suggestion, to go for a drink to her place instead. Once there, things move quickly, Beatriz kissing Josefina and unbuttoning her blouse, pleased that "Josefina respondiera aunque como solían las mujeres heterosexuales con bastante sosería" (114). Her blouse completely unbuttoned, Josefina separates her mouth from Beatriz's in an attempt to explain that she has had various operations, fearing that her companion will be revolted by the reality of her plasticized body. But Beatriz is fascinated by what she sees and begins manipulating Josefina's nipples. Noting the pain this action elicits in Josefina, Beatriz repeats the motion on the other breast: "Tocó y sopesó el redondel plástico, lo acarició, lo presionó suavemente

primero, un poco más después. Josefina se encogió rehuyendo la mano, y gimió me haces daño ¿sabes? Es que me duele mucho siempre. Entonces Beatriz sonrió y dijo. Me encanta, lo voy a pasar muy bien" [sic] (114). It would seem that the innocent, suffering Josefina has fallen into the hands of a lesbian sadist.

The reader hears little else of Josefina in the mélange of people and activity that is Falcón's *Postmodernos*; she is a secondary character. The next mention of her is during a telephone conversation between Ana María and Eugenia, two women vying for the attentions of Beatriz. Neither can understand why Beatriz would disappear and take up with the likes of Josefina, "que ni es guapa ni tiene nada que resalte, tampoco es actriz, más bien está loca" (176). While Eugenia appears to be disposed to find Beatriz no matter what it takes, Ana María ponders how she might find her without recurring "a los métodos groseros de Eugenia" (176). When Eugenia goes in search of her lost love to Beatriz's flat, she lets herself in with her own key and finds Beatriz and Josefina in an intimate scene: "Sentada en el sofá, Josefina, desnuda de cintura para arriba, mostraba unos extraños pechos que al principio le parecieron tatuados, y Beatriz, de rodillas ante ella, se dedicaba con fruición y expresión radiante a apretarle y a pellizcarle los pezones, cada vez que Josefina gritaba que no podía más" (177). Before Josefina can put on her blouse, Eugenia tears it out of her hands and cuffs her twice, followed by several blows to the chest. Each time Josefina cries out in pain, and Eugenia retorts, "¡Para que no te queden ganas de meterte con la mujer de otra! ¿entiendes, puerca?" (177). Eugenia knocks Josefina's head against the wall, opens the door and throws her out.

The ending of this tale is surprising, but only because the reader has not yet penetrated to the core of Eugenia and Beatriz's relationship:

"Cuando regresó al comedor, le advirtió severamente a Beatriz, que la miraba con una expresión divertida, ¡esto se ha acabado! ¿comprendes? Y Beatriz, sonriente y tranquila replicó, mientras encendía un cigarillo, es una lástima porque me lo había pasado muy bien" (177). The cynicism of these women is a very far cry from the firebrand sarcasm of Octubre, the wide-eyed possibilities of Elena, the kinetic optimism of Athenea, or even the masochistic narcissism of Elisenda. Eugenia turns out to be perhaps the most sinister character in Falcón's entire corpus. Her obsessive possessiveness and outburts of violence leave Beatriz bruised and eventually insane.

When Beatriz informs Eugenia of her lack of funds, and Eugenia realizes she no longer live off Beatriz's income, Eugenia drops Beatriz immediately: "Mira, no seas pesada, Beatriz, necesito una amante rica y tengo que encontrarla, para lograrlo he de arreglarme bien y frecuentar los sitios donde van esas mujeres, y por supuesto, no espantarlas llevándote siempre al lado" (199). Beatriz is last seen (peered at secretly throught the eyes of Ana María) in Eugenia's dining room cutting up into pieces each of Eugenia's articles of clothing. Although she is not dead, or hacked-up, Beatriz's fate is equally tragic. And in her case it was brought on by a woman.

SUMMARY COMMENTS - *Postmodernos*

It will be recalled that for Linda Gould Levine the function of *Postmodernos* is "destacar la desintegración de la izquierda y la imposibilidad de una alianza entre los diferentes partidos que la constituyen y que tratan de acceder al poder en las campañas electorales de los ochenta" (42). In the present analysis this disintegration, this impossible alliance, has been the backdrop for the stories of

five of the numerous personages in this heavily populated book. Ironically, these five women also disintegrate, within impossible alliances. If not dead, each is a grotesque caricature, an *esperpento*, Josefina with her *pechos de plástico* and her pain, Beatriz the passé actress with her scissors in hand.

Levine argues that the lack of alliances between people based on political commitment and action gives way to "las nuevas alianzas [que] se basan más en el alcohol y el consuelo momentáneo que en una ideología unificadora" (43). This assertion is true for the men and to some extent for the women, for there is a strong current of friendship between the women of the *colectivo feminista*. The question to which the present analysis must return is this: Is there a lingering nostalgic yearning for unity, or has Falcón given up? As Levine, again, points out, in *Postmodernos* any would-be collective ethic is superseded by an individualist project, as "[l]as relaciones políticas y personales se definen precisamente por las metamorfosis constantes que [los personajes] sufren a medida que cada uno busca su parcela de gloria, amor, poderío y amistad" (43). There really is no unifying factor for the women--some work of solidarity, some co-authorship of a book, and mostly friendship and support are the predominant modes of their relationships. Indeed, Falcón's protagonists in *Postmodernos* do not partake of the faith in the unity of women under a common banner which their earlier counterparts embraced, if tenuously. In conclusion it would appear that for Falcón Spanish feminism has suffered the same general malaise festering in the whole country: the postmodern condition.[111]

CONCLUSIONS

> "It is unforgivable that a writer of the stature of Lidia Falcón has received so little serious critical attention."
>
> Gloria Feiman Waldman[112]

This study began with an examination of the field of Women's Studies within Hispanism, looking at studies which do not include Falcón and then examining scholarship which does include Falcón among authors studied. This examination is followed by analysis of Falcón's seven works of fiction. Before entering into conclusions about the material presented in this dissertation, it would be well to make some pointed observations on the nature of Falcón's literary project. Regarding "women's writing," one of the principal pioneers in the field, Birute Ciplijauskaité, decided to abandon her attempt to determine whether there exists literature that can rightly be called "feminine writing" (9). She finds the term "nueva escritura -- escritura de mujer que escribe conscientemente como mujer" (10) more apt for qualifying the new consciousness found in women's literature.

In an article entitled "Ecritura de mujer" from a 1990 issue of *Poder y Libertad*, "Mujeres y literatura," Lidia Falcón expresses a related but distinct view. In this explication of what for her constitutes feminist literature, Falcón rejects two ideas. She denies the notion that "las mujeres utilizan un estilo distinto al de los hombres cuando escriben," and she dismisses the belief that

> lo escrito por mujeres bucea más en el mundo interior de la psique femenina que en los datos que proporciona el mundo exterior o que narra autobiográficamente antes que recurrir a contar las vidas ajenas, o que filosofa sobre el amor, la vida y la muerte antes que describir los hechos guerreros o económicos del mundo. (6-7)

If this were what defines women's writing, she quips, Proust and Mann were women. For Falcón the point in question is not whether any given work is "women's writing," but rather whether it is feminist writing. What for her then constitutes feminist literature?

For Falcón the crux of the issue, "el meollo de la cuestión sobre la literatura feminista," (7) is the ideological weight that the text carries:

> La distinción ha de hacerse sobre la carga ideológica que posee la obra y no sobre el estilo, el tema o el sexo de su autora. El enfoque ideológico de la literatura es el que ha permitido calificar como progresistas o reaccionarios a los literatos, situarlos frente o contra determinada posición social o política, analizar su obra bajo el estandarte que su creador enarbola y en razón de las tesis que defiende. [...] [E]l novelista es siempre un personaje comprometido social y políticamente. Aquel que afirme que él es apolítico es que sustenta una ideología reaccionaria. (7)

To determine whether a text is feminist, "es preciso observar los rasgos diferenciales que posee respecto a las otras tendencias sociales que hasta ahora se han desarollado en la literatura" (7). Feminist literature expresses feminist consciousness, and "[S]er feminista es tener conciencia de la injusticia profunda que significa ser mujer, y sentirse implicado en ella" (7). Any literary work which demonstrates this consciousness (even that of men, like Stuart Mill, Ibsen, Henry James, Martínez Sierra, Galdós, Flaubert, or Tolstoi for example) falls under the rubric of feminist.

Falcón expresses an ardent desire to see more works published in Spain that go against the grain of "el machismo de las mentes":

> [E]s preciso que surja con gran fuerza una corriente literaria que hable, que grite, más bien, contra tanta mentira, contra tanta sensiblería falsa, contra tanto machismo como se halla instalado en las mentes de los autores y en la páginas de sus obras. Es preciso que se publiquen las novelas, los cuentos, las poesías que repudien el machismo [...]. (7)

In taking stock of the literary situation in her country, Falcón remarks: "Quizás está todavía por nacer o por hacer, en España [...]. Nosotras, las escritoras españolas, debemos retomar el iniciado por Emilia Pardo Bazán, que nadie más ha sabido proseguir" (7). This is certainly the *raison d'etre* of her literary undertaking. Grounded in social-historical narrative and strongly ideological, Falcón's own brand of "writing woman" is above all feminist writing.

