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# Narrative of Spanish Women Writers of the Nineties: An Overview

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The purpose of this essay is to examine the narrative produced by Spanish women writers in the last decade with the aim of establishing its pertinent characteristics. Since I limit my discussion to literary and cultural issues and to precise spacio-temporal coordinates, it is necessary to explain my methodology and to address some preliminary questions. Foremost among these questions are the reasons why I concentrate on the decade of the nineties and not on the eighties and why is it necessary to undertake an investigation that focuses solely on women writers, thereby excluding their male counterparts.

With regard to the literary issues, it is useful to note that the nineties in Spain turn out to be especially important due to the emergence of two significant innovative groups of narrators: a new "generation" of writers, the so-called "generation X,"<sup>1</sup> and a group of women writers whose emergence has been labeled as the "boom" of Spanish feminine narrative. But belonging to the often-cited "new narrative," or "generation X," poses some problems. While some women writers unquestionably form part of this "new narrative," others remain on the margins. The so-called "new narrative," which includes the works of male writers as well as those of some women writers with a penchant for "independent" production, opens up the Spanish narrative at the edge of the millennium to new techniques and to new themes with transnational traits.<sup>2</sup>

While one is inclined to celebrate the "boom" of feminine narrative in the Spain of the nineties, it must be borne in mind that the novel during this period is considered by some as an object of consumption whose "value" depends on industrial mechanisms and on marketing. Not surprisingly, prose, in general, becomes the exclusive literary genre since it adapts itself to market laws and to commercialization better than poetry or theater.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, within this context it is imperative to focus on the literary production of women writers to avoid falling into the easy trap of considering their texts exclusively within the parameters of the literary market. It is important to keep in mind that, although there is a plethora of women writers who have won literary prizes, in part because of marketing strategies, the literary market possesses its own ideology through which

it organizes and diffuses its interpretation of the world. Even so, as women writers gain representation in the editorial market, their feminist stance moves from a political sphere within a framework of aggressive feminism to an ideological realm that is not gender-conditioned.

As to the restriction of this work to a cultural analysis of Spanish women writers of the nineties, I would like to suggest that while texts by women writers should not, in principle, be analyzed separately from those of their male counterparts—since such a practice presupposes value judgments—restricted investigations of specific textual productions can be justified for the following reasons. First, exclusive research into the works of these women writers helps to establish their status and space within Spanish culture. Second, such an undertaking helps one to explore some of the common personal characteristics among those women writers who belong to the so-called “new narrative” and those who do not. Third, cultural analysis also enables one to investigate the textual resistance of these women writers to the patriarchal culture. Finally, such an analysis establishes the influence (or absence thereof) of this group of women writers on contemporary Spanish culture.

#### *Representation of Women Writers*

The recent publication of texts such as *Páginas amarillas* (1997) calls for a critical study of the representation of Spanish women writers' contemporary texts.<sup>4</sup> The rather careless—even dismissive—manner in which Pote Huertas, the publisher of *Lengua de Trapo*, treats Spanish women writers at the edge of the millennium, is in part responsible for my desire to set the record straight. Of a total of thirty-eight writers in his anthology, Huertas selects only nine women writers whose names can be found in the first column of Table I provided at the end of this study. Contrary to the stated intentions of the volume, Sabas Martín, in the prologue to the anthology, asserts that “otro rasgo significativo del fenómeno de los jóvenes narradores es el de incorporar a su nómina una amplia relación de mujeres, como nunca antes en la historia de la literatura española”<sup>5</sup> (‘another significant characteristic of the phenomenon of young narrators is the incorporation of a large number of women, as never before in Spanish literary history’).<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, he bases his assertion “en el avance habido en la normalización de los papeles sociales” (‘on the advances made in social practice normalization’) for women and, on the other, on the unconventional treatment of issues such as sexuality.<sup>7</sup> He specifically refers to those women writers who appear in the fourth column of Table I.

In contrast to the scarce representation of women writers in *Páginas amarillas*, the anthology *Vidas de mujer*, which appeared in 1998, gives a

more balanced portrait of Spanish women writers of the nineties.<sup>8</sup> The editor of this anthology, Mercedes Monmany, selects and writes a prologue to the nineteen short stories by women writers.<sup>9</sup> She uses two criteria: first, the temporality of the production—"la única frontera inicial marcada como punto de partida ha sido una selección de narradoras españolas que empezaron a publicar su obra en los años setenta" ('the only initial condition has been the selection of Spanish narrators who began to publish in the seventies')—and second, the thematic, since all except five of these short stories "tienen como trasfondo común, no especialmente premeditado a la hora de la elección, el plantear algún tipo de conflicto sexual o de pareja en nuestros días"<sup>10</sup> ('have as a common background, not particularly conspicuous at the time of selection, the presentation of some type of sexual or partnership conflicts characteristic of our time'). Before the publication of Monmany's book, Laura Freixas, in 1996, edited a series of narratives entitled *Madres e hijas*.<sup>11</sup> This book became a remarkable editorial success with ten editions in one year. While Freixas, in the prologue, highlights the dangers of establishing an exclusive ghetto of feminine collections, she nevertheless concludes that its positive aspects outweigh its disadvantages for two reasons: first, because outside this group "las mujeres están muy lejos de ser ciudadanas de pleno derecho" ('women are very far from being citizens with full rights') and, second, because these collections contravene the existing prejudices against women authors. She believes that in the opinion of many male critics, these authors channel their personal frustrations into their works. Such prejudice is also directed at the female reader who buys more books written by women, regarded by some to be of inferior quality.<sup>12</sup>

