

Introduction

The Concepts and the Women Who Formulated Them

Is Spain different? Many have argued that Spain's geographical position between Europe and Africa and its 800-year-domination by Arabs (711–1492) have molded the country in distinctive ways. Its literature and philosophy seldom appear in major surveys and anthologies of Western cultural production. Such is the case with Spanish feminist theory. Mary Nash points out, for example, that “el feminismo igualitario, basado en el principio de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres y el ejercicio de derechos individuales, no representa la fundamentación teórica exclusiva del feminismo español sino que coexiste con un fuerte arraigo de un feminismo que se legitima a partir del presupuesto de la diferencia de género y del reconocimiento de roles sociales distintos de hombres y mujeres” (“Experiencia y aprendizaje” 158) [egalitarian feminism, based on the principle of equality between men and women and the exercise of individual rights, does not represent the exclusive foundation of Spanish feminism but coexists with a strong basis of a feminism that is legitimized on the presupposition of sexual difference and the recognition of different social roles for men and women]. And Maria Aurèlia Campany notes that Spanish feminists, unlike their Anglo-American sisters, did not form an ideological front. Campany points out that each region in Spain had different social, economic, and political circumstances that demanded different solutions (see *De profesión mujer* 23–24). (*A New History of Iberian Feminisms* takes this situation into account.) In Spain, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century liberalism (especially the notion of representative government) of other Western countries such as France and England was weak. The ancien régime was prolonged in a

medieval landholding system, in the top-down socioeconomic and political hierarchy, and in the relatively small and slow-growing bourgeoisie. Only a few wealthy men had the right to vote. The general lack of confidence in electoral democracy did not inspire women to place the vote at the center of their agenda for change. Rather, education became the motivating force, education that would provide women the means to work and gain economic independence from men. Mary Nash also points to another factor in Spanish society that steered early Spanish feminism in directions other than suffrage—“el claro predominio del discurso de la domesticidad” (160) [the clear preponderance of a discourse of domesticity], which forms the basis of Spanish feminism and shapes its course. Understanding this fundamental difference between Spanish feminism and that of other Western countries is important to contemporary debates between “difference” feminists and “equality” feminists that have characterized recent Spanish feminist theory.

A number of studies exist on French, American, English, and Italian feminist thought, but there is only one monograph on Spanish feminist discourse—Estrella Cebreira’s *Palabra de mujer: Hacia la reivindicación y contextualización del discurso feminista español* [Women’s word: Towards the vindication and contextualization of Spanish feminist discourse]. Cebreira’s is a valuable initiation into the topic, but it is written in Spanish and includes commentary on both essays and fictional works. The many histories of women and histories of feminism in Spain are likewise written in Spanish and have not been translated. Catherine Davies’s “Feminist Writers in Spain Since 1900: From Political Strategy to Personal Inquiry,” a useful survey that treats Carmen de Burgos, Margarita Nelken, Clara Campoamor, Federica Montseny, Carmen Laforet, Carmen Martín Gaité, Lidia Falcón, Montserrat Roig, Esther Tusquets, and Rosa Montero, includes both essayists and novelists. *Spanish Women Writers and the Essay: Gender, Politics, and the Self*, edited by Kathleen M. Glenn and Mercedes Mazquiarán de Rodríguez, contains in-depth considerations of specific women writers who wrote essays, although not all of them on feminist topics. The volume includes Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, María Martínez Sierra, Margarita Nelken, Rosa Chacel, María Zambrano, Carmen Martín Gaité, Lidia Falcón, Montserrat Roig, Soledad Puértolas, and Rosa Montero. *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, edited by Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff, contains a number of useful essays on significant topics related to Spanish feminism from the early nineteenth to the

mid-twentieth century—motherhood, Catholicism, work, and politics; I reference the articles on women's work in chapter 4. Most recently, *Recovering the Spanish Feminist Tradition*, edited by Lisa Vollendorf for the Modern Language Association of America, marks another milestone, as it contains important analyses of specific authors of all literary genres from the Renaissance forward. Lastly, I mention two volumes I have coedited and that I hope the present volume complements—*Antología del pensamiento feminista español 1700–2012* (with Maite Zubiaurre) [Anthology of Spanish feminist thought 1700–2012] and *A New History of Iberian Feminisms* (with Silvia Bermúdez). The first supplies a sampling of texts of Spanish feminism across three centuries, and the second chronicles the history of Spanish and Portuguese feminist thinking with special emphasis on the particularities of feminist thought in the key Spanish territories—the Basque Country, Castile, Catalonia, and Galicia.