CRITICS IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S STUDIES WITHIN HISPANISM

Falcón's philosophy and practice of feminist literature can be compared to what Joan Lipman Brown observes in the thirteen Peninsular writers she examines in *Women Writers of Contemporary Spain: Exiles In the Homeland.* For Brown, while female characters created by women mark an essential difference between women's and men's literature, "gender is secondary to the writer's historical moment and individual experience as a basis for literary direction" (21). In Brown's view there exists no homogeneous women's literature, as for Falcón: feminist consciousness is a form of human consciousness. It is absolutely necessary that women write as women, about and for women; it is also important that men partake of this revolution.

Elizabeth Ordóñez concludes from her survey of Spanish women's literature that "the contours of the readings suggest an increasing boldness through time of the transgressive nature of these narrative voices" (27). Linda Gould Levine wrote in 1978 that the "concept of solidarity and sisterhood has become an increasingly important element in contemporary fiction written by women," and that the then burgeoning movement would eventually change the

social reality and ultimately be reflected in literature ("Censored" 303-04). Insofar as these claims are true, it is logical to assert that boldness of women writers over time is directly related to feminist ideology and the feminist movement, since the phenomena are contemporaneous and bear numerous other parallel relationships. Such an assertion is denied, however, by some writers, who reject feminist theory as "a 'corsé de talla única' into which their work is forced" (Davies, *Women* 3). In Falcón's fiction, beginning with her first published novel *Es largo esperar callado,* the concept of sisterly solidarity is an essential element. The feminist movement and feminist ideology are the sine qua non of Falcón's fiction.

Near the beginning of the incursion of Women's Studies into academic Hispanism one of the principal players, Beth Miller, applauded the many researchers in England and the United States who had studied correlations between the literary production of women and women's history. Miller underscored however the "notable absence of comparable scholarship on Spanish and Latin American writers" citing Annis Pratt: "The world of woman's art is not the aesthetic other-world of the new critics, self-existent, with no reference to historical and cultural context" (Miller 5-6). Miller also pointed to the "relatively little scholarship which attempts to relate the literary production by women to the history of the feminist movement or to women's history" (11n17). Linda Chown was also critical of the narowness of the field, observing that "American critics seldom mention the many, very thoroughly contemporary Spanish feminist studies"; she suggested that "investigation of these sources could result not only in an exciting study of the connections between politics and literature

but should also point out additional motifs, images, and patterns peculiar to Spanish women's literature" (103).

Concern over the absence of Spanish theory applied to Spanish women's texts was again raised in the early 1990s by Elizabeth Ordóñez, who questioned contemporary Hispanists' insistence on applying constructs derived from Anglo-American and/or French feminist literary criticism to Hispanic women's texts: "Have they anything to do with women in Spanish culture? Is it fair to import willy-nilly theories from abroad and force Spanish texts into their perhaps procrustean beds? Why not Spanish theory?" she asked bluntly (24). Catherine Davies, one of a handful of British scholars working in Women's Studies in Hispanism, appeared to respond to Ordóñez's very legitimate concern. In Spanish *Women's Writing 1849-1996* Davies affirmed the existence of "[c]ontemporary feminist theory and criticism [...] in Spanish," mentioning Falcón specifically among others (3). She noted however that this theory had "not entered the Western academic market place" (3). "[I]t is marginalized by current metropolitan discourse," Davies argued, "[t]he subtle alignment of class and gender politics perhaps poses too many threats" (3).

Elizabeth Starcevic's approach to Falcón's fiction leads one to again ponder the question posed by Ordóñez. Rather than import theoretical considerations foreign to Falcón's own methodology, Starcevic demonstrates ways in which Falcón's narrative style furthers her objectives. While she integrated thinkers such as Rich, Showalter, MacKinnon, Foucault, and Eagleton, the principal basis of Starcevic's insight into Falcón's fiction was her appreciation of Falcón's very purposeful and obvious intentions as well as Falcón's more or less constant reference to the material historical context of the second wave

feminist movement in Spain. Starcevic provided an admirable illustration of how literary criticism of women's fiction can be done without having to import "willy-nilly theories from abroad and force Spanish texts into their perhaps procrustean beds" (Ordóñez 24). In this approach Starcevic remains true to Falcón's literary philosophy and political commitment.

Nancy Vosburg is another scholar of Women's Studies within Hispanism whose critical enterprise remains true to the tenets of Falcón's literary philosophy and political commitment. In "On Post-Transition Politics, *Picardìa*, and Power. Lidia Falcón's *El alboroto español*" Vosburg analyzes Falcón's collection of essays in light of Falcón's feminist activism, her stylistic particularities, and the exercise of *ninguneo* perpetrated upon her by some elements of Spanish society. It will be recalled that Vosburg defines *ninguneo* as "the practice of treating someone as if she or he did not exist" (205). Vosburg reasons that Falcón's manifest absence from important Spanish publications on the feminist Movement in Spain "demonstrates clearly that there has been a concerted effort from certain sectors within Spain to dismiss her through the Spanish practice of *ninguneo*" (210).

Vosburg's question led the present researcher to ask whether *ninguneo* has been to blame for the paucity of information on Lidia Falcón evident among literary critics. Gloria Waldman suggested in this regard that since Falcón's "writing is so extreme and confrontational, the critical response has been equally extreme" (Waldman, Levine et al. 174). Mercè Otero Vidal offered another argument for the apparent lack of critical attention accorded to a figure as important at Lidia Falcón:

> [L]o cierto es que sus novelas son un testimonio a veces molesto, ya que últimamente la literatura comprometida no ha estado bien vista, la crítica social no se ha cotizado, los sentimientos han

> resultado ser una manipulación, el realismo se ha visto como una imposición y la utopía como un engaño. (64)

While for a time Falcón's voice remained all but silenced in the annals of academia, the field of Women's Studies in Hispanism has broadened and become more inclusive.

With the advent of "Cultural Studies" the field has allowed for more varied approaches to literature. Particularly important in this regard have been Falcón's prison memoirs and her drama. Patricia O'Connor, John Gabriele, Susanna Cavallo, and Nancy Vosburg have all added to the critical literature through their scrutiny of Falcón's works in these areas. Vosburg vindicates Falcón's feminist challenge to hegemonic historical discourse and to the dominant political apparatus inscribed in *Viernes y trece en la calle del Correo.* Gabriele's approach to Falcón's prison memoirs *En el infierno: Ser mujer en las cárceles de España* situates Falcón firmly in the center of international feminist/textual issues by applying analytical constructs developed by de Beauvoir, Cixous, Gilbert and Gubar, Irigaray, Kristeva, Millett, Moi, Rich, Showalter, and others. His integration of feminist analysis of the body and ideas associated with *l'écriture feminine* with Falcón's memoirs have more intricately enmeshed her writings in the critical discourse in Hispanism. Cavallo's analysis, on the other hand, locates Falcón's memoirs within the range of Spanish feminist discourse by pointing to the "strategic essentialism" adopted in *Viernes y 13.* This essentialism underscores "un cambio de postura desde la doble militancia socialista y feminista, a la militancia única, la feminista" (91), a theme Falcón fictionalized in *Es largo esperar callado* and *Rupturas.*

Patricia O'Connor's work on Falcón's drama demonstrates that the field of Spanish feminist theater cannot be surveyed without taking into account the plays of Lidia Falcón. In 1984 O'Connor introduced contemporary Spanish women playwrights to the American academy in *Estreno,* referring to Falcón as "la feminista más relevante y conocida de España" (11). In *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy* the combative nature of Falcón's drama is recognized, as is the fact that at international feminist theater festivals only Falcón's plays were staged from among all the works of Spanish women playwrights. In *Signs* O'Connor pointed out that Falcón's dramatic works "serve as vehicles for her militant feminist position [...]. Battered women and abused children [...] abound in her plays, as do scenes that propose contraception, divorce, and abortion as viable alternatives for women" (386). With the publication of *El teatro breve de Lidia Falcón* John Gabriele made available the only book length examination of Falcón's work to date. What is new in this book is Gabriele's insightful critique of four of her plays. Synthesizing ideas from Judith Butler, Gilbert and Gubar, Marilyn Frye, and several lesser known feminist critics, as well as a Brechtian perspective, Gabriele managed to demonstrate that Falcón's works satisfy the goals of feminist dramaturgy.

The present study has taken very seriously the claim by Gloria Waldman that "It is unforgivable that a writer of the stature of Lidia Falcón has received so little serious critical attention," and it follows the lead of critics like Cavallo, Davies, Gabriele, Gazarian Gautier, Jones, Levine, Pérez, O'Connor, Starcevic, Vosburg, and Waldman. Its chief purpose has been to examine the fictional works of Lidia Falcón. Taken in chronological order the novels reveal the principal preoccupations of what some call Spain's leading feminist, as portrayed

in the fictional mode, relative to the historical development of the second wave feminist movement in Spain.

FALCON'S NOVELS

The first novel, Clara, portrays the functioning of what Foucault has called the "apparatus of sexuality," its "dominant strategic function," and the "urgent need" it responded to at a given historical moment. The apparatus consists of the relations between the mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power inherent to the relationships Clara maintains with the men in her life: Arturo, Rondero, Soler, and Nesweda. With Arturo, the indifference and ignorance Clara feels are overcome first by desire for him and then by his sheer physical force. Her submission is engendered in part by cultural cues codified in the ethics of the status quo. Rondero wields different forms of power: Clara is a commodity and he is a consumer. Her exploitation is tied to her job security; she is seduced not so much by the man as by her fantasies. Soler wields economic power over Clara too, but he is more pitiful than exploitative. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Clara falls under his protection but is defenseless in the face of his advances. Compliance is her ticket to freedom, yet she never gets there. Again, cultural norms which condition her thinking undermine her would-be feminist consciousness. Subsequently Clara allows the charisma of Ramón Nesweda to engender emotions which overpower her reason. Her insufficiently strong knowledge gives way to submission, and thus she loses everything. In spite of her apparent understanding, Clara is subject to what Martín Gaite calls "nubes de rosa," or over-romanticized cultural cues to which women of her era had been conditioned to respond.