Chronology strictly limits my study: I intend to discuss the texts of the group of women writers who published their first books in the late 1980s or during the 1990s.<sup>13</sup> In addition to this chronological boundary, this essay focuses, as mentioned earlier, on those women writers considered members of the literary movement characterized as "la nueva narrativa" ('the new narrative') and on those who continue the so-called phenomenon of the "boom de la literatura escrita por mujeres" ('boom of literature by women writers') that emerged in the Spain of the 1970s. This "boom" is further manifested in anthologies such as *Doce relatos de mujeres* (1982), *Relatos de mujeres* (1988), and *Narradoras españolas de hoy* (1988), as well as in designated issues of specialized magazines such as the forty-seventh issue of *Camp de l'arpa* (1978) and *Litoral's* 169-70 issues of 1986, which were published under the title *Literatura escrita por mujeres en la España contemporánea. Litoral femenino*.<sup>14</sup> Both groups—the one that continues the work initiated in the 1970s and the so-called "nueva narrativa"—continue the work of women writers such as Carmen Martín Gaité, Carmen Laforet,

Elena Quiroga, Dolores Medio, Luisa Forellad, Ana María Matute, Carmen Kurz, Mercedes Salisachs, Elena Soriano, and Josefina Aldecoa, among others, who began to publish their texts during the Spanish postwar period. Consequently, one can argue that the women writers of the 1990s represent the third generation of Spanish women writers in the second half of the twentieth century.

### *Common Social Characteristics*

In 1990 Susana Reisz highlighted the existence of a narrative boom by a group of women writers who share some common characteristics. Most of them, she suggests, “comienzan a escribir algo tarde, hacen sus primeras armas en el periodismo y alcanzan un fulminante éxito editorial con su primera novela”<sup>15</sup> (‘begin to write somewhat late in their life and begin their career in journalism and have an extraordinary editorial success with their first novel’). These three basic characteristics allow one to distinguish two tendencies within the group of women writers of the last decade. Whereas the majority of the women writers of the 1990s—members of the “joven narrativa” (‘young narrative’)—are journalists as well as writers who attained great editorial success with their first novels, those of the boom began their textual production at a later age. It must be mentioned that the denomination “joven narrativa” is based strictly on the authors’ ages and not necessarily on the specific time period of their literary production.

The current study is based on analysis of the corpus of works written by twenty-four women.<sup>16</sup> Most of them developed their career during the nineties, with their birth dates ranging between 1949—the oldest being Rosa Pereda and Fanny Rubio—and 1970, the year in which Blanca Riestra was born.<sup>17</sup> More than half of them (fourteen) were born during the 1960s. Thus, they were at most fifteen years old when General Franco’s dictatorship ended, a moment of particular significance in the development of Spanish literature. With the exception of Enriqueta Antolín and Dulce Chacón, whose personal data are unknown, all the women writers included in this essay have university-level education and have or have had a professional activity related to teaching either at the university or at the high school level (Luisa Castro, Susana Fortes, Laura Freixas, Rosa Pereda, Ana Rodríguez Fischer, Fanny Rubio, and Pilar Zapata Bosch). Others such as Mercedes Abad, Nuria Barrios, Lola Beccaria, Castro, Lucía Etxebarria, Fortes, Espido Freire, Freixas, Milagros Frías, Belén Gopegui, Ángela Labordeta, Pereda, Blanca Riestra, Rodríguez Fischer, and Juana Salabert have some connection with journalism, while Freixas, Salabert, and Clara Usón are translators. Regarding their development as women writers, three of them were established poets before publishing their first

novels (Castro, Chacón, and Rubio). Three others had published only short stories (Abad, Barrios, and Begoña Huertas), and four had published collections of short stories in addition to novels (Etxebarria, Freixas, Almudena Grandes, and Zapata Bosch).<sup>18</sup> Finally, the last column of Table II, pertaining to prizes, indicates that these women writers have regularly received awards since the end of the previous decade, a characteristic that situates them at the center of Spanish literary life.