While these studies move chronologically from author to author, *Major Concepts in Spanish Feminist Theory* is organized around six central concepts that mark the focus of its chapters: (1) solitude, (2) personality, (3) work, (4) social class, (5) equality, and (6) difference.¹

The six concepts are intertwined, but pairs of concepts—solitude and personality, work and social class, and equality and difference—bear particular affinities, in part because they share the same historical time frame. Work and social class were important topics of Spanish feminist thinking in the 1920s and 1930s, when leftist political parties were gaining ground in Spain leading up to the Second Republic and during the Republic's brief rule. Equality and difference feminism, while they have precedents in earlier Spanish feminist thinking, are especially linked to the democratic era. These two concepts, in fact, became identified with particular Spanish feminist schools of thought that engaged in open and sometimes hostile public debate, a debate that continues to smolder today (See my article "The Concept of Gender Equality in Constitutional Spain"). The concepts of solitude and personality can be found throughout the modern history of Spanish feminist theory. The importance of these concepts in Spanish feminist theory can be attributed to the fact that Spanish women were not traditionally considered persons in their own right, but rather as appendages of the men in their lives—fathers, brothers, husbands, sons. Given that certain writers focused on one or another concept, they are treated only in the chapters of their particular focus. Such is the case, for example, of Rosa Chacel and Maria Zambrano in the chapters on solitude and personality. In addition, since these writers

are more philosophically inclined, their approaches to feminism are less sociological than others treated in later chapters. The book's themes are arranged in a roughly chronological format (1700 to the present). Thus early mid-twentieth-century authors, such as Zambrano and Chacel, are less likely to appear in later chapters, especially the chapters on difference and equality that come to the fore in democratic Spain (1975–present).

Within each chapter I also follow a roughly chronological format to analyze the work of several writers who have treated the chapter's subject. Although *Major Concepts* is not a comparative study, the concept approach allows me to highlight the important contributions of Spanish thinking to Western feminist theory. Questions I address are not necessarily those that shaped the development of feminist theory in other countries. For example, as the chapters on solitude and personality reveal, education and personal development, rather than suffrage, were the galvanizing issues in early Spanish feminist thinking. My format also allows comparison of several authors' views on a particular topic. Geraldine Scanlon's *La polémica feminista en España* also employs a topics format, but Scanlon's is more a factual history of the Spanish feminist movement(s). Nonetheless, Scanlon does discuss a number of theoretical matters that fueled feminist debates between 1868 and 1974.

Although *Major Concepts* is structured thematically, to take into account the importance of history and politics to Spanish feminist thought, I also consider the chronological development of Spanish feminist philosophy. This is a story of revival and recovery, and its perspective must be historical. Each chapter notes the recurrence of certain themes in Spanish feminist thought at different times that register the vicissitudes of Spanish history's somewhat circular path. Thus I trace the modifications each concept has undergone in various periods from the eighteenth century to the present. Despite the existence of significant feminist writings in nineteenth-century Spain, the first Spanish feminist movement flowered during the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1939).² This movement, which gained women the vote and social and political equality, was stymied by the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the conservative, repressive dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939–1975) that followed the war. When the dictator died in 1975 and Spain transitioned to a democratic form of government, the Spanish feminist movement recovered some of the ground women had lost between 1939 and 1978, when under the new constitution women once again gained the vote and equality before the law. Themes such as work, social class, and women's

solidarity that had been muted in women's nonfiction writing from 1939 to 1975 reappeared. Even toward the end of the dictatorship, a timid thaw witnessed the emergence of some feminist writing, such as Lidia Falcón's *Mujer y sociedad* (1969), Geraldine Scanlon's landmark book *La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea, 1868–1974* (1975), and other more recent studies such as Pilar Folguera's and Nash's; such writings provide a great deal of the historical background in which I situate the development of the six major concepts I address. Unlike my book, these historical studies do not engage in detailed analyses of specific theoretical topics, and Scanlon's important book ends with the demise of the Franco dictatorship in 1975.

Major Concepts includes prominent Spanish feminist thinkers from the eighteenth century (Father Feijoo, Josefa de Amar), the second half of the nineteenth century (Concepción Arenal and Emilia Pardo Bazán), the early twentieth century (Carmen de Burgos, María Martínez Sierra, Margarita Nelken, Hildegart Rodríguez, and Federica Montseny), those who began writing in the 1930s and continued to write in exile after the Civil War (Rosa Chacel and Maria Zambrano), the Franco era (María Laffitte, Lili Álvarez, Carmen Laforet, Lidia Falcón, Montserrat Roig), the transition to democracy (Rosa Montero and Carmen Martín Gaité), and democracy (Celia Amorós, Victoria Sendón de León, Alicia Puleo, Carmen Alborch, Milagros Rivera, Marina Subirats, Alicia Miyares, and Lucía Extebarria), among others. Given the ultraconservative, restrictive religious, social, and political milieu in which Spanish feminist thinkers of the nineteenth century until the 1980s lived and worked, their achievements as feminist thinkers are especially remarkable.

Concepción Arenal (1820–1893), whose liberal father was imprisoned and died shortly thereafter, defied her very Catholic mother and dressed as a man to attend university classes on law. Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851–1921), a prolific writer of essays and fiction, founded and wrote her own journal, *Teatro Crítico*, and published a book series intended for women. Joyce Tolliver believes that despite her prolific production in fiction, Pardo Bazán should be considered primarily an essayist, remarking that “she was never timid about expressing her sympathies with the feminist movements that were gaining momentum in Europe and the United States” (14). Pardo Bazán spoke and wrote vehemently in favor of women's education, despite the dominant male culture's ridicule of her. As was the case of María Laffitte (1902–1986) and Lili Álvarez (1905–1998)—both titled aristocrats and feminists during the