The power relations inherent to Clara's alliances are conditioned by economics and by male ability to arouse desire. When desire is insufficient, men hold the dominant position by physical or economic superiority. Clara is subject to these techniques of power due to the capacity of cultural codes to mold her attitudes and behavior, to trigger fantasies in her, and to provoke interpretations of her experiences which put her in a subordinate position. To the extent that Clara allows their operation through her, she is complicitous in her own submission. While the *Sección Femenina* preached and romance novels were assimilated, it was and is the individual who embraces their norms, and it is only the individual who can free herself from their influence. This kind of *toma de conciencia* was, however, yet to come. So too were the structural changes which would enable women to be gainfully employed without such personal compromise. In *Clara* Falcón only exposes their functioning.

Asesinando el pasado reinforces and subverts the *novela rosa* nearly as much as does *Clara*. Elena's depiction as "buena ama de casa, fiel, sencilla, amable, [...] sumisa y obediente" (41) is interrupted by Bloch's intervention. He seeks to delimit her possibilities, as had Pablo. But Elena is unwilling to allow herself to be subjected in this way. She refuses to be minimalized according to their standards. She is neither *santa* nor *ramera*. Rather than being submissive and obedient, willing to be exploited for someone else's gain, Falcón's heroine is free, by virtue of her choices and her acts. She will neither whore for Bloch nor accept Pablo's identification of her as prostitute. Thus Falcón creates a model for women which exists outside the dictates of the men in her life, and beyond the social determinants of the omnipresent *Sección Femenina*. Elena does however enjoy a "rosy ending." If as Falcón claims "un libro es toda una batería de

artillería" (Falcón, "Escritura" 7), it must be said of *Asesinando el pasado* that in spite of the pistol and the poison, it is not quite as heavily loaded as *Clara*.

Es largo esperar callado is the first of Falcón's mature novels. The political ramifications of its content are fairly obvious: Rubén is caught in an ideological struggle between Athenea and Pilar. He sides ultimately with Pilar and all she represents. Athenea absents herself from Rubén's world, and in her place is found a thriving feminist community in embryo. Within the confines of this community Rubén must confront his own choices. His ethic proves to be other than being true to himself. He is sacrificed to the world of triumphalist bourgeois comfort -- the classic sellout. Falcón penetrates the machinations of ideology, and lays them bare for all to see.

In this novel there is also the question of the political ramifications of the form. The teleogenic plotting employed in *Es largo esperar callado* "implies the transformation of past events by subsequent ones" (Davis 213). In the end Rubén arrives at Athenea's flat. What happens there gives meaning to the rest of the story. While party leaders were convincing Rubén to stave off Athenea, she was busy constructing a feminist revolution; while politicoes were occupied accommodating the Left to Francoist bourgeois values, the feminist movement was being constructed in clandestinity. But Athenea's doings remain untold. Her history is a clandestine history. Given that this book was written in the 1970s and published late in 1975, the reason for the secrecy about Athenea's activities could be that in real life feminist activity was suppressed; in like manner Falcón suppresses information about it in this work. The fact that neither the words "feminismo" nor "feminista" appear in the text at all is highly significant. The form of the plot mimics reality: Rubén struggles with the

demand to silence Athenea, but he cannot. Thus the reader is confronted with multiple meanings.

The liberatory impact of this form of reading has been alluded to by Weedon: "Knowledge of more than one discourse and the recognition that meaning is plural allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual and even where choice is not available, resistance is still possible" (40). The understanding that the "the real story" may be other than what one has heretofore believed is the lesson that Falcón's teleogenic plotting offers. In *Es largo* the groundwork for the delineation of a feminist ethic is laid in the characterization of Athenea. Certainly a great deal of work remained to be done by feminists in order to elaborate a coherent set of principles. More importantly, however, the limitations of censorship and Francoist suppression of alternative ideologies prohibited their expression, as Francoist policies restricted the development of the feminist movement until his death.

Up to this point in the trajectory of Falcón's fiction the determinants of feminist ethics included the "mixing of the political with the sexual" and the concomitant "politicization of the personal" (Hutcheon 144, 161). Athenea breaks away from the love affair with Rubén because of his political cowardice. It is not the case that for Athenea there is a move toward autonomy where as woman she rejects object status to become a self-determining subject, as does Clara. Nor is Athenea dissatisfied with her own sexuality so that she changes her attitude, partner, and/or entire orientation to her own sexed body, as in protagonists of Falcón's later novels. In *Es largo esperar callado* that the political is political means that the Partido Feminista has taken root. That the personal is political means that making bedmates with the enemy is not an option. Just who constitutes an

adequate bedmate, which is central to the determination of a feminist ethic, is not spelled out.

Falcón's second published novel, *El juego de la piel*, has been examined in light of William S. Burroughs, his classic *Naked Lunch*, Dante's *Inferno*, feminist ethics, sexual relations, and the apparatus of sexuality. A common element to these themes is the "skin game," Burroughs' metaphor for the transformation of identity, to which Falcón refers overtly in the novel. The skin game, the surfacing, submerging, and resurfacing of skins, is a play of identities. This doubly enfolded corporeal metaphor is an apt one for Elisenda, for the layers of self she exhibits/manifests/ becomes are multiple and as her body adapts to heroin she changes and becomes more and more the slave to male desire.

In so doing Elisenda thinks she is escaping her misery. She tries to actualize the mind-body split, to achieve a separation between her concrete reality and her emotional/psychological experience. The attempt to actualize this dualism is unsuccessful, for the reality of the body will not allow the mind to forget its existence. The only way to survive is to kick the habit, and so her story becomes one of the challenge of exercising will power over herself. To get out of Hell, and then Purgatory, is tantamount to staying clean, which requires strength of will and palpable alternative directions for the exercise of will.

Thematically, this decisive exercise of will is of paramount importance for Burroughs in *Naked Lunch*. For him "the collapse of individual will and identity " is the ultimate evil (Lyndenberg 76). The system that encourages and patronizes "absolute need" can only be overcome by the exercise of will. But once will is harnessed, there must be viable directions for creative and meaningful outlet on the horizon. Objectifying directions for the will means outlining possible paths

of action, possible ways of comporting oneself, of making choices. This Falcón creates by opening up the possibility of feminist action to Elisenda. Elisenda is challenged to muster the will to survive, and she is afforded directions for the exercise of this will. For her the promise of salvation is the feminist movement, embodied in Gina, and in Isabel Fortuny.

Elisenda's story ends with the subtheme of political action, just as it began on September 22, 1975, the day after the widely denounced executions of FRAP and ETA activists. Elisa, without ever actually appearing in this novel, turns out to be a key figure in Elisenda's final transformation, thus setting the stage for Falcón's strongly political *Camino sin retorno*, in which Elisa is the female protagonist and her tales of political activism and life in prison take center stage. Thus Falcón constructs a political response to the apolitical escapist ethic posited by Burroughs and the "tune-in, turn-on, drop-out" culture of the 1960s and 70s.

In *El juego de la piel* Falcón's feminist ethic is embodied in Isabel, whose independence and strength of will make her a role model for Elisenda. There are also female charaters who model behavior and attitudes which ought not be emulated. These are Agnès, who hanged herself in London after whoring in the park to support her lover, and also María, the Hungarian beauty who with her gorgeous voice and demeanor helped multiple male musicians to survive. Another such negative model is Jacqueline, whose embracing of the ideology of the love generation belies the reality of her unhappy tradition bound existence. Falcón constructs a feminist counter-ethics through these negative role models, that is, she shows a variety of options which for women are destructive. Elisenda meets women who constitute a counter-discourse to a feminist ethic, a feminist counter-ethic.

Falcón's next novel *Rupturas* narrates specific aspects of the feminist movement in Spain in its telling of the awakening of one woman. Elena becomes conscious of her condition as woman within social, political, and interpersonal paradigms which formed the bulwark of the patriarchal model of human relationships during the period of second wave expansion of the feminist movement. This dissertation focuses on two particular aspects of this confluence of historical factors: one, the techniques in place which induce women to form part of the very system which circumscribes their possibilities and delimits their sense of self; and two, the creation of new structures of behavior and understanding which are generated in feminist activity and thought, i.e., in consciousness raising. Elena's saga brings out these historical elements, characterized by Pilar Folguera as "la ruptura de viejas pautas de comportamiento," the rejection of "las actitudes patriarcales," the "actitud de ruptura," all of which paralleled the desire (and need) on the part of women to achieve independence "en lo económico y en lo afectivo, en lo personal y en lo profesional" (Folguera, "Transición" 130).