The data in Table II indicates that the women writers studied here represent a social class of educated women who have left behind the private sphere to occupy a public space, whether in their access to institutions of higher education or in their presence in the mass media, a space that hitherto was reserved exclusively for men. The visibility of women authors in public spaces allows them, as social beings, to surpass the gender role normally assigned to women and to modify the symbolic meaning of language to give rise to a new representation based on the change of ideological positions. Through their personal development, the women writers of the 1990s, educated and with a space in the public sphere, are redefining the meaning of the language on which the female world and woman's identity are based. Such a stance resonates with Teresa de Lauretis's view that "the social being is constructed day by day as the point of articulation of ideological formations, an always provisional encounter of subject and codes at the historical (therefore changing) intersection of social formations and her or his personal history."<sup>19</sup> By questioning the rules that define the patriarchal world and by building new identities, subjective as well as objective, Spanish women writers of the 1990s have initiated a path that will make room for other women writers within an integral cultural environment. Indeed, once the genie is out of the bottle, there is no way to put it back. Perhaps, either by virtue of the transformation of language or as a consequence of the woman subject sensing the apparent cultural fairness toward women, female writers of the 1990s produce texts brimming with post-modern elements—supremacy of subjectivity, fragmentation, discursiveness, search for a new identity—in which the logocentric patriarchal tradition is contemplated and configured in a systematic way.

### *Production and Textual Marks*

I have examined the most recent narrative works of the twenty-four women writers selected for this essay, as shown in Table III.<sup>20</sup> For some of these women writers, the novel or the short story collection analyzed represents their first fictional work. Such is the case of Barrios with the short story compilation *Amores patológicos* (1998), Beccaria with *La debutante* (1996), Gabriela Bustelo with *Veo, veo* (1996), Frías with *La sal de la vida* (1999), Pereda with *La sombra del gudari* (1999), Riestra with *Anatol y dos*

más (1996), and Usón with *Las noches de San Juan* (1998). With the exception of *La debutante* by Beccaria and *Batir de alas* (1998) by Rodríguez Fischer, almost all the texts were published by well-established editorial houses including: Alfaguara, Anagrama, Debate, Destino, Ediciones B, Espasa, Lumen, Planeta, Plaza and Janés, Seix Barral, and Tusquets.<sup>21</sup> With the exception of Lumen, the publication of these texts by these “big” editorial houses leads us to two ironic observations: it is apparent that the editorial houses have quickly recognized the viability of women writers’ texts as profitable products within a consumer society, which, as Enri Raczymow proposes, has demythicized literature until it has become an industrial good that loses its elite status upon being read. In this sense, and in general terms, the text is ephemeral and appears subject to market laws controlled by the reader, while the author becomes a commodity that can be easily substituted by another.<sup>22</sup> The discovery of this marketing potential has led to the publication of more novels written by women. Thus, the very editorial successes that allowed these women to publish have raised the concern that their works are “light” marketing products of dubious value.

This irony reflects the dual effect of an editorial market that promotes the emergence of a new culture within the framework of an open society, but at the same time hinders its development due to the fleeting character of the texts. The duration of the cultural projects pursued by the women writers is so brief that it becomes insufficient for their legitimization by the standard critical tools—academic essays, specialized articles, roundtable discussions, among others—and even by the common reader. A fundamental disservice is rendered to these texts by women writers when they are thrown onto the market in massive quantities without regard to literary quality. Indeed, literary and aesthetic concerns are subordinated to success measured by sales. For some conservative critics, texts by women writers are nothing but passing fashion products.

In spite of the above observations, a critical analysis of these texts reveals an intentional repetition of certain textual markers. In the quick commercial evolution of substitutable texts, some permanent characteristics allow for a certain kind of endurance in the texts’ structure. In my opinion, this type of immutability acts as a textual sign of resistance against literature as an industrial object. In other words, confronted with the transient nature of the text because of market demands, women writers retaliate with a transtextual resistance, which rides through and across all the texts and undoubtedly dismantles the program of textual agility of literature understood sheerly as serving the ephemeral goals of leisure, entertainment, and industry. These strategies of resistance, shown in Table III under “textual marks,” include preference for the first-person narrative;

perspectivism through different points of view, the polyphonic novel; preference for a woman or a group of women as protagonists; and, finally, fragmentation as a narrative technique.

Since women traditionally have been portrayed and defined by patriarchal metanarratives, the use of the first person presupposes, in addition to an expression of self-determination, a psychological quest for a new identity as well as a sociological search for a new space within the society. In the texts analyzed, a majority of the women protagonists undertake the writing act as a way of recording and expressing the disillusionment associated with daily life—*Entre amigas* (1998); as well as with moral or social indebtedness to some relative or friend—*Mujer de aire* (1997), *La fiebre amarilla* (1994), *Mea culpa* (1997), *Desde el mirador* (1996), *Tiernos y traidores* (1999), *Melocotones helados* (1999), *Blanca vuela mañana* (1997); frustration due to the failure of a political project—*La sombra del gudari*, *Atlas de geografía humana* (1998); rejection of a sexuality controlled from outside, either by men or by socioreligious regulations—*El dios dormido* (1998); or the need to explain to themselves a life considered socially “different”—*La debutante*, *Veo, veo*, *Anatol y dos más*, *Batir de alas*, *Rapitán* (1997).<sup>23</sup> For all these reasons, the protagonists utilize, on numerous occasions, the act of writing as an explanatory introspection, as in the case of Elisenda in *Entre amigas* by Freixas:

Estás intentando demostrar que se puede vivir de otra manera, que es lo que yo me decía a mí misma muchas mañanas al despertarme, cuando trabajaba en televisión, antes de poner en marcha el engranaje del día, tan parecido al día anterior, pensaba: hay otras vidas posibles, tiene que haberlas. . .<sup>24</sup>

(You are trying to show that you can live differently, that is what I told myself many mornings upon waking up, when I worked in television, before I set in motion the gear of the day, so similar to the previous day, I thought: There are other possible lives, there must be.)

In this sense, one could assert that the woman writer of the 1990s repeatedly echoes a voice that wants to define a new identity without boundaries or in accordance with her own conception of the “I,” of its limitations and values, of its position in the world, and of its aspirations as formulated by herself. Beccaria’s protagonist in *La debutante* lucidly highlights this sudden self-realization:

A quien pueda parecer absurdo o escasamente convincente que a una mujer de cuarenta y siete años, poco agraciada en lo físico, de escasa valía intelectual, y de clase media tirando a baja sin posibilidad alguna de ascenso en el escalafón social, sin amigos o parientes próximos, carente de lazos afectivos y con una salud más que pésima, un buen día le dé un ataque de afán y desee cambiar su vida radicalmente, me siento

en la obligación de explicarle que este nuevo estado, esta metamorfosis del carácter no se escoge, sino que sale de golpe en el ánimo, como un herpes en la boca.<sup>25</sup>

(To whom it could seem absurd or scarcely convincing that a woman who is forty-seven years old, physically unattractive, of scarce intellectual depth, belonging to the lower end of the middle class with no prospect of social promotion, without friends or close relatives, lacking ties and with health worse than very bad, one day experiences a bout of eagerness and desire to change her life radically, I feel the obligation of explaining to him or her that this new state, this character metamorphosis is not chosen, but it comes out all of a sudden in the spirit, like a cold sore.)

Woman's centrality as the narration's nucleus leads us to reflect on the cultural program embodied in these texts. If these textual productions effect a modification of culture based on changes in the meaning of words or situations, on the representation of individuals so far marginalized, one can assume that the behavior of the protagonists, their thoughts, and their visibility may lead, consequently, to the dismissal of the sociocultural discourses of domination. The women writers of the 1990s have elaborated female models that subvert hegemonic roles within Spanish society. These models, which have become examples that their women readers follow, include a desire for autonomy, independent behavior, and a sense of sexuality. However, it must be pointed out that many novels, including *Mujer de aire*, *La debutante*, *Tiempos y traidores*, *Entre amigas*, *Atlas de geografía humana*, *Mar de los espejos* (1998),<sup>26</sup> *Desde el mirador*, and *Mea culpa*, highlight the crisis that some middle-class women with some level of independence confront during adulthood. The level of dissatisfaction articulated by one such woman narrator, Rosa, is found in Grandes's *Atlas de geografía humana*: "Quizás, lo único que ocurre es que mi insatisfacción contradice el modelo de insatisfacción consagrado por la estadística para mujer española emancipada de clase media urbana universitaria de mi edad"<sup>27</sup> ('Maybe, the only thing that occurs is that my dissatisfaction contradicts the model of dissatisfaction statistically expected for emancipated Spanish women of the university-educated urban middle class within my age group'). Bucking this trend, however, are the works of Beccaria, Castro, Rubio, and Usón that incorporate social perspectives beyond strict middle-class lines and present a broader segment of the society with protagonists of varying ages in texts such as *Veo, veo*, *Batir de alas*, *Rapitán*, *Anatol y dos más*, and *Noches de San Juan*.

A quick look at the last column of Table III suggests that the works of most of the women writers of the 1990s possess two intertwined characteristics: memory as a driving force and the search for a new identity. Moreover, the act of writing, whether in the form of letters or diaries, plays

an indispensable role in many of these novels as a way of providing a coherent explanation of the protagonists' world. Thus, for example, each one of the three characters in *Tiernos y traidores* by Fortes writes a journal whose pages, properly ordered by one of them, form the text that the reader has in his/her hands. This fragmentary and polyphonic journal, written eighteen years after the events occurred, helps to reckon with a past that remains suspended without a logical ending:

Mientras escribo no tengo la sensación de estar recordando sino abarcando el tiempo en el que todavía no era yo. Porque mi identidad tenía, por una parte, algo de cosa inventada. . . y, por otro lado, empezaba a tener los contornos precisos . . . de alguien que está empezando a ingresar en el mundo.<sup>28</sup>

(While I write I don't have the feeling of remembering but of covering a time in which I wasn't myself. Because my identity was, on the one hand, something of an invention . . . and, on the other hand, began to acquire precise contours . . . as someone who is beginning to enter the world.)