reactionary Franco regime—Pardo Bazán’s social class was important in making her feminist ideas heard. Carmen de Burgos (1867–1932) broke several social taboos by leaving her husband at the turn of the twentieth century to move to Madrid, where she lived as a single woman journalist and teacher. She wrote numerous popular novelettes on feminist themes, in addition to her feminist essays and speeches. María Martínez Sierra (1874–1974), married to Gregorio Martínez Sierra, a theatrical impresario, penned well-received plays as well as feminist essays and speeches, which Gregorio signed or delivered in public. Margarita Nelken (1894–1968), art critic and single mother, was first a socialist, then a communist political militant; she was one of the first women to be elected to the legislature under the Second Spanish Republic. Federica Montseny’s parents Joan Montseny and Soledad Gustavo were important anarchist activists, as was Federica (1905–1994), who lived according to the ideology she preached. Hildegart Rodríguez (1914–1933) was a prodigy conceived by her mother out of wedlock to be schooled in and to propagate her mother’s ideas on feminism, sexual liberation, and eugenics. Ironically, her mother shot her when at age eighteen she began to show some independence of spirit. Rosa Chacel (1898–1994), self-taught philosopher, and María Zambrano (1904–1991), with a doctorate in philosophy, published daring feminist essays in a philosophical milieu dominated by misogynist José Ortega y Gasset. Both continued their feminist writing in Latin American exile when the Franco regime made life in Spain impossible for Republican-sympathizing intellectuals. Interestingly, they both moved away from feminist writing after the early 1950s, when it became clear that the Allies were not going to vanquish Franco, and they would not be returning to Spain anytime soon, where they might have had an opportunity to make a feminist impact on their nation. Clearly, both writers were anxious to universalize their philosophical themes and ensure that their work would have wider appeal. As detailed in chapter 2, Zambrano left women’s concerns to focus on humanity in general via her notion of “person,” especially in *Persona y democracia* (1955, *Person and Democracy*), and after *Saturnal* (1970) Chacel left essay writing to concentrate on fiction, which she probably perceived as more lucrative in her penurious exiled state.

The relationship of the individual to society is one of the themes that bind together the chapters on the concepts of solitude, personality, social class, work, equality, and difference, as these themes have developed in Spanish feminist thought over the course of nearly three

hundred years. Two rival positions emerge—one emphasizes women in their social milieu and the other focuses on women as individuals. In the nineteenth century, Concepción Arenal exemplifies the first position when she defends education for women as a means to better society as a whole, while Emilia Pardo Bazán argues that women should be educated for their own personal improvement and enjoyment. Arenal's argument from the exterior is continued in 1920s and 1930s feminist writing by Carmen de Burgos and Margarita Nelken in favor of legal parity for women. In this period and into the 1940s through the 1970s from their exile in Latin America, Rosa Chacel and María Zambrano looked to women's inner selves as the loci of their strength and place in the world. In the late Franco era and the democratic period, these two positions, with important modifications, can be detected in thinkers such as equality feminist Celia Amorós and difference feminist Milagros Rivera (who often relies on María Zambrano's insights).

“Feminism” and “Theory” in the Spanish Context

I employ the term “feminist” for writing that addresses women's condition to expose or attempt to correct inequities. Lidia Falcón defines feminism within the Spanish context: “[l]a mujer está sometida al hombre desde que nace. Vive las condiciones que le han sido dadas por sus padres, por su ambiente, por su escuela, por la sociedad entera. Salir de ello requiere lucha y sacrificio y preparación que no la tiene” (qtd. in Vollendorf, “Introduction” 4) [women are subjected to men from birth. They live within the conditions they have been given by their parents, by their ambience, by their school, by their whole society. Struggle, sacrifice, and further education are required for women to move beyond this condition].³ I would add to this definition that feminism and especially feminist thought pertain not only to the struggle, but to the attempt to reveal the conditions that maintain women in a subjugated position. As Najat El Hachmi argues, while feminism is a global phenomenon, it has specific manifestations in different areas of the world: “El feminismo es una lucha global de las mujeres que en cada una de sus realidades socioculturales tienen que encontrar el mecanismo más adecuado para cambiar el machismo particular que les ha tocado” (“La discriminación positiva” 1) [Feminism is a global struggle of women who in each one of their sociocultural realities have to find the most appropriate means

to change the particular masculinism that pertains to them]. Sometimes the arguments are ontological; other times they are political, legal, social, or refer to personal practices. María Ángeles Durán reminds us that the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defines *feminism* as “una doctrina, un sistema elaborado de pensamiento. . . . probablemente en el uso actual dominan las connotaciones relativas al estilo de conducta, a prácticas sociales” (“Introducción,” *Mujeres y hombres* 12) [a doctrine, an elaborated system of thought. . . . probably in today’s usage the connotations relative to a style of conduct, to social practices]. As I do here, Durán recognizes that the term *feminism* changes with the time and place in which it is used.