Elena chastizes practitioners of *el feminismo de la diferencia* for what is in her view their flight from men, their fear of confronting the battle against men, and their passivity vis-à-vis the daily struggle to survive in the midst of men. As she encourages her sisters in their struggle to stand up for their rights, she realizes that she herself lacks the courage to do so in her own life. The strength she slowly garners which does enable her to fight against the limitations within which she operates and which steal her potential for happiness and satisfaction (marriage, mother-identity, professional status, sexual relations) come from feminist gatherings. Whether she embraces what they teach her (e.g., knowledge

of female sexuality) or discards their comportment (e.g., espousal of lesbian relationships as inherently superior to heterosexual ones) what remains is that Elena's life has been radically transformed. She discards that which no longer serves her interests and embraces that which promises to make her life more fulfilling; she engages in the process of "self-actualization of creative human potential in the struggle against oppression" (Daly 264).

Of major importance in *Rupturas* is the narration of divisive elements within the feminist movement. Several different tendencies can be said to exist: "a feminism working for immediate goals within established society [...], women's sections of proletarian political parties or feminist orgaizations linked to parties [...], feminism which considering women are a class, fights for women's takeover of power [...], [and] the so-called 'radical' wing of feminism which fights for the identity of women, attempts to contribute to the formation of a feminist culture proper to women, and rejects any structure comparable to that of the organizations of men [...] (Rague-Arias, 475-76). Each of these tendencies is represented in Falcón's portrayal of the various feminist activities in which Elena takes part. Elena's experience of divisiveness in the movement points to this principal cause of the breakdown of the feminist movement in Spain, and is a testament to the relative ineffectiveness of feminism as a political movement within Spain.

The movement's potency as a catalyst for personal change remains, however. Elena finds the strength to oust Alejandro from their home, she finds the knowledge she sought from her psychologist which he could or would not furnish; she dismisses the dishonest and self-serving Miguel; and she gains a new sense of self. Thus while the efficacy of the movement as a political tool in

the public forum is ambiguously represented, its power to produce meaningful change in individual consciousness and thus in human lives is incontestable.

With respect to a feminist ethic, the novel offers some inisght into Falcón's ethics of interpersonal relationships. Elena recognizes her own hypocrisy in reproaching others for what she herself is incapable of doing, as when she charges practitioners of *diferencia* with seeking escape from the world around them and from their enemies. Thus the text points to the need for integrity between expectations of others and expectations of oneself. The telling of Otilia's attempt to rectify her boring marriage by engaging in lesbian affairs shows that women-centered relationships are not necessarily superior to heterosexual ones, and that women are capable of imitating the worst of male conduct. Clearly women's liberation ought not consist of imitating men. Additionally, when the psychologist Ferrater suggests that Elena make love to her husband Alejandro just to ease the situation, she rejects the duplicity of this option. Lovemaking must be based on honest intentions.

The personal liberation Elena feels as a result of confronting what has made her so unhappy, and of taking steps to correct her situation, gives her an extraordinary sense of personal power. A prime example of this is her sexuality: achieving clitoral orgasm, the fulfillment of her physiological destiny, is the common ground whe shares with other women, and affords her a sense of affinity with them never before known. When her "lover" Miguel refuses to stimulate her as she wishes, she terminates the relationship. She expects another ulcer attack as a result of the confrontation, but it never comes. In fact, she appears to be cured of her health problems. Through learning of her own potential for an equal share in the sexual balance of power and demanding it,

Elena tears away from old ways and leaps into new ways of being, healing herself in the process. As she prepares for her trip to Cairo, the reader feels assured that Elena, for one, will never return to her old ways; there are too many definitive *rupturas*. By making a feminist political issue a most personal one, Elena is empowered, and Falcón offers a new subject position to her readers, urging them to self-actualization in their own struggles.

With the publication of *Camino sin retorno* Falcón more clearly delineates the parameters of her feminist counter-ethics. In the end Falcón leaves Elisa's future open, subject to the protagonist's own intentions and choices, and the determinations she must make in the face of her own consciousness. What she must undertake is reminiscent of Foucault's "exploration of the self not as a liberation of a true or essential inner nature, but rather as an obligation, on the part of the individual; to face the endless task of reinventing him or herself," as Lois Mc Nay states this aspect of the Frenchman's ethics of the self (89). Elisa is faced with this challenge.

Notwithstanding, Elisa's consciousness is marked by Octubre, the voice of right action in this novel. It is Octubre's discourse which sets the ethical standard in *Camino sin retorno*. This empassioned redhead, the alter-ego of Falcón, renounces opportunism, comfort, and corruption and extols revolutionary struggle; she rejects the double standard whereby the same behavior displayed by two people is accepted or rejected according to the person's sex; she makes it clear that while making choices for oneself based on one's own circumstances is acceptable, legislating for others based on one's own personal criteria is not; and she dismisses out of hand interpersonal betrayal. Another area where a delineation of ethics is made explicit is that of monogamous relationships: Elisa

wants to sit on both sides of the fence, dismissing Roser's "husband nabbing" while having an affair with a married man herself. Octubre rejects this hypocrisy. She criticizes what to her is unacceptable, but lays out no program of right action.

As can be seen in the dynamics between Elisa and Octubre, Falcón refuses again and again to design the future of her protagonist: Elisa must confront the challenge of reinventing herself after the final break with Arnau with no help from her creator; so too must each woman decide for herself what action to take and what will be the determinants of her own life path. When pressed to define the feminist alternative Elisa can only say, "Debe de existir una síntesis, pero yo no la conozco. Tiene que descubrirse la verdadera ética feminista. Sólo cuando la sepamos podremos avanzar. . . " (313). *Camino sin retorno* constitutes an exploration of this theme.

In the analysis made in this dissertation of Falcón's final novel, *Postmodernos*, the disintegration of the Left and the impossible alliance of its political parties forms the backdrop for the stories of five of the many characters in this densely populated book. Ironically, these five women also disintegrate, within impossible alliances. If not dead, each is a grotesque caricature, an *esperpento*, of womanhood, e.g., Conchita with her desperate attempts to attain independence, Josefina with her *pechos de plástico* and her pain, Beatriz the passé actress with scissors in hand. Linda Gould Levine argues that the lack of alliance between people based on political commitment and action gives way to new affiliations based on alcohol and momentary consolation based on worn-out slogans. While true for the men, this assertion applies to a lesser extent to the women.

Given the decadence and hopelessness of *Posmodernos* and the relative optimism, even passion, of the previous novels, the question suggests itself: Is there a lingering nostalgic yearning for unity, or has Falcón given up? As Levine says, in *Postmodernos* any would-be collective ethic is superseded by an individualist project. While for the women solidarity work, co-authorship of a book, and friendship and support are the predominant modes of interaction, a unifying ideology is conspicuously absent. Falcón's protagonists in *Postmodernos* do not partake of the faith in the potential of the feminist movement which their earlier counterparts Athenea, Isabel, Katy, Elisenda, Elena, and Elisa embraced (if only tenuously). It would appear that for Falcón Spanish feminism has lost the promise it once had for the unification of all women in Spain.

FALCON'S FEMINIST COUNTER-ETHICS

In his *History of Sexuality* Foucault advances the claim that the deployment of sexuality is a technique of power -- that "human sexuality" is an historical construct created and utilized by power to subjugate certain energies and activities in order that the great mass of people serve the interests of power. The same may be said of the construct "liberated sexuality," a notion that came into vogue with the rise of second wave feminism and the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Foucault warns of the potential pitfalls of these concepts:

> We must not think that by saying yes to sex, one says no to power; on the contrary, one tracks along the course laid out by the general deployment of sexuality. It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim --through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality-- to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance. (Foucault, *History* 157)

Elizabeth Grosz, in her 1994 *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, speaks to the problem of "liberated sexuality" specifically in terms of feminist ethics: "At stake in the feminist sexual norm is 'feminist ideology.' [...] [W]hat I call feminist ideology or feminist normative sexuality is not, I believe, feminist but a residue of patriarchal ideology which some feminists continue to hold unanalysed" (116). What Grosz is talking about is the tendency for feminists to define what sorts of behaviors are acceptable, what sorts of sexuality ought to be engaged in, in short: how one ought to comport oneself in order to measure up to some predetermined standard of being "liberated" or "feminist." What is at issue is the establishment of a program of behavioral determinants which would serve the interests of one social sector or another: patriarchal norms dressed in a skirt, if you will.

As has been demonstrated, Falcón does not promote a categorical feminist norm as part of her feminist ideology. She is not one of the "feminists who remain embedded in the larger culture even as we attempt to critique it" (Grosz 116). Her discourse on sexuality shows her to be free of these accusations: she does not propose a universal norm for women to which everyone should measure up. Elisa says in *Camino sin retorno*, "Debe de existir una síntesis, pero yo no la conozco. Tiene que descubrirse la verdadera ética feminista. Sólo cuando la sepamos podremos avanzar. . . " (313). The evidence gathered in this dissertation points to the fact that Falcón has indeed discovered a feminist ethic -- a feminist counter-ethic. It is up to each woman to decide for herself how to behave, once her level of consciousness has been raised enough to enable her to develop a critical analysis of the politics of her own situation. Only then can the

personal become political; only then is the revolution really brought home, to make more meaningful and satisfying lives for women, and for society at large.

The establishment of new subject positions for women, possible through consciousness raising and analysis, must of course be paralleled by the establishment of opportunities in the world for women to act in accordance with their own knowledge and desires -- the creation of new horizons of viable options. This ongoing political struggle, to which Falcón has dedicated her personal and political energies for over fifty years, is still being carried out by her daily, through her work in the *Partido Feminista*, in her newspaper and journal articles, and in the regular dissemination of information in *Poder y libertad*. This dissertation is yet another step in the same direction.

NOTES

[1] Ordóñez cites Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972): 50.