The development of an independent conscience by the women protagonists causes them to view themselves as projected entities within a society where memory may play a fundamental role in the process of historical revision: "Me gustaría saber cómo se las arreglan algunos para olvidar. Yo no lo consigo. Él mismo, a veces, se sorprende y me sorprende. ¿Cómo puedes acordarte de eso?, me pregunta. Y yo respondo preguntando a mi vez: ¿Y cómo puedes haberlo olvidado tú?"<sup>29</sup> ('I would like to know how some people manage to forget. I can't do it. Sometimes he is surprised himself and surprises me. How can you remember that? he asks me. And I answer with a question: And how can you forget it?').

Several novels pivot around self-reflective grappling with relationships crucial to the protagonists. Three of the narratives, *Mujer de aire* by Antolín, *La fiebre amarilla* by Castro, and *Mea culpa* by Zapata Bosch, present a past in which the protagonists focus on their relationships with their respective fathers. In Antolín's novel, there is an attempt to reach a reconciliation with the father figure. The Spanish civil war and the postwar period serve as background to this recuperation of the past. In Castro's novel, the title symbolizes the paternal inheritance that the author tries to bring to the text, while Zapata Bosch's text, *Mea culpa*, elaborates an analysis of female repression in a matriarchal society where the absent father's figure is paradoxically even more oppressive than if he were present. The illness and death metaphor as a source of meditation and self-reflection appears in *La fiebre amarilla* and in *Desde el mirador*, as well as in the texts of Chacón (*Blanca vuela mañana*), Fortes (*Tiernos y traidores*), and, to a certain extent, Freire (*Melocotones helados*). For Blanca in Chacón's novel, the

illness and untimely death of her friend Ulrike motivates a reflection on the meaning of love in general—“[a]sí empieza el amor: es una lucha entre lo que deseas y lo que temes”<sup>30</sup> (‘this is how love begins: as a fight between what you desire and what you fear’)—and on her private relationship with Peter. In Fortes’s novel, the end of the adolescence of the protagonists (Inés, Byron, and Martín) is marked by the suicide of their literature teacher, while the narrative thread in Freire’s *Melocotones helados* circles around old Elsa’s reclusion and the frustrated mental and social rehabilitation of her cousin, the young Elsa. At the same time, both Elsas develop their identity in the shadow of their aunt, the Elsa girl, who died at the age of nine. Yet another novel—*Desde el mirador* by Sánchez—presents a woman who begins to examine her life when she visits her sick mother at the hospital. At this time of family and personal crisis, she asks herself:

¿Quién soy yo? Es una pregunta que debería haberme hecho hace tiempo. A veces la rutina le borra a uno los límites y sobre todo el amor, que te crea la ilusión momentánea de que eres el otro, de que puedes pensar con su cabeza y sentir con su corazón. . . . Se produce mucha confusión de identidad en la dimensión del amor y lo más difícil, cuando poco a poco sales de ella, es volver a restablecer los límites naturales.<sup>31</sup>

(Who am I? It is a question that I should have asked myself some time ago. Sometimes the routine erases one’s limits and above all love, which creates the momentary illusion that you are the other, that you can think with the other’s head and feel with the other’s heart. . . . A great deal of identity confusion is produced in the love dimension and it is very difficult, when little by little you come out of it, to return to reestablish the natural limits.)

This same question, prompted by personal, marital, and middle-age crisis, is repeated continuously by the four protagonists of *Atlas de geografía humana* by Grandes and Eli in Freixas’s *Entre amigas*.

Pereda, Rubio, and Gopegui present a critical review of the patriarchal world from a different perspective. In *La sombra del gudari*, Pereda presents the terrorist group ETA from an unusual angle: the terrorists with an iron-clad ideology are women. In *El dios dormido*, Rubio defamiliarizes the figure of María Magdalena through a revision of her biblical role. The social identity crisis that Gopegui highlights in *La conquista del aire* affects not only the woman protagonist but also the two men co-protagonists. This leads Gopegui to a reflection on the exhaustion of the ideological program of the left in contemporary Spanish society. The prologue that precedes the novel positions the author in relation to the task of writing—“El narrador quiere saber y por eso narra” (‘The narrator wants to know and therefore he narrates’)—and delimits the role of the novel in the editorial market: “La novela que no nombre el significado, que no ilumine el sen-

tido, la novela que sólo quiera ser emoción y no ser emoción que se sabe a sí misma, terminará por confundirse con cualquier otro medio de entretenimiento” (‘The novel that does not mention the meaning, that does not illuminate the sense, the novel that only wants to be emotion and not to be emotion that knows itself, will end up being confused with any other entertainment product’). The author suggests that the narrator’s intention in this novel could be “mostrar algunos mecanismos que empañan la hipotética libertad del sujeto”<sup>32</sup> (‘to show some mechanisms that limit the hypothetical liberty of the subject’).