While in the Anglo-American world, few who write about or work for the improvement of women’s situation would contest the label “feminist,” such has not been the case in Spain. “Feminist” has been a troubled category, even for the women such as Federica Montseny, Rosa Chacel, María Zambrano, and Soledad Puértolas, who fit most definitions of feminism but who were or are reluctant to be called feminist. For example, Kathleen Glenn reports that “Soledad Puértolas rejected the idea that as a female author she should shed light on the world of women” (“Voice” 374). At the same time, Mercedes Mazquiarán de Rodríguez finds feminist statements in Puértolas’s *La vida oculta*: “Puértolas’s self-acknowledged inability to respond quickly and cogently in front of an audience is the result of social conditioning, and her own annoyance regarding the fact is an indication of her awareness of the limitations patriarchal societies have imposed on women. Uneasiness when facing the public eye has traditionally been a woman’s reaction in male-dominated cultures” (237).⁴ Mazquiarán de Rodríguez also cites Puértolas on women’s writing: “Why should it be acceptable, she wonders, for male writers to write about anything they desire without anyone questioning the reasons for their choices, while all women are expected to write about the same things. Once again she poses a rhetorical question laden with irony: ‘Is it that women perhaps and within that category, women writers, are condemned to be exactly the same?’” (238). In Spain, women such as Emilia Pardo Bazán, many of whose writings could be identified as feminist, run the risk of being considered masculine. According to Geraldine Scanlon, Pardo Bazán’s *Nuevo Teatro Crítico*, the journal she wrote and published entirely on her own, “demonstrates, wrote a contemporary biographer, the capabilities of her ‘varonil espíritu’ [manly spirit] (Anon.); Gómez de Baquero affirms that few contemporary male writers would be equal

to the task she has undertaken, and Mariano de Cavia refers to her as ‘La Madre Feijóo [Mother Feijóo], calling her an ‘autor’ or author rather than authoress because ‘es mucho hombre esta mujer’ [that woman is some man]” (“Gender and Journalism” 244–45).

It is not entirely clear why the label “feminist” should have such negative connotations in Spain. Often those who resist the feminist label pit feminism against what they consider more universal human concerns. Some writers and activists, such as Federica Montseny, were “double militants” who did not believe that matters relating specifically to women should take precedence over what they considered larger issues, such as class oppression. Lidia Falcón countered that argument by declaring women to be a social class. Central to some Spanish feminist thought is that the sexes are absolutely equal in abjection of all sorts, including what they consider bourgeois marriage. Spanish feminists, whose society has traditionally and institutionally maintained highly differentiated sexual roles, have often had to find ways of mediating between feminist ideals in other countries and ones that can be accepted in Spain. As Mary Lee Bretz points out, one of María Martínez Sierra’s contributions to Spanish feminist theory is her wedding of the notions feminine and feminist. Martínez Sierra argues that no woman should reject the label “feminist,” because being feminist does not subtract from a woman’s femininity (that is, her domesticity, maternity, and care-giving):

Toda actividad generosa que le haga traspasar por un momento los lindes encantados de su propio hogar, acercarse a la vida, ponerse en situación de comprenderla, de darse cuenta de que hay un más allá, o un más abajo, hecho de injusticias tremendas y de dolores insospechados, lejos de hacer perder feminidad a su espíritu, la aumentará, ensanchándole el corazón a medida que acrezca el conocimiento. Por saber más no es una mujer menos mujer . . . no puede dar de sí más que un perfeccionamiento de sus facultades naturales, nunca un cambio de su naturaleza. (*Feminismo* 13)

[All generous activity that makes her leave the enchanted borders of her own home for a moment, approach life, place herself in a situation to understand it, to realize that there is something beyond, or below, full of tremendous injustices and unsuspected pain, far from causing a loss of femininity in her

spirit, will increase it, enlarging her heart as her knowledge grows. Just because a woman is more learned, does not mean she is less of a woman. . . . she can only perfect her natural faculties; she cannot change her nature.]

Maryellen Bieder notes that early in her career, Carmen de Burgos was a master of holding feminist positions and carrying out feminist activities, while strategically rejecting the label “feminist”: “As she frequently does in her public statements, she takes both sides of the issue, opposing feminism but recognizing its fundamental role in enacting social change” (“Carmen de Burgos” 250–51). By the 1920s, however, Burgos unequivocally declared herself a feminist (Bieder, “Carmen” 251).

In many cases one suspects that in rejecting the feminist label, Spanish women writers wish to avoid the kinds of ridicule leveled at feminists, who were caricatured from the earliest years of the twentieth century onward in the popular press and in novels such as Pío Baroja’s *Paradox, rey* [Paradox, king] and *El mundo es así* [That’s the way the world is]. In these novels the feminist characters are foreign (English or Russian), and thus a latent nationalism may be operating in Baroja’s and other male writers’ depictions of feminism as a foreign movement that could invade Spanish soil where traditional womanhood formed part of the nation’s identity. These caricatures persisted in the scorn heaped on Carmen de Burgos, whose pseudonym Colombine [Buttercup] was transformed into Colombone [oversized buttercup; Burgos was a large woman], and in the ostracizing of highly militant late-Franco-era feminists such as Lidia Falcón. Some women writers learned to shun any association that would similarly attempt to marginalize them, although others, including Carmen de Burgos, María Martínez Sierra, Margarita Nelken, Montserrat Roig, Rosa Montero, and Lucía Etxebarria, openly called or call themselves feminists. However, some male public figures, such as dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera and novelist Felipe Trigo, who readily adopted the feminist label, may be suspect.⁵

Double militancy, that is, militancy for a political ideology as well as for feminist causes, is another aspect of Spanish feminism that complicates women’s identification with the feminist label. Mireia Bofill highlights the importance in Spain of the intertwining of political ideology and feminist thinking, contrasting the Spanish situation to that in the United States:

Claro, en América, hay antologías de textos u otros de redacción, pero, vamos, no los hay desde nuestro punto de vista que a lo mejor es más político. A nivel de divulgación general, seguramente es más político y entonces hay que ver la relación de la lucha política con la situación de la mujer, si una está subordinada a la otra, si son dos luchas independientes, si las mujeres deben luchar sólo por las mujeres y prescindir de la lucha política, o luchar sólo políticamente y dejar lo de las mujeres o intentar coordinar las dos cosas. (Levine and Waldman 49)

[Of course, in America, there are anthologies of texts or others of essays, but, for us they don't exist; our viewpoint is more political. At the level of popular dissemination, surely it is more political, and then we have to consider women's situation in its relation to the general political struggle—if women should fight only for women and not engage in the political struggle, or enter only into the political fray and leave behind women's issues or try to combine the two things.]