[2] Here Ordóñez quotes Mari Sarda, "Literatura feminista de los años 60-70: silencio, gritos, indicios," *Campo de l'arpa* 47 (Feb 1978): 27. Sarda "may well have followed Irigaray's lead" (Ordóñez27).

[3] In personal correspondence (8/3/99) Elizabeth Ordóñez explained: "I can only say that I read much more than I included in the book. And quite simply, I included what I especially liked for esthetic as well as theoretical reasons. I guess Falcón's fictional writing never grabbed me as literature... when I did my work, the capaciosness and inclusiveness of cultural studies was less a guiding factor than a melding of feminist theory with old-fashioned close reading (explicacion de texte)."

[4] Nichols incorporates Jane Gallop, Hélène Cixous, Sandra Gilbert. Susan Gubar, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Elaine Showalter, Maggie Humm, Carolyn Burke, Michèle Richman, Elizabeth Abel, and Shoshana Felman, among others.

[5] For this Nichols cites Elaine Showalter "Towards a Feminist Poetics," *The New Feminist Criticism*, Elaine Showlater, comp. (New York: Knopf, 1975): 131 (*Des/cifrar la diferencia* 8).

[6] For example the *Seminario de Estudios de la Mujer*, of the Univ. Autónoma de Madrid, the *Centre d'Investigació Històrica de la Dona* of the Universidad de Barcelona, the *Seminario de Estudios de la Mujer* of the Univ. del País Vasco.

[77] María Ángeles Durán and José Antonio Rey, comps., *Literatura y vida cotidiana. Actas de las cuartas jornadas de investigación interdisciplinaria*, (Zaragoza: Seminario de Estudios de la Mujer, Univ. Autónoma de Madrid, 1987).

According to Cleary Nichols, most of the papers read at the *Jornadas* on literary criticism belong to the category *"imágenes de la mujer"* in masculine works (three treat the same images in women's writing, one is an introduction to North American feminist criticism, and two are thematic, i.e., they treat feminine narrative of specific periods) (p.19).

[8] In "The Laugh of the Medusa" Cixous writes:

> In women's speech, as in their writing, that element which never stops resonating, which, once we've been permeated by it, profoundly and imperceptibly touched by it, retains the power of moving us -- that element is the song: first music from the first voice of love which is alive in every woman. Why this privileged relationship with the voice? Because no woman stockpiles as many defenses for countering the drives as does a man. You don't build walls around yourself, you don't forego pleasure as 'wisely' as he. Even if phallic mystification has generally contaminated good relationships, a woman is never far from 'mother' (I mean outside her role functions: the 'mother' as nonname and as source of goods). There is always within her at least a little of that good mother's milk. She writes in white ink. (251).

[9] Maier is here quoting the "call for papers" with which the editors solicited essays for this book; also Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken," *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences* (New York: Norton, 1979): 35.

[10] The two prior meetings were the international symposium "Literatura y crítica literaria de mujer de Latinoamérica" at Strathclyde University, Glasgow in 1989, and the "Feminism and Hispanic Literature" conference at Westfield College, London in 1990. Davies notes that the St. Andrews conference "was slightly different inasmuchas the work of solely women, of both Spain and South America, was at issue" (5).

[11] See for example "Conversando con Mercedes Abad, Christina Fernández Cubas y Soledad Puértolas: 'Feminismo y literatura no tienen nada que ver'" *Mester* 20 (1991): 157-65.

[12] Davies cites Jorge Rufinelli, *Poesía y descolonización* (México: Oasis, 1985): 21.

[13] In elucidating this deconstuctionist line of thinking, Davies refers in general terms to Gayatri Spivak, and specifically to Paul Julian Smith, *Representing the other. 'Race', text and gender in Spanish and Spanish American Narrative* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1992): 21.

[14] bell hooks, *Talking back. Thinking feminist -- thinking black* (London: Sheba, 1989): 43, 105-07.

[15] Elizabeth Monasterios in Charnon-Deutsch, p. 16.

[16] The women interviewed in this volume include: Carmen Alcalde, journalist and author; Mireia Bofill, writer; Charo Ema, Vice-president of the Asociación de Mujeres Universitarias; Lidia Falcón; Lola Ferreira, ex-political prisoner; Eva Forest, psychiatrist, sociologist, author, and activist; Elisa Lamas, journalist and activist in the movement to liberalize the Catholic Church; Julia León, composer and singer of feminist music; Carmen Rodríguez, video-journalist at Televisión Española; and Natacha Seseña, President of the Asociación Española de Mujeres Universitarias.

[17] For Levine and Waldman, the avant-garde activists of the 1970s, while passionately differing with each other on specific issues, form a common front:

> No solamente les pertenece su propio pasado luchador, con mujeres de la estirpe de Concepción Arenal, la Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, Victoria Kent, Margarita Nelken, Federica Montseny y Clara Campoamor, sino también comparten la herencia de mujeres como Flora Tristán, Rosa Luxemburg [sic], Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, las Pankhurst, las Grimké, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony.... (21).

[18] Miller here quotes Lillian Robinson, "Dwelling in Decencies: Radical Criticism and the Feminist Perspective" (1970) in Robinson's *Sex, Calss and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978) 12.

[19] Annis Pratt, "The New Feminist Criticisms: Exploring the History of the New Space," in *Beyond Intellectual Sexism: A New Woman, A New Reality*, ed. Joan I. Roberts (New York: David McKay, 1976) 193.

[20] Levine takes this linguistic metaphor from the cover of *Vindicación Feminista*, January 1977.

[21] That women form a social class is a theoretical elaboration argued at length by Falcón in *La razón feminista* and by the Partido Feminista in its *Tesis*.

[22] Servodidio cites for example Nancy Chodorow's thesis that "a girl's identity arises through her infantile union and later identification with her mother. While separation and individuation are as crucially important to a girl's developmnent as to a boy's, her personality is relational and fluidly defined and

her ego boundaries permeable." Also Carol Gilligan who "defines a woman's world view as one founded on relationships and their preservation" (12).

[23] Falcón uses Unamuno's classification of writers into two groups: the viviparous and the oviparous. The latter jot down notes in pads, organize them, and use them in their novels. The viviparous writer forms the work mentally and then sits down and writes it all out. Falcón considers herself more viviparous than oviparous (Gazarian *Interviews* 128).

[24] She goes on to say that "By exploring one hundred and fifty years of women's creative writing on its own terms, outside the critical conventions of the male-dominated literary canon, I hope to foreground a distinctive pattern of literary practice motivated in part by the feminine tradition itself and by the development of the women's movement in Spain (Davies 1).

[25] Davies' study includes: Cecelia Böhl de Faber, Roalía de Castro, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, Federica Montseny, Rosa Chacel, Carmen Conde, Mercè Rodoreda, Carmen Martín Gaite, Falcón, Esther Tusquets and Ana Diosdado.

[26] O'Neill's *Una mujer en la guerra de España* (Madrid: Turner, 1979) was first published as *Una mexicana en la guerra de España* in 1964, and its sequel, *Los muertos también hablan*, apeared in 1971.

[27] Vosburg employs Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* but finds that "his androcentric perspective fails to take fully into account that the social is profoundly gendered, and thus he fails to address the differentiation in the gender-based deployment of social control" (122). Adrian Howe's *Punish and Critique: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Penality* (London: Routledge, 1994) broadens the theoretical base for her analysis, as does Ioan Davies' *Writers in Prison* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

[28] Gabriele borrows the term from Judith Scheffler, *Wall Trappings. An Anthology of Writings by Women Prisoners* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1986).

[29] Vosburg explains that *ninguneo* is "an oral expression given literary cachet by Juan Goytisolo" and cites his "Los ritos hispanos del 'ninguneo'," (*El País* June 19, 1984).

[30] See France and Corso, *International Women Playwrights: Voices of Identity and Transformation - Proceedings of the First International Women Playwrights Conference, October 18-23, 1988* for the role played by Falcón as panelist: "Women's Voices in Hispanic Theater" (213-21) and "The Woman Playwright: Identity and Transformation" (238-47).

[31] Ragué-Arias argues that even though there existed "un teatro feminista 'de urgencia', de corte a menudo panfleatario, y casi siempre sin un texto excrito," and some dramatists were presenting a feminist alternative, aspiring feminists "trabajan en condiciones de gran marginalidad" such that "sólo podría hablarse, creo yo, con honestidad del "no-teatro no-feminista". La situación de la mujer, la cultura, y la política de nuestro país deben cambiar mucho todavía para poder hablar de un teatro feminista." (María-José Ragué-Arias, "El teatro feminista, o el no-teatro no-feminista," *Estreno* 10.2 [1984]: 47).

[32] The collection includes Falcón's "No moleste, calle y pague, señora," "Personal e intransferible" by Carmen Resino, "El llanto del dragón" by María Manuela Reina, Paloma Pedrero's "Resguardo personal," "La fuga" by Maribel Lázaro, and Marisa Ares' "Anda, empújame."

[33] Falcón's response to this first question is:

> Podría responderse que por los mismos motivos por los que escriben otros géneros. La literatura, la poesía, el ensayo, son las formas del arte con que la autora expresa sentimientos, manifiesta opiniones, vuelca emociones, confiesa obsesiones ocultas, denuncia injusticias, busca afectos, hace adeptos, logra fama, explica pasiones inconfesables, encuentra amigos, se venga de los enemigos, pasa cuentas de la propia vida y de la de los demás. (13).