### *Tentative Conclusion: Toward a Contemporary Spanish Culture*

One of the most important tendencies in the phallogocentric construction of culture has been the systematic neglect of women’s cultural production or its designation as a lesser creation lacking in “value.” However, with the consolidation of women writers in the Spanish cultural circles of the twenty-first century, with publications in large editorial houses, with consecutive editions of their works, with their winning of literary prizes, and with the construction of several exemplary female subjects for women readers, the consideration of marginality begins to recede, producing ideological and sociopolitical adjustments. As I conclude this article, the literary production of women writers continues to garner awards such as the Azorín Prize for Dulce Chacón’s *Cielos de barro* (2000) and the 2000 Alfaguara Prize for Clara Sánchez’s *Últimas noticias del paraíso*. This, to some extent, confirms the gradual disappearance of a male gender-centered culture. What the literary production of Spanish women writers has done is to dismantle the concept of “value” traditionally applied to the construction of the patriarchal canon in the Spanish culture of the twentieth century. Spanish women writers at the end of the millennium are formulating a culture, a set of strategies that patriarchal society cannot keep out: the investigation of women’s genealogy, the construction of bonds among women writers and women readers, the creation of real textual dialogues not manipulated by the patriarchal conception of womanhood, relationships among women and between women and men, the affirmation of an identity and of a female sexuality with their own characteristics, the recuperation, through memory, of a past that was suppressed and considered merely subjective or feminine, and, in short, the affirmation of a feminine universe that complements, subverts, and opens gaps in the all-embracing patriarchal organization.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Other denominations for this group are "new narrative" or "young narrative." I formulate the generation's characteristics in "La narrativa española de los noventa. ¿Existe una generación X?" *Letras Peninsulares*, 10, Nos. 2-3 (1997-98), 455-76.

<sup>2</sup> The narrative of Spanish women writers possesses transnational characteristics that do not recognize linguistic borders, as is apparent in the anthology *Relatos de mujeres II: Ellas también cuentan* (Madrid: Torremozas, 1996), in which short stories by women writers of different nationalities are collected, or in *Mujeres al alba* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1999), a recent anthology published by Alfaguara in collaboration with Amnesty International, in which the question of women's mistreatment brings together women authors' short stories from diverse countries.

<sup>3</sup> For the study of "new Spanish narrative" in general, the interested reader should consult, among others, articles by Santos Sanz Villanueva, "Así pasaron veinte años," *República de las letras*, 50 (1996), 19-24; Angel Galiano and Andrés Sánchez Magro, "Narrativa española de los noventa," *Reseña*, 277 (1996), 2-7; Rafael Conte, "En busca de la moral perdida," *Leer*, 75 (1995), 48-51; Antonio Ortega, "Entre el ruido y las nueces. Notas sobre últimas tendencias en la novela española, con un intermedio sobre el cuento y una propuesta final," *Urogallo*, (Mayo 1996), 28-42; Ramón Acín, "La biblioteca del mañana," *Leer*, 83 (1996), 30-35; Santos Alonso, "El revuelo de la juventud," *Leer*, 83 (1996), 24-29; and the roundtable with Juana Salabert, Valeria Ciompi, Eloy Tizón, and Francisco Solano published in *Urogallo: Antonio Ortega, Horacio Vázquez Rial y Encarna Castejón, "A debate. Última narrativa," Urogallo* (Mayo 1996), 24-42. It is necessary, however, to note the scarce attention paid to women writers in these articles as compared to their male counterparts.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Álamo, et al., *Páginas amarillas*, 2d ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Lengua de Trapo, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Sabas Martín, "Narrativa española tercer milenio (Guía para usuarios)," in *Páginas amarillas*, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> All translations in this article are mine.

<sup>7</sup> Martín, p. xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Mercedes Monmany, ed., *Vidas de mujer* (Madrid: Alianza, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> A list of those nineteen women writers included in the volume is provided in the second column of Table I.

<sup>10</sup> Monmany, Introduction, *Vidas de mujer*, pp. 7, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Laura Freixas, ed., *Madres e hijas*, 10th ed. (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1997). The women authors included in this anthology appear in the third column of Table I.

<sup>12</sup> Freixas, Introduction, *Madres e hijas*, pp. 18, 19.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the names of the women writers that appear in boldface in the four columns of Table I, Mercedes Abad, Enriqueta Antolín, Dulce Chacón, Susana Fortes, Milagros Frías, Rosa Pereda, Ana Rodríguez Fischer, Clara Usón, and Pilar Zapata Bosch have been included.