In the pre-Civil War era, many Spanish feminists were identified with one or another of the leftist parties or ideologies and militated to varying degrees within them—Margarita Nelken, first with the Socialist Party and later with the Communist Party; María Martínez Sierra with the Socialist Party (at least in the 1920s and 1930s); Federica Montseny with anarchism. Thus Spanish feminist theorists often feel the need to prioritize their several interests. In Montseny's case, for example, what she considered to be universal human concerns took precedence over issues she deemed more narrowly pertaining to women. María Martínez Sierra, while not directly addressing the division between more universal political militancy and feminist militancy, devoted most of her essays to feminist matters.

Double militancy was a divisive issue in the 1970s after the long oppression of both women and leftist political parties allied with the working class. In an attempt to overcome the theoretical dichotomy between gender and class, Lidia Falcón argued that women are a separate social class: “[n]osotros consideramos que la mujer es una clase oprimida, por lo tanto, entra dentro de la problemática de la lucha de clases

evidentemente y hasta que la problemática ésta no se haya resuelto, tampoco se resolverá la de la mujer. Para mí, no tiene importancia una cosa que otra, tiene la misma. La lucha debe llevarse al mismo nivel y además no es imposible” (Levine and Waldman 71) [we believe that women are an oppressed class, and therefore they clearly enter into the problematics of the class struggle, and until it has been resolved, women’s situation will not be resolved. As far as I am concerned neither is more important than the other; they carry the same weight. It is not impossible to take the struggles to the same level]. Carmen Alcalde saw women’s struggle as the overriding one, and like Falcón, she viewed women as a social class whose interests should take precedence over all others: “para mí es más importante la lucha de la mujer. Para mí, es la primera lucha de clases que existe. . . . es más importante, la lucha de sexos, la lucha sexista. Mientras esto no se solucione la mujer seguirá colaborando con los partidos, con sus presidentes y directivas” (33) [for me the women’s cause is the most important. For me, it was the first class struggle to ever exist. . . . the battle of the sexes, the sexist battle is more important. As long as that issue remains unsolved, women will continue to collaborate with the political parties, with their precedents and directives].

The term “theory” presents another set of problems for the Spanish case. Scholars have not been accustomed to considering Spanish thought when theorizing about feminist issues in Spanish writing, partly because that writing often does not resemble theory as we understand it—namely, engaging in pure abstraction. Many Spanish feminist writings, such as Carmen de Burgos’s book on divorce in Spain (1904) and her *La mujer moderna y sus derechos* (1927), Margarita Nelken’s *La condición social de la mujer en España* (1919), and Lidia Falcón’s *Mujer y sociedad* (1969) are more historical, sociological, or political in nature. Of course, there is theory behind historical, political, or sociological essays, but sometimes it is submerged and latent. One must tease it out and foreground it. Spanish feminist thinkers often distinguish between theory and practice, with some tendency to favor the latter. Lidia Falcón mentions a woman acquaintance who became disillusioned with attending feminist meetings in the early 1970s, because those present devoted the time to “una comparación de teorías feministas” (Levine and Waldman 75) [a comparison of feminist theories]. Eva Forest points to the need to base theory on experience:

Nosotras no queremos partir de textos; más bien los problemas
que surgen en cada sesión

nos llevan a los textos. Por ejemplo nos preguntamos después de una discusión: ¿cómo respondieron las mujeres de cierta clase social a estos problemas? Entonces cada una se encarga y hace un poco un resumen de lo que se ha dicho sobre ese problema. Eso nos obliga a estudiar mucho y ver el problema como vinculado con todos los demás problemas. (Levine and Waldman 104)

[We do not want to begin with texts; instead the problems that come up in each session take us to the texts. For example, we ask ourselves after a discussion: how did women of a certain social class respond to these problems? Then each one of us takes responsibility and summarizes a little of what has been said about this problem. This obliges us to study a great deal and to see the problem in relation to all the other problems.]

Feminist theorists from France and the United States, such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, and Judith Butler, take a mostly ahistorical “universalistic” or abstract philosophical or psychoanalytical approach to the study of matters relating to women and gender. By contrast, Spanish feminist theory is more directly tied to specifically Spanish situations, and Spanish feminist writers for the most part begin their analyses and arguments with a historical review as background to understanding a current situation. The emphasis on history may be attributed to the fact that since modern feminism began to emerge in the late nineteenth century, Spanish political history has varied more than that of France, England, or the United States.