As to "Why feminist theater? she states: "Sí, teatro para las mujeres, tan necesario como la novela y el cine. ¡Teatro feminista que nos represente! ¡Teatro, en fin, para más de la mitad de la humanidad!" (16).

[34] *¡No moleste, calle y pague, Señora!* appeared in *Estreno* 10.2 (1984): 28-31, and in O'Connor's *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy*; *¡Parid, parid malditas!* and *Tres idiotas españolas* number among the plays in Falcón's *Teatro* (1994); and *Tu único amor* appeared in *Art Teatral* 3.3 (1991): 19-24.

[35] "Prólogo a la edición de 1980," *Clara* 14.

[36] In coining this term, Falcón takes inspiration from Unamuno, who created the neologism *nivola* "en el deseo de replicar, a quienes le acusaron de no saber novelar según los cánones clásicos, que su estilo era propio y no dependiente de normas ni modas [...]." ("Prólogo presente," *Clara*, p. 4)

[37] Buck quotes José María Díez Borque, *Literatura y cultura de masas* (Madrid: Al-Borak, 1972) 157.

[38] Navajas adds two more aspects to his depiction of the generic components of the *novela rosa*. "La atemporalidad ahistórica" is a feature whereby "la historia [tiene] una dirección determinada inequívocamente, una orientación estricta hacia un propósito definido. [...] [E]l estado final del tiempo se produce en ella como hecho efectivo. [...] La implicación es que una vez se ha alcanzado ese estado final ya no habrá reversión hacia el dinamismo de la temporalidad y que la felicidad será para siempre" (375). "La narración absoluta" refers to the narrator's desire to "afirmar inequívocamente su posición de conocedor indisputado de todos los hechos"; the narrative voice assumes "el papel de dominador absoluto sin que consienta que el lector contribuya en nada al acto comunicacional" (377).

[39] "Prólogo presente edición" 4, my translation.

[40] Of primary importance in this analysis are *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, and "The Confession of the Flesh."

[41] From a poem by Francisco Javier Martín Abril, quoted in Martín Gaite, *Usos* 145.

[42] Carmen Martín Gaite, *Desde la ventana* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1987) 108, cited by Buck, p. 28.

[43] In the penultimate chapter of *Mujer, falange y franquismo*, "Principio y fin de una existencia: la sumisión," Gallego Méndez offers a solid analysis of the phenomenon of submission in the postwar years, and the role of the *Sección Femenina* in disseminating the precept of submission as "un fin en sí mismo" (185).

[44] Martín Gaite cites *Medina*, 15 de noviembre de 1942 (*Usos* 161n).

[45] Cavany's people found a look-alike for Bloch to negotiate the deal. This confused Felix at first, who knew Bloch was dead but saw the replacement alive. At his insistence Cavany explained everything, and in this way Felix and the reader are made aware of every detail of the mystery.

[46] Falcón takes issue with Marxist writers such as Christine Delphy, Juliet Mitchell, Evelyn Reed, and Mª Alice Waters who

> [d]urante muchos años, y hoy todavía [...] siguen manteniendo una aplicación mecanista del análisis materialista de la historia al estudio del problema de la mujer, y en consequencia afirman que la mujer está dividida en las mismas clases que el hombre, que sus intereses se desarrollan y difienden igual que los del hombre y que los de las mujeres burguesas son contradictorios con los de las proletarias. Ni aun se plantean si existen realmente burguesas y proletarias. Y que la revolución socialista, con la abolición de la propiedad privada de los medios de producción acabará con la opresión femenina. Opresión que no deriva de una explotación material y específica de la mujer. (*La razón feminista* 32-33)

Falcón's thesis is that women form a social and economic class in direct opposition to men.

[47] Falcón was among the first feminists worldwide to document and report violence against women. Her book *Violencia contra la mujer* (Madrid: Vindicación Feminista, 1991) is, in characteristic fashion, extensively researched; it covers violence perpetrated against women, cross-culturally and trans-historically, and includes an expose on Spain. See also *Mujer y sociedad* (1967); *La razón feminista* 1994, pp. 136-42; *Poder y libertad* no. 14, "Pornografía y feminismo" and no. 22, Violencia sexual"; "Cada día puede morir una mujer," *Vindicación Feminista* 2

(agosto 1976) 13-14; and "Aumentan las agresiones sexuales" *Vindicación Feminista* 6 (diciembre 1976) 16.

[48] The following somewhat brief commentary on Foucault and on the Sección Femenina are expanded in the next chapter.

[49] Citation taken from the "Prólogo" of the 1975 edition of *Es largo esperar callado*, p. 10.

[50] In February of 1975 twenty four women's associations were legally suspended as a result of a boycott of markets in protest of the high cost of living (Moreno *Mujeres en lucha* 95). The protest was organized by local units of the Asociación de Amas de Casa of Madrid, a branch organization of the MDM formed in 1969 for the purpose of breaking down barriers which served to prevent women from connecting with each other (Pardo 134).

[51] Citation from the cover of the 1975 (original) edition.

[52] The "Transition" in Spanish history refers variously to the period spanning the years immediately prior to or after Franco's death to the establishment of democracy. For example, for Raymond Carr the monarchy of Juan Carlos de Borbón is synonymous with the Transition, at least up to the year 1980 (*España).* Alternatively, Victoria Prego's account of the Transition begins earlier, with the death of Carrero Blanco in 1973, and continues up to July 22, 1977 when the Cortes, composed of representative members voted into office by 77.1% of the population in the first free election after four decades of political immobilization, opened their first session under the leadership of King Juan Carlos and President Adolfo Suárez.

[53] As Catharine A. MacKinnon explicates this most central of feminist concepts:

> The substantive principle governing the authentic politics of women's personal lives is pervasive powerlessness to men, expressed and reconstituted daily *as* sexuality. To say that the personal is political means that gender as a division of power is discoverable and verifiable through women's intimate experience of sexual objectification, which is definitive of and synonymous with women's lives as gender female. Thus, to feminism, the

> personal is epistemologically the political, and its epistemology is its politics. (535).

While Falcón avidly pursues consciousness raising as a means of discovering the personal as political, neither she nor her protagonist Athenea (nor her other heroines) accept the notion of "pervasive powerlessness to men" in an absolute sense; on the contrary, she practices and predicates the appropriation of power on all levels.

[54] Herzberger includes in his classification "novels of memory" *Volverás a Región* (1967), *Una meditación* (1970), *Cinco horas con Mario* (1967), *Señas de identidad* (1966), *Recuento* (1973), *La cólera de Aquiles* (1979), *El cuarto de atrás* (1978), *San Camilo, 1936* (1969), and "related works [...] which Francisco Caudet has identified closely with the 'boom' in the writing of memoirs" in the 1970s (162-3 n1).

[55] The principal group of this type was the MDM (*Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres*), created in 1965 by women of the PCE "con la intención de ser un movimiento de masas y teniendo como campo de acción los barrios periféricos" (Borreguero et al. 33) .

[56] Falcón traces the history of the all pervasive *machista* attitude of the PCE, including the anti-feminist principles propagated by Dolores Ibárruri and Santiago Carrillo, in *Mujer y poder político*, part III, chapters 1, 2, and 3.

[57] Jones quotes Monica Threlfall, "The Women's Movement in Spain," p. 46.

[58] For a list of women's groups formed in this period see Amparo Moreno's *Mujeres en lucha*, pp. 27-41 and 45-67.

[59] Other statements written in the introduction to *Partido Feminista: Tesis* which demonstrate the separatist philosophy of this organization include:

> Porque ha llegado el momento de abandonar las súplicas y las reformas de grupos aislados de mujeres o de asociaciones de masas heterogéneas, que únicamente pretenden arañar mejoras al poder, para convertirnos en una "clase per se", con una organización fuerte, coordinada, organizada, y eficaz, que conduzca la lucha por la revolución feminista. Porque sin la revolución de la clase mujer,

ésta seguirá explotada y oprimida por el hombre, y alienada por las diversas promesas de los poderes machistas. Tanto en los países capitalistas como en los socialistas, como la experiencia lo demuestra. Porque las experiencias realizadas en otras formas de organización no partidaria: asambleas, colectivos, grupos dispersos de personas apenas coordinadas, han demostrado la imposibilidad de la organización y por lo tanto su ineficacia en la práctica. Poque esa ineficacia beneficia únicamente a nuestros enemigos. La atomización de los grupos de mujeres, sus contradicciones no resueltas en la discusión, la disolución constante de unos y otros grupos, demuestran la debilidad de nuestra clase y refuerzan el poder de la clase antagonista. [...] Porque como clase explotada en lucha queremos alcanzar el poder. Porque sólamente [sic] accediendo al poder y manteniéndose en él, hegemónicamente respecto a otras clases, podremos transformar la sociedad en nuestro beneficio. (7-8)

[60] Moreno cites Sara Iribarren, *La liberación de la mujer* (Paris: Ebro, 1973): 115.

[61] Linda Hutcheon addresses the "politics of representation" in the last chapter of *The Politics of Postmodernism* , where she examines feminisms in light of postmodernism. Her analysis sheds light on narrative technique evident in *Es largo esperar callado*:

> If the personal is the political, then the traditional separation between private and public history must be rethought. This feminist rethinking has coincided with a general renegotiation of the separation of high art from the culture of every day life —popular and mass culture— and the combined result has been a reconsideration of both the context of historical narrative and the politics of representation and self-representation" (160-61).

Falcón's renegotiation involves each of these elements.