<sup>14</sup> Ymelda Navajo, ed., *Doce relatos de mujeres* (Madrid: Alianza, 1982); *Relatos de mujeres* (Madrid: Editorial Popular, 1988); *Narradoras españolas de hoy* (Ventanal

14. Perpignan: Université de Perpignan, 1988); *Literatura escrita por mujeres en la España contemporánea. Litoral femenino* (Málaga: Litoral, 1986); "La mujer en la literatura," *Camp de l'arpa*, vol. 47 (1978).

<sup>15</sup> Susana Reisz, "Hipótesis sobre el tema 'escritura femenina e hispanidad,'" *Tropelías*, 1 (1990), 200.

<sup>16</sup> These writers are presented in graphic form in Table II.

<sup>17</sup> Although both Rosa Pereda and Fanny Rubio published their first book in 1987, *Vestir en España* by Pereda and *Reverso* (poetry) by Rubio, *Las sombras del gudari* (1999) is the first novel by Pereda and *El dios dormido* (1998) the fourth by Rubio, who started her narrative career with *A Madrid por capricho* (1998).

<sup>18</sup> In this paper, I consider three short-story collections: Mercedes Abad, *Soplando al viento* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1995); Begoña Huertas, *A tragos* (Madrid: Debate, 1996); and Nuria Barrios, *Amores patológicos* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Due to space limitations in this essay, I have been unable to analyze other women writers and their texts. Among such writers are Lourdes Fernández-Ventura (1956), *Donde nadie nos encuentre* (1997); Olga Guirao (1956), *Adversarios admirables* (1996); Cuca Canals (1962), *Llora, Alegría* (1999); Elvira Lindo (1962), *El otro barrio* (1998); Ana Rioja (1962), *Esa mujer no es para ti* (1998); Angeles Caso (1960), *El resto de la vida* (1998); Marta Rivera de la Cruz (1970), *Que veinte años no es nada* (1998).

<sup>21</sup> Barrios, *Amores patológicos* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1998); Lola Beccaria, *La debutante* (Barcelona: Alba, 1996); Graciela Bustelo, *Veo, veo* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1996); Milagros Frías, *La sal de la vida* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1999); Pereda, *La sombra del gudari* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1999); Blanca Riestra, *Anatol y dos más* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1996); Ana Rodríguez Fischer, *Batir de alas* (Madrid: Acento Editorial, 1998); Clara Usón, *Noches de San Juan* (Barcelona: Lumen, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Enri Raczymow, *La mort du grand écrivain. Essai sur la fin de la littérature* (Paris: Stock, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Freixas, *Entre amigas* (Barcelona: Destino, 1998); Antolín, *Mujer de aire* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1997); Luisa Castro, *La fiebre amarilla* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1994); Zapata Bosch, *Mea culpa* (Barcelona: Destino, 1997); Clara Sánchez, *Desde el mirador* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1996); Fortes, *Tiernos y traidores* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1999); Espido Freire, *Melocotones helados*, 2d ed. (Barcelona: Planeta, 1999); Chacón, *Blanca vuela mañana* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1997); Almudena Grandes, *Atlas de geografía humana*, 4th ed. (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1998); Rubio, *El dios dormido* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1998); Angela Labordeta, *Rapitán* (Madrid: Debate, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Freixas, *Entre amigas*, p. 116.

<sup>25</sup> Beccaria, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Juana Salabert, *Mar de los espejos* (Barcelona: Plaza and Janés, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Grandes, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Fortes, p. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Antolín, p. 143.

<sup>30</sup> Chacón, p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> Sánchez, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Belén Gopegui, *La conquista del aire*, 2d ed. (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1998), pp. 13, 11, 12.

TABLE I  
Anthologies

<i>Páginas amarillas</i>	<i>Vidas de mujer</i>	<i>Madres e hijas</i>	<i>Sabas Martín</i>
Nuria Barrios	Nuria Barrios		
Lola Beccaria			Lola Beccaria
Luisa Castro	Luisa Castro	Luisa Castro	Luisa Castro
Lucía Etxebarria [sic]	Lucía Etxebarria [sic]		Lucía Etxebarria [sic]
Begoña Huertas			Begoña Huertas
Paula Izquierdo			Paula Izquierdo
Blanca Riestra			Blanca Riestra
Juana Salabert			Juana Salabert
Marta Sanz			Marta Sanz
	Rosa Regás		
	Esther Tusquets	Esther Tusquets	
	Clara Janés		
	Lourdes Ortiz		
	Cristina Fernández Cubas		
	Adelaida García Morales		
	Ana María Moix	Ana María Moix	
	Soledad Puértolas	Soledad Puértolas	
	<b>Fanny Rubio</b>		
	Ana Rossetti		
	Nuria Amat		
	Rosa Montero		
	Paloma Díaz-Mas	Paloma Díaz-Mas	
	Clara Sánchez	Clara Sánchez	
	Laura Freixas		
	Espido Freire		
		Rosa Chacel	
		Carmen Laforet	
		Carmen Martín Gaité	
		Ana María Matute	
		Josefina R. Aldecoa	
		Cristina Peri Rossi	
		Mercedes Soriano	
		<b>Almudena Grandes</b>	<b>Almudena Grandes</b>
			<b>Angela Labordeta</b>
			Cuca Canals
			Care Santos