This situation does not mean that Spanish feminist theory is not philosophically informed. Most Spanish feminist thinkers reveal the influence of one or more (usually male) thinkers, whose ideas they have employed or modified for their own purposes. Krausism—a Spanish neo-Kantianism—and John Stuart Mill’s liberalism are evident in Concepción Arenal and Emilia Pardo Bazán’s feminist writing. In fact, Krausism is perhaps a singularly important source of difference between Spanish feminism and other European and American feminisms. Krausism is an odd blend of God-centered German rationalism and ethical social reformism that sought to reconcile the several strands of modern thought that had been seeping through the cracks of the Spanish Catholic hegemony

since the late eighteenth century. Concepción Arenal, born in 1820, was a contemporary of Julián Sanz del Río (born in 1814). Sanz del Río popularized Karl Christian Friedrich Krause's ideas in Spain with his courses at the University of Madrid from 1854 to 1867 and with the publication of his *Lecciones para el sistema de filosofía analítica de K.Ch. F. Krause* in 1850 [Lessons for a system of analytical philosophy of K. Ch. F. Krause] and *Ideal de la humanidad para la vida* [Ideal of humanity for life] in 1860.

Arenal's intellectual formation took place in an atmosphere and historical circumstances similar to those of Julián Sanz del Río (except for Sanz del Río's sojourn in Belgium and Germany). And while Sanz del Río garnered a well-recognized following of distinguished thinkers, among them Francisco Giner de los Ríos, Gumersindo de Azcárate, Nicolás Salmerón, and Pedro Dorado, it has long been forgotten that Arenal was also an inspiration to the younger Krausists. She was a close friend of Francisco Giner de los Ríos, with whom she carried on an extensive correspondence.⁶ Pedro Dorado wrote a book on her, and Gumersindo de Azcárate, who wrote essays on Arenal,⁷ professed a "verdadero culto . . . hacia la excepcional y admirable personalidad de doña Concepción Arenal" [a real cult . . . for the exceptional and admirable personality of Concepción Arenal], this according to Pedro de Azcárate.⁸ I consider the coincidences between Arenal's thought and that of the Krausists as parallel developments, especially in the 1860s, when according to Juan López Morillas, "Sanz del Río's influence was extraordinary" (8).⁹ By the 1880s, however, when the heyday of Krausism was over and parodies of it began to appear (for example, Galdós's *La familia de León Roch* [1879; Leon Roch's family] and *El amigo manso* [1882; The docile friend]), Arenal adopted a more specifically Krausist vocabulary to her feminist purpose. Her first feminist book, *La mujer del porvenir*, employs Krausist-sounding concepts, such as *perfección humana* [human perfection] and *armonía universal* [universal harmony], in a fairly general way to argue for women's education, while in the later work, *La mujer de su casa* [The stay-at-home woman], she moves to a more philosophically intricate argument for women's involvement in the public sphere, which she regards as essential to the health of the nation. Her use of Krausist concepts and vocabulary is more technical and precise in *La mujer de su casa*, although I speculate that her recourse to Krausist concepts in 1883 is perhaps ironic and not a little subversive. As we will see in some of the pages that follow, Arenal may have adopted the "equal but different"

stance with regard to the genders that is at the heart of Krausist thinking on the matter (see Labanyi, *Gender and Modernization* 83).

Krausism likewise melds what might seem to be conflicting impulses in its rationalistic theism. It is possible that Arenal's early contact with Enlightenment and Romantic thinking in the libraries of her father and his family began to be colored with Krausist tinges as early as the 1840s, when several of Arenal's biographers have determined that she was dressing in men's clothing in order to sit in on law classes at the University of Madrid and attend intellectual café *tertulias*. 1841 saw publication of the Spanish version of *Cours de Droit naturel* by German jurist Heinrich Ahrens, who, according to Juan López-Morillas "taught, from his chair at the University of Brussels, a system of philosophy of law directly inspired by Krause's doctrines" (5). If, as López Morillas states, Sanz del Río's "first contact with Krausism [via the translation of Ahren's book] . . . seems to have aroused in Sanz del Río an interest bordering on obsession" (5), what attracted Sanz del Río to Krausism, and what Arenal must have found equally appealing, was its "progressivist and humanitarian ethics" (5). Its "harmonic rationalism" allowed for the wedding of traditional Spanish spiritual values and modern secular science and reason. Such an accommodation particularly suited Arenal, whose family background was a microcosm of Spain in the early nineteenth century. Her father was a liberal supporter of the Constitution of Cádiz, and he died after a debilitating term in prison for conspiratorial activities when Fernando VII's reign breached its promise to maintain the tenets of constitutional monarchy and reverted to absolutism and repression in 1823. Arenal's mother was more conservative and traditional; her views were at odds with those of her daughter, whose avid reading in secular literature and attendance at the University of Madrid she strongly opposed.

Mill's concept of the servitude of women looms large in the work of Carmen de Burgos, María Martínez Sierra, and Margarita Nelken, although each adds significant dimensions to Mill's ideas that fit the Spanish context. José Ortega y Gasset's ratio-vitalism and Max Scheler's notion of "person" are central to Rosa Chacel's and María Zambrano's formulation of (female) personhood. Marxism, socialism, and anarchism inform Margarita Nelken's and Federica Montseny's writings of the 1920s and 1930s and Lidia Falcón's conception of women as a social class in the late 1960s and 1970s. In the late Franco and democratic eras, existentialism, Enlightenment rationalism, and French, American, and Italian feminist theory are important philosophical sources and methods.