[62] Lennard Davis characterizes the distinction between characters as ideological, i.e., the product of particular historical forces, and characters as universal as follows:

> Character, at least literary character, or what Lukács and Jameson, among others, call the 'subject,' is closely linked to historical and cultural factors and indeed cannot be understood outside of history. This notion of the historical conditioning of the subject goes against one of the powerful ideological myths of the novel —

> the universality of character. It is one of the tenets of early modern humanism that art provides its consumers with eternal truths—that a Hindu, a Minnesotan, and a Bantu will all, given the opportunity, recognize the universal application of Oliver Twist or Tom Jones. Rather than seeing character as a universal given, I want to lay the foundation for understanding character in its historical and cultural particularity. (107)

[63] Here Davis quotes Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) 74.

[64] As the *Routledge Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Political Thinkers* affirms:

> It is no exaggeration to say that the ideas of Althusser and his associates set the agenda for Western Marxist intellectuals, and indeed for many radical non-Marxists from the mid-1960s into the late 1970s. Arguably, too, much of the 'postmodernist' and 'poststructuralist' literature of the subsequent decade is the legacy of Althusser's unremitting deconstruction and renewal of Marxist philosophy. Althusser has been credited with raising Marxist philosophy to a new level of sophistication [...] by bringing it into creative engagement with non-Marxist philosophies and other traditions of modern thought: most significantly psychoanalysis, structuralism and linguistics. (5).

[65] Luce Irigaray in "This Sex Which Is Not One" makes a profound inquiry into the singularity of the male imaginary and the plurality of the female, based on the unitariness of the "noble phallic organ" and the plurality of female sexuality, for "*woman has sex organs just about everywhere*" ("This sex" 103). Rubén's confusion over the order of the young women's lives reflects what Irigaray characterizes as "the mystery that woman represents in a culture claiming to count everything by units, to inventory everything as individualities" (81).

[66] Foucault delineates four classes of "specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves":

> (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an

> objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self [...]. ("Technologies" 225)

[67] In the third chapter of *The Use of Pleasure*, "Morality and Practice of the Self," Foucault distinguishes between two senses of the word "morality." One sense is that of "a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as the family (in one of its roles), educational institutions, churches, and so forth" (25). The second sense

> refers to the real behavior of individuals in relation to the rules and values that are recommended to them: the word thus designates the manner in which they comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, the manner in which they obey or resist an interdiction or a prescription; the manner in which they respect or disregard a set of values. (25).

This second meaning is denominated "the morality of behaviors" and the first, a "moral code" (25-26). Thus while individuals may be subjected to the same moral code, each may choose distinct behaviors which he/she considers conducive to the satisfaction of that moral standard. One example in *Es largo* is that of the clash of revolutionary principles: while Rubén believes that loyalty to the party line is what will lead to democracy (the ultimate good), Athenea and the second generation of feminists believe that being loyal to their own principles in the face of party hypocrisy and opportunism is more conducive to the ultimate good.

[68] Introduction to *Naked Lunch*, p. xlii.

[69] Foucault employs the concept of the "apparatus of sexuality" as a methodological tool of analysis. He states that what he is trying to make manifest with this term is:

> [F]irstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions -- in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established

> between these elements. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. [...] Thirdly, I understand by the term 'apparatus' a sort of --shall we say-- formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need.* The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function. (*Power/Knowledge* 194-95)

Discourse is only part of a complex of factors which come into play when sexuality is used as a means of gaining control over any given sector of the population.

[70] FRAP is the *Frente Revolucionario Anti-Patriótico,* "organización de masas del PCE(m-l)" [*Partido Comunista Española marxista-leninista*] (Ramírez 20). ETA repersents three words in the Basque language, *Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna.* Founded in 1959 by the youth of the Basque Nationalist Party, this terrorist organization has embraced sabotage, bank robberies, kidnapping, and assassination, believing in the tactic of armed struggle to further their revolutionary vision (Carr, *Spain* 730).

[71] M. Antolín Rato states that his own "La literatura atonal y aleatoria de William Burroughs" (*Papeles de Son Armadans,* nov. 1969: n.p.) was "el primer artículo español sobre el escritor norteamericano" published in Spain. (33)

[72] Perhaps the most complete listing of Burroughs' opus, which includes novels, a film script, letters, memoirs, interviews, musical lyrics, liner notes, and recorded readings, is found in Murphy, pp. 257-59.

[73] According to Mel Ash, Burroughs' cut-up technique was developed in collaboration with the artist Brion Gysin and had roots in the Dada experiments of Tristan Tzara (45).

[74] Falcón did not read the original in English. The fundamental difference between the two texts points to an important point that is lost in the translation, which shall enter in to the conclusion of this discussion of *El juego de la piel.*

[75] Charters quotes Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs.* New York: Henry Holt. 1988, n.p.

[76] The following synopsis is taken from my reading of *The Divine Comedy: Inferno* in Mark Musa's *The Portable Dante.*

[77] Some of Elisenda's escapades while in attendance at the first boarding school bear striking resemblance to the adventures of the young Lidia Falcón as related in her autobiography *Los hijos de los vencidos.*

[78] Taken from the Grandgent version of *La Divina Commedia.*

[79] The Tribunal of Crimes Against women was held in Brussels in March of 1976 (Rague Arias, "Spain" 472).

[80] Charters quotes Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988): n.p.

[81] "Dossier Burroughs" includes "Cronología de William Seward Burroughs"; "Burroughs Horror Show" by M. Antolín Rato; "Burroughs habla" by Victor Bockris (interviews from the book *With William Burroughs: A Report From the Bunker* (New York: Seaver, 1981) trans. Martín Lendínez; and "El sistema del infierno según W. S. Burroughs" by Miguel Morey.

[82] Morey takes into account *Yonqui, El almuerzo desnudo, Las cartas del yage, Nova Express, Las últimas palabras de Dutch Schultz, El trabajo (conversaciones con Daniel Odier), Exterminador, El metro blanco,* and *Ciudades de la noche roja.*

[83] Mel Ash recognizes in Patti Smith a descendent of the Beat generation, since in his view she "revolutionized music and eventually spawned what we know today as punk music." Her Burroughs-inspired lyrics "are filled with sex, death and drugs; of walking the razor's edge of experience" (Ash 301).

[84] Especially poignant are the following descriptions:

> Elisenda no pudo impedir el nuevo coito, más lento que el primero pero de la misma forma desconsiderada y agresiva. [...] 'Y cuando me dicen que el amor el dolor yo les digo, puede que sea para ti, cariño, pero no para Janis, ya no, no no no no... Sí y tengo a mi chico, si, si tengo a mi chico, buen dios...' [...] Elisenda notaba un dolor profundo en el bajo vientre y el escozor entre los muslos por el roce prolongado. Era inútil que intentase apartarse; aquel cuerpo pesaba mucho más de lo que sus delgados brazos podían levantar. [...] "no puedes contar con nadie, nena, ni siquera con tu propio

> hermano, por eso si alguien llega y te ofrece un poco de amor y afecto, dije, consíguelo mientras puedas, sí..." (145).

Joplin's injunction to "get it while you can" appears to be precisely what Elisenda wishes she were not doing.

[85] Indeed her john (named Juan, interestingly) tries to keep José Luis from taking Elisenda, and then mistakes him for Elisenda's *chulo* (168).

[86] Sue Kaufman, *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (New York: Random House, 1967).

[87] Some of the more absurd acts of these women include Espe's murder "a martillazos" of her cat, whom she had considered female but who turned out to be male (260); or Nuria's love for her cat *Mao*: "Se subía a la mesa y comía en el mismo plato [...] y dormía con nosotras y hacía el amor con *Gertrudis* y nosotras también lo masturbábamos... (262); or Lisa and other separatists who inhabit a completely nude commune in Ibiza, and who send away men "a pedradas" (264).

[88] For examples of this invective see the section "Seriedad y formalidad. El movimiento feminista era una fiesta" (pp. 376-79) and the chapter "El feminismo de la diferencia" (pp. 381-407) of *Mujer y poder político*; also "Auge y caída del movimiento feminista" in *Poder y libertad* 12 (1990). In *Mujer y poder político* Falcón traces the ideological roots of *diferencia* politics to Carla Lonzi (*Escupamos sobre Hegel* [Barcelona: Anagrama, 1981]) and Luce Irigaray (*Speculum de l'autre femme* [Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974]).

[89] Blaise's extensive study has been translated and published by Vindicación Feminista. See Works Cited.

[90] Falcón develops this history throughout the first part of *Mujer y sociedad*.

[91] Sendón recognizes the futility of the act of defining *el feminismo de la diferencia*, since

> la definición histórica de un tipo de feminismo no tiene sentido en un mundo en evolución y tan complejo como el nuestro. Podemos esclerotizar el movimiento feminista definiéndolo como radical, revolucionario, reformista, igualitario o de la diferencia, pero todo esto corresponde a un paradigma antiguo y, por tanto, ingenuo, de análisis (143).

[92] Puleo quotes Amorós but provides no information on her source for the citation.

[93] For example Olimpia de Gouges sought both voting and representational rights for women and in 1789 authored the "Declaration of the Rights of Women" which argued for the abolition of all masculine privilege (Beauvior 123). Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 "Vindication of the Rights of Women" sketched out the feminist movement in England (Beauvoir 136). Falcón details these and subsequent developments, and the post-Englightment reaction, in *Mujer y sociedad*, pp. 158-67.