TABLE II  
Women Writers

Writer	Date of Birth	University Studies	Teacher	Translator	Journalist	Poet	Short-Stories Writer	Awards
Abad	1961	✓			✓		✓	La sonrisa vertical VIII Tigre Juan 1992
Antoñín *	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Barrios	1962	✓			✓			
Beccaria	1963	✓			✓			
Bustelo	1962	✓		✓				
Castro	1966	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	Hiperión 1986 Rey Juan Carlos de Poesía 1989 Finalista Heralde 1989 Ciudad de Irún 1995
Chacón *	1954					✓		
Elzebarria	1966	✓			✓		✓	Premio Nadal 1998
Fortes	1959	✓	✓		✓			Nuevos Narradores 1994
Freire	1974	✓			✓		✓	XLVIII Premio Planeta
Freixas *	1958	✓	✓	✓			✓	Lena 1982
Frías *	1955	✓			✓			
Gopegui	1963	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	Tigre Juan 1993 Santiago del Nuevo Extremo 1994
Grandes	1960	✓					✓	La sonrisa vertical XI
Huertas	1965	✓					✓	Casa de las Américas 1993 Juan Benet 1995
Labordeta	1967	✓			✓			
Pereda *	1949	✓	✓		✓			
Riestra	1970	✓			✓			
Rodríguez Fischer *	1957	✓	✓		✓			Femenino Lumen 1995
Rubio *	1949	✓	✓			✓		
Salabert	1962	✓		✓				Finalista Nadal 1996
Sánchez *	1955	✓			✓			
Usón	1961	✓		✓				Femenino Lumen 1998
Zapata Bosch	—	✓	✓				✓	Hucha de Oro 1988 Ramón J. Sender 1988 Villa de Madrid 1995

\* The names with asterisks are those writers that do not belong to the «nueva narrativa» group.

TABLE III  
Texts

Text/Author	TEXTUAL PRODUCTION			TEXTUAL MARKS				NARRATION CATEGORY
	First text	Editorial	Year	1st person	Polyphonic	Protagonist	Fragmentation	
<i>Soplando al viento/Abad*</i>	No	Tusquets	1995	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Mujer de aire/Antoñin</i>	No	Alfaguara	1997	√		woman		Memory/father's figure
<i>Amores patológicos/Barrios</i>	Yes	Ediciones B	1998		√	adults	√	Desire
<i>La debutante/Beccaria</i>	Yes	Alba	1996	√		woman		Identity/Picaresque
<i>Veo, veo/Bustelo</i>	Yes	Anagrama	1996	√		woman	√	Identity/Picaresque
<i>La fiebre amarilla/Castro</i>	No	Anagrama	1994	√		woman		Memory/father's figure
<i>Blanca vuela mañana/Chacón</i>	No	Plaza & Janés	1997			woman		Identity
<i>Nosotras.../Erebarria</i>	No	Destino	1999		√	woman	√	Identity/sexuality
<i>Tiernos y traidores/Fortes</i>	No	Seix Barral	1999	√	√	adults	√	Memory
<i>Irlanda/Freire</i>	Yes	Planeta	1998	√		teenager		Apprenticeship
<i>Entre amigos/Freixas</i>	No	Destino	1998	√		women		Memory/friendship
<i>La sal de la vida/Frías</i>	Yes	Espasa	1999			women	√	Photographic realism
<i>La conquistista del aire/Gopegui</i>	No	Anagrama	1998			adults	√	Identity
<i>Atlas de geografía humana/Grandes</i>	No	Tusquets	1999	√	√	women	√	Identity
<i>A tragos/fuertas*</i>	No	Debate	1996	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Rapitán/Labordeta</i>	No	Debate	1997		√	young persons	√	Apprenticeship
<i>La sombra del guardari/Pereida</i>	No	Planeta	1999	√		women	√	Politic memory
<i>Anato! y dos más/Riestra</i>	Yes	Anagrama	1996	√		young persons	√	Apprenticeship
<i>Batir de alas/Rodríguez Fischer</i>	No	Acanto	1998	√		teenager		Apprenticeship
<i>El dios dormido/Rubio</i>	No	Alfaguara	1998	√		woman		History
<i>Mar de los espejos/Salabert</i>	No	Plaza & Janés	1998		√	woman		Memory
<i>Desde el mirador/Sánchez</i>	No	Alfaguara	1996	√		woman		Identity/mother's figure
<i>Noches de San Juan/Usón</i>	Yes	Lumen	1998			woman		Apprenticeship
<i>Mea culpa/Zapata Bosch</i>	No	Destino	1997	√		women		Memory/father's figure

\* The titles with asterisks are collections of stories that do not present textual unity