Betty Friedan's notion of the feminine mystique had a major impact on Lidia Falcón's writing in the late 1960s, and Carmen Martín Gaité discovered US feminist ideas about women's writing, especially those of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Judith Fetterly, and Adrienne Rich, which inspired her to theorize about Spanish women's literature in new ways (see especially her *Desde la ventana*). Spanish equality feminism from the 1980s to the present rejects the premises of poststructuralism in favor of the critical reason of Enlightenment thinker François Poullain de la Barre. Poststructuralism, however, can be indirectly related to Spanish difference feminism of the same period via the traces it bears of French and Italian feminist theory. Although my study is not comparative, I do note wherever possible influences of foreign feminist theorists on Spanish thinkers (for example, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Luce Irigaray, and Luisa Muraro have had significant impact on Spanish feminist thought since 1960).

A Circular History and Arguments from History

As I have noted, unlike the more linear trajectory of feminist thought in other countries, Spanish feminist thinking has traversed a circular path that follows the vicissitudes of twentieth-century Spanish history. Catherine Davies divides her study of twentieth-century Spanish feminist writing into four parts that follow the swings in Spanish political life in the last century. The first section from 1900 to 1930 covers the last years of the Restoration (1875–1931) and the Primo Rivera dictatorship (1923–1930), especially the crucial post–World War I era in which Spanish women entered the workplace in larger numbers and thus gained greater consciousness of their inferior social and legal status. The second part focuses on the Second Republic (1931–1939), when women achieved the vote and equality before the law and entered political life as *diputadas* [congresswomen] and government officials. The third period encompasses the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939–1975), when all the gains made under the Republic were rescinded and earlier legal codes reinstated. Even worse, some aspects of women's roles that were formerly a matter of social convention (e.g., domesticity) became institutionalized through the Sección Femenina de Falange that required women to attend courses in cooking, housekeeping, and child-rearing. Finally, during the

period of transition and democracy (1975–1990), women once again gained the right to divorce, to limited abortion, and to equality before the law. My chronology begins with Benito Jerónimo Feijoo's *Defensa de la mujer* (1729) and Concepción Arenal's *La mujer del porvenir* (1869) and thus adds a period (1729–1900) to Davies's periodization. All six of the concepts I analyze here have their beginnings in the pioneering work of Father Feijoo, Josefa Amar y Borbón, Inés de Joya, Concepción Arenal, and Emilia Pardo Bazán in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ Arenal's and Pardo Bazán's thought draws on Feijoo's; they both wrote essays on Feijoo's thought, although not necessarily on his feminism. Curiously, however, Spanish equality feminists of the democratic era have passed over their own Enlightenment countrymen and women to find inspiration in the French Enlightenment. Following the chronological scheme allows me to perceive the gaps and repetitions in the development of Spanish feminist theory.

In the 1970s Spanish feminists had to “reinvent the wheel” after the forty-year hiatus in legal and social progress for women during the Franco era. Many feminist issues of the pre-Republican and Republican eras (1920s and 1930s) resurfaced in the late 1960s as Francisco Franco approached death. The pre-Republican years were governed by the Civil Code of 1889, a series of legal statutes that severely restricted women's legal independence. In *La mujer moderna y sus derechos*, Carmen de Burgos is particularly eloquent on the “legal construction” of Spanish womanhood, which she defines as a relegation to the status of “eterna menor” (144) [eternal minor]. Unmarried women could not live alone without parental permission and were legally prohibited from becoming pregnant. If a woman became pregnant out of wedlock, the law forbade paternity investigations. A married woman's husband had to authorize any work or travel she wished to undertake, and the husband controlled the woman's money. The infamous article 438 dictated that the man who killed his adulterous wife was only sentenced to exile; if he beat her there was no punishment. Lidia Falcón's *Mujer y sociedad* (1969) revisits the legal construction of womanhood forty years after Carmen de Burgos's *La mujer moderna y sus derechos* appeared. Both women appeal to nationalist instincts by comparing Spanish legal structures to those in other countries. Burgos emphasizes the gains made by women in England, while Falcón includes a chapter on “Tío Sam” [Uncle Sam], which bears the heavy imprint of Betty Friedan. In *Feminismo*, María

Martínez Sierra also compares Spain and the United States, although in her pre-Betty Friedan world, she views women's situation in the United States in a more positive light.

There were, of course, some feminist threads that were not severed during the Franco years, although, on the whole, Franco-era feminists were only vaguely aware of the work feminists had done in the pre-War period, if at all. When Franco-era feminists cite pre-War feminist thinking, they seldom mention specifics. Carmen Alcalde comments, for example, that

[n]os quedamos un poco cortas. No supimos ver de verdad todos los valores que hubo en los años veinticinco, treinta y treinta y cinco, y en la Guerra, la gente de un valor extraordinario como Victoria Kent y Margarita Nelken o digamos «La Pasionaria», que ya es mito, y Federica Montseny y una cantidad de gente anónima con unos esfuerzos tan grandes y tan pioneras que verdaderamente no se puede decir que no hubo feminismo, tal como se dijo en este libro [her *El feminismo ibérico* co-authored with María Aurèlia Capmany and published in 1970]. (Levine and Waldman 27–28)

[we came up a bit short. We really were unable to see all the value of the years 1925, 30, 35, and during the War, people of extraordinary merit such as Victoria Kent and Margarita Nelken or “La Pasionaria,” who is now a myth, and Federica Montseny and a large number of anonymous people who made enormous efforts and were so pioneering that truly one cannot say that there wasn't feminism, as was stated in this book.]