[94] Amorós argues that de Beauvior's classic was scarcely assimilated in Spain at the time, "tratándose de un libro largo, filosófico en algunas de sus partes, en un país en el que los hábitos de lectura están poco arraigados y menos en las mujeres [...] Lidia Falcón lo cita en *Mujer y sociedad* " (43-44).

[95] The principal works noted by Amorós are *Mujer y sociedad* (Falcón, 1969), *La mujer es un ser humano* (Ana Pujana, 1967), *Cuatro ensayos sobre la mujer* (Carlos Castilla del Pino, n.d.). Later works concentrated on the contemporary situation of women, including *Trabajos duros de la mujer* (Eliseo Bayo, 1970), *El trabajo duro de la mujer* (Mª Angeles Durán, 1972), and *Mujer y sociedad rural* (García Fernando, 1976). The survey *Habla la mujer* (Campo Alange, 1967) measured the level of consciousness among women, and significant studies of history appeared such as *La mujer en España: cien años de su historia (1860-1960)* (Campo Alange, 1964), *El feminismo ibérico* (Mª Aurelia Capmany, 1970), *El sufragio femenino en la II República* (Rosa Mª Capel, 1975), *La mujer en la guerra civil española* (Carmen Alcalde, 1976) and a reedited edition of Concepción Arenal's *La emancipación de la mujer en España* (1974) (Amorós 44).

[96] Amorós cites Mª Victoria Abril and Mª Jesús Miranda, *La liberación posible* (Madrid: Akal, 1978) 219.

[97] The discourse of difference refers in particular to the Egyptian goddess Isis. At the end of a cycle of male supremacy which terminated with the disaster

of fratricide, Isis put back together the thousand pieces of her brother Osiris, thus inaugurating a period of life and rebirth (Amorós 52).

[98] For example see *El Viejo Topo* 10 (1980), especially Amelia Valcárcel, "El derecho al mal."

[99] According to María-Milagros Rivera,

> Karen Horney (1885-1952) criticó en los años veinte y trienta las ideas de Freud sobre la sexualidad femenina, y Melanie Klein (1882-1960) desarrolló ideas esbozadas por Karen Horney, demonstrando (en desacuerdo con un principio clave del fundador del psicoanálisis) que las niñas desarrollan en la primera infancia una sexualidad independiente del proceso típico de los niños: es decir, que el complejo de castración del niño no tiene por qué producir envidia del pene en la niña (*Nombrar* 181).

In this regard Falcón points to Luce Irigaray whose 1974 *Speculum de l'autre femme* "ponía en cuestión, con bastante acierto, la interpretación de Freud sobre la sexualidad femenina y los complejos que según él, dominaban la pubertad y la edad adulta de las mujeres." Falcón goes on to state of Irigaray that "Su crítica del 'continente negro' freudiano, una de las primeras que se realizaban desde el feminismo en los años setenta, constituye una novedad, casi un escándalo, y para la Sociedad Psicoanalítica una herejía inadmisible, lo que provoca su expulsión" (*Mujer y poder político* 387).

[100] Regarding Freud's position Lydon writes:

> In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud formulated his basic ideas concerning feminine sexuality: for little girls, the leading erogenous zone in their bodies is the clitoris; in order for the transition to womanhood to be successful, the clitoris must abandon its sexual primacy to the vagina; women in whom this transition has not been complete remain clitorally-oriented, or "sexaully anaesthetic" and "psychosexually immature" (Lydon 198).

[101] Starcevic cites Foucault's *The History of Sexaulity* as found in Rosalind Coward, "Are Women's Novels Feminist Novels?," *The New Feminist Criticism. Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon, 1985) 237.

[102] The anthology of articles where Weisstein's piece appears, *La liberación de la mujer: año zero,* includes Falcón's "La opresión de la mujer: una incógnita."

[103] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," p. 223.

[104] This broadly used Foucauldian term refers to the multiple methods by which mechanisms of domination are utilized in the subjectification of people. See for example Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick. H. Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the Self, A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1988.

[105] A detailed history of the events leading to and including the widely protested executions of José Luis Sánchez Bravo, Ramón García Sanz, Manuel Cañaveras de Gracia, Humberto Baena, and Juan Paredes Manot, whose acts and philosophy are condemned by Octubre, can be found in Pedro J. Ramírez, *El año que murió Franco* (see Works Cited).

[106] For Foucault, subjectification is

> a technique, a form of power [which] applies itself to immediate everyday life [and] categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (Subject 212)

My suggestion here is that Elisa, in becoming aware of her motivations for being in the Party, takes steps toward self-subjectification, that is, instead of continuing to allow herself to be defined by the Party's (or Arnau's) idea of her worth, she forges her own.

[107] Taken from the epigraph to this section, (Foucault, "Subject" 223).

[108] According to *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature* "Esperpento" is a term first employed by Ramón del Valle-Inclán

> to describe the technique of systematic distortion in some plays and novels. He first used the word in this aesthetic context in the play

> *Luces de Bohemia* (1923), whose hero Max Estrella says "Los héroes clásicos reflejados en los espejos cóncavos dan el esperpento." Valle-Inclán suggests both that Spanish reality is a grotesque deformation of European tradition, and that to capture the tragic sense of Spanish life one must apply a systematically-deformed aesthetic. The most typical example of Valle-Inclán's esperpentic plays is *Los cuernos de don Friolera* (1921), foreshadowing the later European theater of the absurd [...]. Characters are seen not as heroic or gallant but as grotesque dolls, puppets, or even animals. Valle-Inclán's first esperpentic novel was *Tirano Banderas* (1926).

[109] Falcón's depiction of Belén is a particularly good example of her use of *esperpento*. As a character Belén is an element of Falcón's "systematically-deformed aesthetic" (there is absolutely nothing right in her life)and her characterization symbolizes "a grotesque deformation of European tradition" (the exaggeratedly ill-functioning mechanism of the Party). However, the pressures put on her, while seemingly exaggerated, do unfortunately (tragically in Belén's case) represent faithfully the realities which women do face.

[110]The existence of the feminist club where many of the women in this novel meet to engage in social and/or political activities is reminiscent of the *Club Vindicación Feminista*. This *Club* was not only a center for political, social, and artistic endeavors, it offered professional services to women such as legal consultation and representation, adult and child psychological counseling, sexual counseling, gynecological service, birth control advising and provision, abortion information, etc. Directed by Falcón, the *Federación Clubs Vindicación Feminista* operated in both Barcelona and Madrid during the 1980s.

[111] The question of whether Falcón has adopted what might be called a postmodern feminism (or a feminist postmodern aesthetics) remains to be seen. It would be particularly interesting to investigate the interconnectedness of feminism of difference and the postmodern, especially given Sendón de León's ascribing the genesis of *feminismo de la diferencia* in postmodern philosophy and physics. A partial listing of useful readings for such a project are listed as Appendix II to the bibliography.

[112] Gloria Feiman Waldman, "Lidia Falcón O'Neill," in Levine, Engelson and Waldman, p. 174.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 1

I. Introduction
II. Works which do not include Falcón among the authors studied
    A. Studies by a single scholar on various authors
        1. Ciplijauskaité - *La novela femenina contemporánea,* 1988
        2. Nichols - *Escribir, espacio propio* , 1989
        3. Ordóñez - *Voices ...* , 1991
        4. Nichols - *Des/cifrar la diferencia,* 1992
        5. Hart - *White Ink,* 1993
    B. Collections of essays by several scholars on various authors
        1. Pérez - *Novelas femeninas ...,* 1983
        2. Manteiga et al. - *Femenine Concerns ...,* 1988
        3. Valis and Maier - *In the feminine mode,* 1990
        4. Brown - *Exiles in the Homeland,* 1991
        5. Condè and Hart - *White Ink,* 1991
        6. Davies - *Women Writers ...,* 1993
III. Works which do include Falcón among the authors studied
    A. Bibliographies
        1. Galerstein - *Women Writers of Spain,* 1986
        2. Levine et al. - *Spanish Women Writers,* 1993
        3. Pérez - *Contemporary Women Writers of Spain,* 1988
    B. Studies of Falcón that focus on her political activism
        1. Levine and Waldman- *Feminismo ante el franquismo,* 1980
        2. Miller - *Icons And Fallen Idols* 1983
        3. *off our backs* 1983
        4. Morgan - *Sisterhood is Global* 1984
        5. Gabriele - "Lidia Falcón y el feminismo español," 1991
        6. Jones - *Women in Contemporary Spain,* 1997
    C. Works which approach Falcón as novelist
        1. Chown - "American Critics and ...," 1983
        2. *ALEC,* 1987
        3. Gazarian Gautier - *Interviews With Spanish Writers,* 1991
        4. Davies - *Spanish Women's Writing,* 1998
    D. Falcón's testimonial literature
        1. Vosburg - "Prisons With/out Walls ...," 1995
        2. Gabriele - "Toward a Feminist Reality ...," 1995
        3. Cavallo - "Autobiografía, testimonio y ficción ...," 1996
        4. Vosburg - "On Post-Transition Politics ...," 1998
    E. Falcón as playwright
        1. O'Connor - *Estreno,* 1984
        2. O'Connor - *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy,* 1988 and *Signs,* 1990
        3. Gabriele - *El teatro breve de Lidia Falcón,* 1997
IV. Further considerations toward a justification of the research topic
    A. Franco - "Opportunities in the Hispanic Field," 1979
    B. Otero Vidal - "CLARA: Una mujer ...," 1994

APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FURTHER STUDY

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