When asked if the work of feminists like Margarita Nelken and Victoria Kent in the 1920s and 1930s was known to postwar feminists, Elisa Lamas replies that there was an “ignorancia total” (Levine and Waldman 117), because the younger women were all educated under the Franco regime, which recognized nothing that happened in Spain before July 18, 1936, when army generals, including Franco, revolted against the Republic. She remarks that a few highly educated women were aware of the feminist movement in the prewar period, “pero son una parte pequeñísima de la población” (117) [a very small part of the population].

As Catherine Davies points out, the concern for issues that had occupied feminist writing in the 1920s and 1930s did not completely disappear between 1939 and the late 1960s; they went underground and found publication outlets in the novel: “fiction [from 1940 to the 1970s] provided virtually the only means by which women . . . were able to express their preoccupations, to affirm their identity, to arouse public awareness, and yet avoid . . . arbitrary censorship” (208). Openly feminist discourse disappeared from public view in the early years of the Franco regime, to be replaced by the traditional rhetoric and ideals on women’s domesticity, wifehood, and maternity propagated by the Sección Femenina de Falange.¹¹ Concerns about women’s education, work, and class can, however, be found embedded in novels such as *Nada* [Nothing] by Carmen Laforet (1945), in which Andrea, an eighteen-year-old girl, narrates a year she spent in Barcelona attending the university immediately after the Civil War. Andrea fits the “chica rara” [odd girl] type defined by Carmen Martín Gaité in an essay by that title. The odd girl goes against the grain of womanhood promoted by the Franco regime—the traditional wife, mother, and homemaker. She is not looking for a husband, likes to be alone, and is studying for a career. She breaks any number of social taboos. Even though her family is from the upper middle class, Andrea interacts comfortably with her lower middle-class Aunt Gloria, a working woman. It is the women of the household—Aunt Gloria, Aunt Angustias, the maid Antonia—who work steadily and keep the family afloat economically; the men are useless in the working world. Laforet herself lived in Spain under the Franco regime for its entire thirty-six years (twenty-one of those as a married woman); she continued to work, often as an important supporter of the family, when her husband’s income did not cover expenses. She diverted her creative writing talents to journalism, which was quicker to produce and brought a more steady income than her preferred fiction writing. However, the income she received from *Nada* and her other novels and stories provided a source of support when she separated from her husband in 1970.

Countess Campo Alange María Laffitte’s *La secreta guerra de los sexos* (1948) [The secret war of the sexes] was an important exception to the ban on publishing “subversive” feminist essays in the most restrictive years of the Franco regime (1939–1953). Notably, this work appeared a year before Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, which exercised its most important impact on Spanish equality feminism in the 1980s and 1990s. In the cover blurb for *La secreta guerra de los sexos*, Laffitte provocatively

challenges the traditional female stereotypes the Franco regime enforced legally through the Sección Femenina courses in domesticity all women were required to complete before they could pursue studies, travel, or work (provided these were approved by her father or husband): “La idea de escribir este libro surgió en mí del choque brusco entre dos mentalidades distintas: aquella que sirvió de fondo a mi niñez dentro de un ambiente provinciano y tradicional y la que se ha producido recientemente en un mundo en plena evolución social. . . . Mi vida apersonal se nutre: en un principio de tradiciones seculares que vienen a morir entre convulsiones al borde mismo de mi plenitud vital” [The idea of writing this book arose from the sharp contrast between different mentalities: that which was the backdrop of my childhood in a rural, traditional environment and that which has come about more recently in a world in full social evolution]. María Laffitte’s social position as a titled noblewoman surely helped garner her the government censors’ blind eye when they reviewed her feminist manuscript.

In a pale reflection of the emergence of feminist writing and feminism in other Western countries, Spain saw a timid flowering of feminist essays in the 1960s. María Laffitte published *La mujer como mito y como ser humano* [Woman as myth and as a human being] in 1961, and Lidia Falcón’s *Los derechos civiles de la mujer* [Women’s civil rights] and *Los derechos laborales de la mujer* [Women’s labor rights] appeared in 1962 and 1963, respectively. In 1962 María Laffitte and Lili Álvarez formed a group (Seminario de Estudios Sociológicos sobre la Mujer [SESM]) of aristocratic and upper-middle-class women, including Concepción Borreguero, Elena Catena, Consuelo de la Gándara, María Jiménez Bermejo, Carmen Pérez Seonae, María Salas, and Pura Salas, to conduct feminist research. They met often at María Laffitte’s home and produced several books of feminist sociology, which they signed collectively. According to María Salas, their ideology was characterized by “1. Una actitud visceral, vivencial y reflexiva ante la vida, que compromete a toda la persona y se refleja en su comportamiento, 2. Un sistema de ideas que, partiendo de la problemática de la mujer, afecta a todas las dimensiones de la sociedad: educación, familia, trabajo, política, economía, religión, ocio, etc. 3. Una acción movilizadora que lleva en sí el cambio social” (“En memoria de Consuelo de la Gándara,” *Consuelo de la Gándara*, 14) [1. A visceral, experience-based, and reflective attitude toward life that involves all persons and is registered in their behavior; 2. A system of ideas that, starting from the problematics of women, affects all aspects